

III. A GENERATION ON THE MOVE

The attachment of the Kerstetter family to the Lebanon County area turned out to be brief. Even before the Revolutionary War, the four sons of Martin and their families were on the move to new homes in central Pennsylvania. It wasn't long before the more adventurous members of the family set out for newly opened lands in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky and Tennessee. Meanwhile, daughter Elisabetha Kimberling and her family resettled in the western part of Virginia.

The first moves for the Kerstetters were to Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, which then included land on both sides of the Susquehanna River. Sebastian and Michael journeyed west of the river to what is now the southern part of Snyder County about 1770. Martin and Leonhardt settled east of the Susquehanna in the southern part of present-day Northumberland County a bit later.

The moves to central Pennsylvania came after the French and Indian War (1754-1763) and after the cessation of hostilities with local Indian tribes. In the present-day county of Northumberland, for example, the last land transactions with the Indians took place in 1768, and the first land warrant was issued that same year. There was an immediate and rapid influx of settlers into the area, and many of the new residents were German.¹

Sebastian and Magdalena

Sebastian, commonly known as Bastian, and his wife Magdalena Diebler had seven children. All of them were born while the family was living near Cleona, all were baptized at Hill Church, and all were alive at the time of Sebastian's death in 1787.

<u>Children</u>	<u>Biographical Information</u> ²
Frances (Veronica)	Born April 9, 1752 Married John Miller (1751-1812) Died in 1818?
Joh. Martin	Born March 7, 1754 Married Elizabeth Reichard (c.1765-Aug. 7, 1845) Died in 1815 in what is now Snyder County
Joh. Leonhardt	Born April 12, 1756 Married about 1779 to Anna Christina Lenker (1760-Jan. 16, 1825) Died Oct. 10, 1822, in Stark County, Ohio
Anna Catarina	Born June 1, 1758 Probably died before 1800

Peter	Born Aug. 24, 1760 Died Sept. 28, 1822, in Pendleton County, Kentucky
Sebastian Jr.	Born Sept. 24, 1763 Probably died before 1830 in what is now Juniata County, Pennsylvania
Anna Margaretha	Born July 13, 1766 Probably died before 1800

The family moved away from Cleona sometime after the birth of Margaretha and was established in the southern part of present-day Snyder County by 1770.

Sebastian's name appears on the Cumberland County tax lists in Penns Township in 1770. The township became Penn Township in Northumberland County in 1772, and the area where the family lived became Mahantango Township in 1796.³

Penn Township was roughly the same as the eastern part of Snyder County today. Mahantango Township was roughly the same area now covered by the Snyder County townships of Chapman, Perry, Union and Washington. Most of the Kerstetters lived in the southern part of what is now Chapman Township.

Sebastian farmed 158 acres on a tract named Dumbarton. It was located about half a mile from the Susquehanna River and paralleled the river from Mahantango Creek to the area near or at McKees Half Falls.⁴

Sebastian's will was dated Feb. 18, 1787, and was filed at the Northumberland County courthouse in Sunbury on March 20. The official record describes him as a yeoman - a small farmer - and spells his name Seboestan Castator. The will reads in part:

