
Using Indirect Evidence to Find In-Laws for Conrad Peters of Monroe County, New York

By Nancy A. Peters, CG

*Without a marriage record there are other ways
to prove a woman's maiden name. When her
given name seems to change, too, the solution
becomes more complex.*

Building a case from indirect evidence may require a wide range of sources and an understanding of cultural context. Determining a wife's parentage without a marriage record requires thoroughly studying the woman, her husband, and their associates. These techniques helped identify Conrad Peters's wife as Gertrude "Catherine" Eberle, born in the Palatinate to Christopher Eberle and Catharina Kunz. Three obstacles complicated this identification:

- The couple's marriage record cannot be found and may not exist.
- The wife's multiple given names confused the identity.
- No Monroe County document names her parents.

CONRAD PETERS OF BADEN AND NEW YORK

Conrad Peters, born in Baden in 1825, immigrated to the United States with his parents in 1834.¹ By 1850 he lived in the Town of Chili, Monroe County,

© Nancy A. Peters, CG; 111 Wax Myrtle Court; Aiken, SC 29803; npeters@bellsouth.net. Ms. Peters is a genealogist and writer specializing in South Carolina and English research. She holds advanced degrees from the University of Arizona and the London School of Economics in London, England. In her spare time she works as a volunteer collection care assistant at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History in Columbia.

1. The Peters surname is also spelled Peter in European records and some American records. Conrad used both spellings. For the birth, see Katholische Kirche Sinzheim [Sinzheim Catholic Church] (Sinzheim, Baden), Kirchenbuchduplikat [duplicate church book] (1809–1869), Taufen [baptisms], p. 11, Conrad Peter (1825); Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe, Karlsruhe, Baden-Württemberg, Germany; microfilm 1,055,213, item 2, Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City. Conrad was born and baptized on 22 November 1825. For his immigration, see *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820–1897*, microfilm publication M237, 675 rolls (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1962), roll 23, arranged by arrival date, manifest, 3 July 1834, *France*, Havre to New York, for Theodore Peter party, p. 2, lines 23–26.

New York, with his apparent wife, “Catherin” Peters, and son, John Peters.² Conrad’s parents resided in the adjacent Town of Gates.³

Conrad had a son baptized on 29 June 1847 at Sts. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church in the City of Rochester, Monroe County. The priest recorded the child’s mother as Gertrude Eberle. Conrad presumably married Gertrude before his son’s 27 June birth because the church record makes no mention of illegitimacy.⁴ Conrad would have been twenty-one years old, suggesting a first marriage. Over the next decades he and his wife—sometimes Gertrude and sometimes a variant of Catherine—had nine children baptized in Rochester.

Unsuccessful Search for Conrad’s Marriage

Four Roman Catholic parishes served Monroe County in the 1840s: St. Joseph’s, Sts. Peter and Paul, St. Mary’s, and St. Patrick’s.⁵ Irish Catholics organized and attended St. Patrick’s and St. Mary’s.⁶ Germanic Catholics founded St. Joseph’s in 1836 and Sts. Peter and Paul in 1843, both served by German-speaking priests on Rochester’s west side.⁷ A Germanic Catholic immigrant couple in the Rochester area might have married in either church. The four churches’ surviving marriage books, however, record no Conrad Peters marriage from 1842 to 1847.⁸ Either the priest failed to record Conrad’s marriage or he married elsewhere.

2. 1850 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., population schedule, Town of Chili, p. 307r, dwelling/family 391, “Coonrad” Peters household; microfilm publication M432, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), roll 528.

3. *Ibid.*, Town of Gates, p. 257r, dwell./fam. 9, Theodore Peter and Delphine Peter. The towns of Chili and Gates were small adjacent Monroe County farming communities west and southwest of Rochester. See U.S. Works Progress Administration, Federal Writers’ Project, State of New York, *Rochester and Monroe County: A History and Guide*, American Guide Series (Rochester: Scantom’s, 1937), 280–81. Also, Howard C. Hosmer, *Monroe County (1821–1971): The Sesqui-Centennial Account of the History of Monroe County, New York* (Rochester: Rochester Museum and Science Center, 1971), 144–45 and 162–63.

4. Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church (Rochester, N.Y.), Baptisms 1:29, Francis Joseph Peter (29 June 1847); Nazareth College, Rochester; FHL microfilm 1,432,394.

5. James L. Elwood and Dellon M. Dewey, comps., *A Directory and Gazetteer of the City of Rochester for 1844* (Rochester: Canfield and Warren, 1844), 17.

6. Gerard Muhl and Charles Bennett, “St. Mary’s Church,” *Rochester History* 44 (October 1982): 2–5.

7. Blake McKelvey, “The Germans of Rochester: Their Traditions and Contributions,” *Rochester History* 24 (January 1958): 3. Also, Vincent A. Lenti, “St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church: One Hundred Twenty-Eight Years on Franklin Street,” *Rochester History* 63 (Summer 2001): 7–8.

8. St. Joseph’s Catholic Church (Rochester), Marriages 1 (1836–1850); FHL microfilm 1,432,393. Also, Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Marriages 1 (1843–1854); FHL microfilm 1,432,395, item 7. Also, St. Mary’s Catholic Church (Rochester), Marriages 1 (1843–1898); FHL microfilm 1,420,498, item 4. St. Patrick’s marriage book for these years appears not to survive. The records were not among the Diocese of Rochester parish registers at Nazareth College’s Wilmot Library in 1986. See St. Patrick’s Catholic Church (Rochester), parish registers of marriages, baptisms, and confirmations; FHL microfilm 1,420,497, items 6–16.

New York state vital records outside New York City begin in 1881, too late to contain Conrad's marriage or identify his wife's parents.⁹ Monroe County maintains birth and death records from 1880.¹⁰ Rochester has marriage records starting in 1876.¹¹

Gertrude aka Catherine

Between 1847 and 1892 Conrad's wife used Gertrude and Catherine as her given name. In church records she was always Gertrude from 1847 until 1861, in which last year her name was recorded as "Cath."¹² She was Gertrude again in 1865, but was Cath. or Catharina three times in a row until 1877 where she was again Gertrude.¹³ A few months later, she was Catharina, and remained Cath. or Catherine in church records until her last appearance there in 1892.¹⁴ Such name usage is consistent with a Germanic custom of two given names: a baptismal, saint's name and a