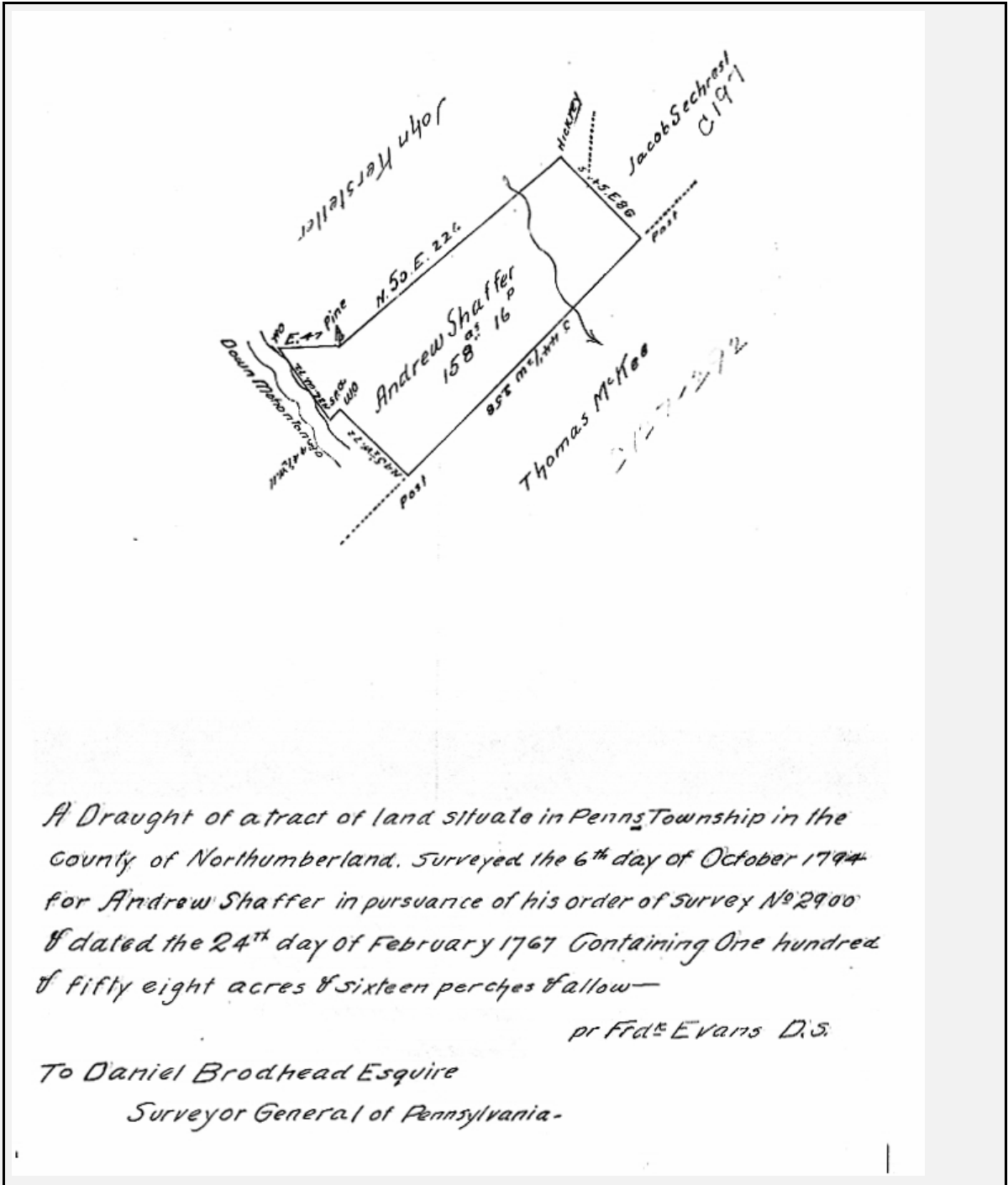
First I give and bequeath to Mary my dearly beloved wife one third part of my whole estate rail and personal during her natural life and then that third of the rail estate to be equally divided among the heirs, also I give and bequeth unto my first born son Martin ten pounds lawful money of Pennsylvania over and above his equal share with the rest of the miner children, all my personal and rail estate to be sold and two thirds of it to be equally divided amongst my children Martin Lenhart Peter Seboston Frances Catharine and Margret and the rail estate not to be sold during my wife Marys life except at her one will.

Federal census records indicate that all three of Sebastian's daughters and his granddaughter Magdalen Miller were living with Magdalena as of 1790.

Magdalena's will was written July 16, 1804, signed with an "X" and filed in the courthouse on Dec. 4. The will said her funeral expenses were to be paid by her own estate and not that left to the children by Sebastian. The rest of the estate went to her granddaughter Magdalen

Miller, daughter of John and Frances Miller. The will said Sebastian's wife had raised the girl from childhood.

SEBASTIAN'S FARM CALLED DUMBARTON



Magdalena's will goes into great detail about the estate and provides some insights into the belongings of families in those times. Several of the listings are unreadable, but the estate included: arrears rent owed by Michael Bowerman, two cows, two cow chains, one bell, one bedstead, bedding and curtains, one tub, two pewter dishers, one churn, one vinegar keg, two chairs, one walnut table, one shovel, one dung fork, one garden hoe, 13 plates, 11 cups and saucers, two tin buckets, one tub, one ax, one coffee pot, one grid iron, one tea kettle, one tea cannister, one sugar box, one pig, the money left in her chest after burial expenses, and the vegetables left in the garden.

It is not known where either Sebastian or Magdalena is buried.

Michael and Maria Dorothea

Michael and his wife Maria Dorothea Dietz probably had five children while they were living near Cleona. All except Joh. Georg are listed in Hill Church baptismal records.

<u>Children</u>	<u>Biographical Information</u> ⁵
Maria Elisabetha	Born March 23, 1754 Married Simon Herrold
Joh. Martin	Born May 30, 1756 Died in 1814 in Butler County, Ohio
? Joh. Georg	Born about 1757 Married Elisabetha Snyder (1764-Dec. 5, 1850) Died Jan. 1, 1847, in what is now Snyder County
Johannes	Born Oct. 31, 1761 Died Aug. 5, 1843, in what is now Snyder County
? Johannes (? Joh. Leonhardt)	Born in 1769 and baptized April 21, 1770 Married Catharine Richter Died after 1830 in what is now Snyder County

The family had moved to Penn Township by 1770. Michael was listed in the early assessment records of the township through 1776, and a widow Kerstetter was on the lists for 1778 through 1781. The 1781 list shows his widow had 300 acres of land and two cows.⁶

All this suggests that Michael died about 1777 and Dorothea in the early 1780s. There are no early land warrants or deeds in the official records, although some of the early surveys refer to the lands of Michael Kerstetter nearby. Neither Michael nor Dorothea left a will, there were no letters of administration issued for their estates, and it's not known where either of them is buried.

Martin and Elisabetha

Martin married Elisabetha Bickel, daughter of Hans Bickel and Barbara Winkelman, born Jan. 15, 1735 or 1736 in Affoltern am Albis, Switzerland.⁷

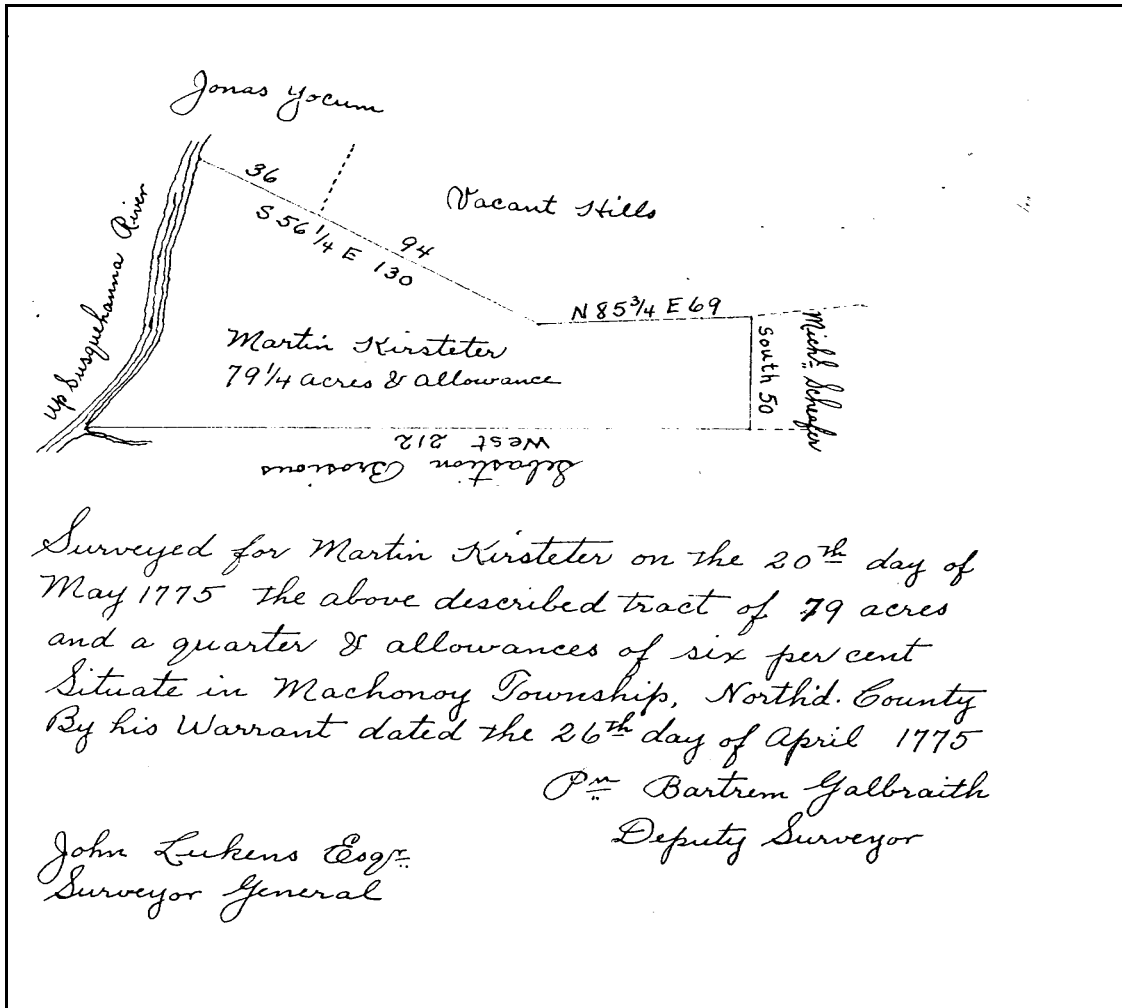
The couple had eight children. Joh. Adam and Anna Margaretha were baptized at Hill Church. The younger children were born after the family relocated in Northumberland County.

<u>Children</u>	<u>Biographical Information</u> ⁸
Joh. Adam	Born Aug. 28, 1757 Died after 1806
Johannes	Probably born about 1760 Married (?) Catarina Wolf Died in 1813 in what is now Centre County, Pennsylvania
Anna Margaretha	Born in July 1766 Married Jacob Brosius
Elisabetha	Married Heinrich or Henry Löffler
Rudolph	Born about 1770 Died after 1850 in Stephenson County, Illinois
Anna	Married John Bingaman
Barbara	Married William Emick or Emrich
Catarina	Married Joh. Georg Yaeger or Yeagle

Early tax records for 1771 and 1772 show Martin and his family living near Jonestown (formerly Williamsburg) at the forks of Swatara Creek in present-day Lebanon County. By 1778, the family had moved to Mahanoy Township in Northumberland County. The township covered much of the southern part of the county at the time, and Martin served as one of its first constables in 1778.⁹

The family soon had extensive land holdings in the county and a grist mill acquired in 1785. There was the tract of 79 acres on the Susquehanna River at Dalmatia. There was a tract of 187¾ acres known as Fairview that Martin acquired by a land warrant dated March 29, 1774. He purchased 245 acres of land with buildings and improvements in 1792 at a location about two miles from the Susquehanna. Still another holding was located north and a bit east of the community of Pillow and just north of Jacob's Ridge.¹⁰ It is not clear from the land records if all these properties were kept by Martin.

MARTIN'S LAND HOLDING AT DALMATIA



Martin's will was dated Sept. 19, 1798, and filed on Nov. 17 at the Northumberland County courthouse. The original will, written in German, is still on file. Martin signed the document in a child-like hand that appeared to have little control. The will lists Martin's occupation as a miller, gives the first names of his eight children and indicates all eight were adults by offering Elisabetha the choice of where she wanted to live after his death.

Martin asked that one piece of land be sold to pay his debts. The rest of the estate was to go to Elisabetha until her death, then be divided among the children. The will added: "But in case my said beloved wife should marry, she shall then have no more than is allowed by law. And in case she would marry then all shall be divided equally amongst my eight children . . ."

Whether Elisabetha remarried or not is not known, and it is not known where she and Martin are buried.

Elisabetha and Joh. Martin Kimberling

Elisabetha's husband Joh. Martin Kimberling was born in Schlaitdorf in Baden-Württemberg south of Stuttgart and came to North America as a boy. Elisabetha and Joh. Martin moved to Wythe County, Virginia, sometime after their marriage in 1758. Their first child Elisabetha was born in Lebanon County, and the rest of the children were born in Virginia.¹¹

Children

Biographical Information

Elisabetha Kimberling	Born about 1759 Married Adam Groseclose (1759-1837) Died in January 1806
Joh. Jacob Kimberling	Born May 30, 1761 Died in March 1839
Esther Kimberling	Born about 1762 Married Jacob Groseclose (1765-1833) Died about 1820
Rosannah Kimberling	Born Oct. 22, 1766 Married Peter Snavely (1757-1846) Died Dec. 13, 1838
Joh. Heinrich Kimberling	Born about 1768 Died about 1850
Mary Magdalena Kimberling	Born May 18, 1770 Married Henry Huddle (1768-1846) Died Jan. 27, 1845
Catarina Kimberling	Born about 1772 Died about 1821
Anna Maria Kimberling	Born about 1781 Died about 1850
George Kimberling	Born about 1783 Died about 1822
Judith Kimberling	Born about 1785
? Barbara Kimberling	Born about 1790 Married about 1811 to John W. Dutton

It is not known why the family moved to the western part of Virginia. Wythe County was best known as a stopping point along the wilderness road to the Cumberland Gap and further on to Kentucky and Tennessee.

The Kimberlings were among the early members of one of the oldest churches in Wythe County, and they donated land for a church building and cemetery. A marker erected by the cemetery association in 1980 reads as follows: "Erected in Memory of Martin Kimberling and his wife Elizabeth Kirkstatter Kimberling who donated this tract of land in 1797, upon which the first Kimberling Lutheran Church was built and a community cemetery was established."¹²

The congregation dated back at least to 1779, according to early baptismal records. Elisabetha and Martin are buried in the church cemetery.

Joh. Leonhardt and Anna Elisabetha

Joh. Leonhardt was married in 1766 to Anna Elisabetha Zehring, daughter of John Zehring.¹³ After several moves, they wound up in Mahanoy Township in Northumberland County, possibly in the present-day township of West Cameron.

The couple had perhaps four sons and four daughters. Two of the children, Magdalena and Joh. Georg, were baptized at Himmel Lutheran and Reformed Church, sometimes known as the church on Schwaben or Greenbrier Creek, in what is now Washington Township.¹⁴

<u>Children</u>	<u>Biographical Information</u> ¹⁵
Leonhardt Jr.	Born about 1767 Married Susanna Gerhard or Gerhart Died about 1847 in Northumberland County
Susan or Susanna	Born about 1771 Married John Snider (Snyder or Schneider) Died about 1809 in Vaughan Township, York County, Ontario
? John	Born about 1773?
? Elizabeth	Born about 1776?
Henry or Heinrich	Born about 1779 Married (1) Anna Maria Keffer or Kiefer (April 14, 1792-c.1825); (2) Esther Steel Wilson (1791-April 17, 1865) Died May 23, 1848, in Vaughan Township, York County, Ontario

Magdalena Born Nov. 2, 1782
 Probably died as a child

Barbara Born about 1785?

Joh. Georg Born May 3 or 20, 1787

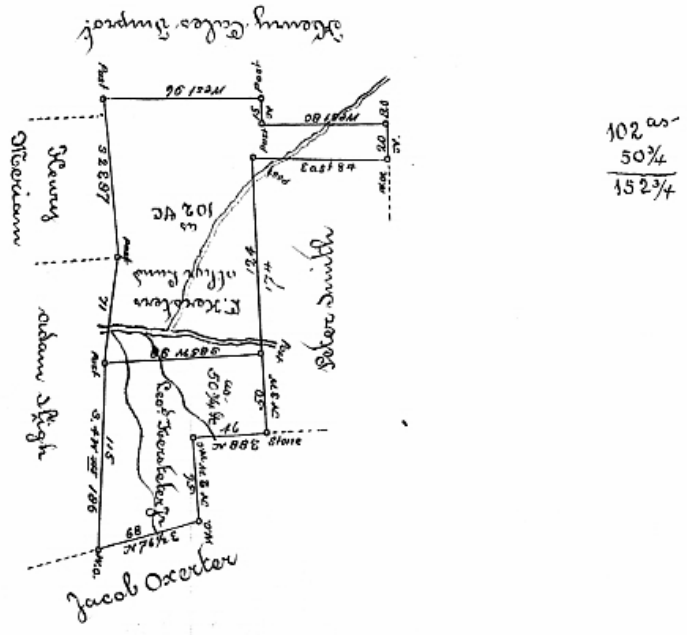
Leonhardt and Elisabetha apparently started out living near the Zehring family in what is now Bethel Township in Lebanon County. In 1768, they bought 300 acres of land on the west bank of the Susquehanna River in what was then Cumberland County and what is now probably Snyder County, but they lost it in a boundary dispute with George Wolf of Berks County, Pennsylvania.¹⁶

Leonhardt was on the tax lists for Upper Paxton Township in Dauphin County in 1772 and for Mahanoy Township in Northumberland County beginning in 1778. He was taxed on land and assorted livestock during most of the 1780s.¹⁷

Leonhardt was apparently a widower at the time of his death in 1790. He left no will, so the county issued letters of administration on Aug. 6 to his son Leonhardt Jr. and his only surviving brother Martin. It is not known where Leonhardt and Anna Elisabetha are buried.

Northumberland County Orphan's Court records dated April 5, 1791, show the appointment of guardians for Leonhardt's three minor children Henry, Georg and Barbara. The guardians were Michael Shaffer, Jacob Oxreiter and George Piper. A new guardian, John Snider, was appointed for Henry on Aug. 27, 1797. Snider was almost certainly the husband of Henry's sister Susan. Shaffer took over from Piper as Georg's guardian on April 7, 1802. Barbara's name does not appear in any of the later records.¹⁸

WHITE OAK BOTTOM AND AN ADJACENT FAMILY HOLDING¹⁹



A Draft of a tract of land called *White Oak Bottom* situate on the south side of Swaba Creek adjoining Land of Peter Smith & others including a Run to an Improvement in Buchanan Township Northumberland County containing fifty acres 3/4 & allow^d surveyed for Leonard Kersteter Jun^r (Administrator of the Heirs of Leon^d Kersteter Dec^d in Trust for the Heirs of said Dec^d) the 18th Day of Nov^r 1793 by virtue of a warrant dated the 27th Day of March 1793.

Daniel Brodhead Esq^r }
 Sur^v: Gen^l

By W^m Gray D. S.

ENDNOTES

1. Herbert C. Bell, *History of Northumberland County, Pennsylvania*, pp.82-84.
2. Hill Church records. The marriage of Veronica, better known as Frances, to John Miller is noted in a legal document from her brother Peter that was needed to settle Sebastian's estate. The document is found in Northumberland County deed book O, page 123, dated June 13, 1807, and filed on Aug. 18 of that year. The document on the following page makes clear which of the Martins in that generation was Sebastian's son.
3. Cumberland County Tax Lists, compiled by Merri Lou Schaumann. The names of Sebastian and a widow Kerstetter appear in *Early Assessment Records of Northumberland, Union and Snyder Counties*, compiled by Mary Belle Lontz, the 1781 tax list searched by Shirley G. McQuillis of Ligonier, Pennsylvania, and notes by Dr. Greg Castetter of Grove City, Ohio, based on tax lists in the Pennsylvania Archives.
4. Northumberland County deed books C, page 86, dated Sept. 6, 1774, and recorded June 16, 1785, and L, page 484, dated Sept. 2, 1801, and recorded Sept. 15. The Dumbarton tract was sold for £1,500 by the executors of Sebastian's estate, his widow Magdalena and son Martin.

The only land between Sebastian and the Susquehanna River was the land of Thomas McKee, an Indian trader and one of the first settlers in the area. The location of the land was found using land records now available on-line from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Go to www.phmc.state.pa.us and click on State Archives and then Land Records.

5. The information on Maria Elisabetha's marriage was supplied by Carol Happel Grennan of Green Lake, Wisconsin.

Joh. Georg and Joh. Leonhardt are listed with question marks because there is no direct evidence that they were sons of Michael and Dorothea. The circumstantial evidence is compelling, however. They are the only two Kerstetters of that generation living in the Snyder County area who can't be accounted for otherwise.

Georg's birth date isn't known, but Joan L. Gray of Amboy, Indiana, says Georg filed his application for a Revolutionary War pension in December, 1820, and said he would be 64 on his next birthday.

It seems almost certain that Johannes and Joh. Leonhardt were one and the same. Two baptismal records for sons both named Johannes don't make sense. Later census records show a Leonhardt born between 1765 and 1770, and that's compatible with the church record for the second Johannes.

6. Lontz, McQuillis, Schaumann. The 1786 assessment list describes Martin as the son of Michael.
7. Information on the family of Elisabetha Bickel was provided by family historian Carleton L. Weidemeyer of Clearwater, Florida, from information researched by Lineages of Salt Lake City.
8. The order of the children's names in the text is the same as in Martin's will, but it doesn't appear to be strictly chronological. Approximate birth dates for Johannes and Rudolph were deduced from later census records. Martin gave the first names, but not the married names of his daughters in his will. Their married names appear in court documents needed to settle the estate some years later.

Elisabetha and her husband had a daughter Elisabetha baptized in 1785 at Stone Valley or Zion's Lutheran and Reformed Church near Hickory Corners, according to *Pennsylvania German Marriages* compiled by Donna R. Irish. The sponsors of the child were her parents. The date would indicate that Elisabetha was born sometime in the early or mid 1760s and married in 1784 or earlier. Ruth Galon of Seipstown, Pennsylvania maintained that Barbara's husband was John Seiler. A Johann Seiler (July 10, 1758-Aug. 30, 1823) is buried in the Stone Valley cemetery.

9. Bell, notes from Castetter and McQuillis. Bell says the administration of township affairs was usually given to "men of some prominence and influence in their respective neighborhoods."
10. A copy of the survey for the land on the Susquehanna was made by Clarence H. Bell in 1937 or 1938 as a W.P.A. project and is in the collection of the Northumberland County Historical Society in Sunbury. The location of the land near the river is described in Northumberland County deed book K, page 91, dated March 20, 1792, and recorded Feb. 7, 1798. The location of the holding near Pillow was found on a portion of a warrantee township map shown to the author by Frederick F. Reed, register and recorder for Northumberland County. The original map was prepared by John H. Carter, a charter member of the county historical society.
11. Information from Public Member Trees on Ancestry.com, largely unsourced. Family members do appear in early census records. Many of the grandchildren of Elisabetha and Joh. Martin were baptized at the Kimberling Lutheran Church.

Other Pennsylvania Germans also moved to Wyeth County, Virginia, during this period. Members of the Snavely family were among the movers, and Sarah or Sally Snavely married Elisabetha's great nephew Peter in 1809 in Virginia. (See Chapter V.)

12. The text was attached to the Public Member Trees.
13. The information about the father of Elisabetha comes from Northumberland County deed book B, page 75, dated Oct. 3, 1774, and recorded Jan. 21, 1777.

14. Records of Himmel Church, translated by Paul H. Noll. The church is located on the road from Red Cross to Pitman several miles east of Red Cross. The original building burned down in 1959, and a new church was built on the site. The original graveyard is in good condition. There are no Kerstetter stones.
15. Much of the information about Leonhardt Jr. comes from the *Genealogical and Biographical Annals of Northumberland County, Pennsylvania*. Additional information was provided by Ruth Burkholder of Stouffville, Ontario, Ralph A. Pugh of Berwyn, Illinois, and Mark C. Kerstetter of Evanston, Illinois.

Burkholder cites a reference to Hinrich Kirchstatter, Johann Schneider and Mrs. Susanna Schneider as joint sponsors at an 1808 baptism at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church north of Toronto. Records of the church were published by the Toronto branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society.
16. Northumberland County deed book C, page 351, dated Jan. 19, 1768, and recorded Oct. 18, 1786. The land dispute is mentioned by Galon in a letter to the author and is based on information in caveat books in the Pennsylvania Archives.
17. Castetter, McQuillis.
18. Oxreiter (Ochenreiter or Oxerter) was a neighbor and a member of the Himmel congregation. Piper (Pfeifer or Pfeiffer) and his wife were sponsors at the baptisms of Georg and Magdalena at the church.
19. The name White Oak Bottom refers to the southern tract of 50¾ acres on the survey map. The northern tract had 102 acres. The reference to Swaba Creek obviously refers to Schwaben Creek.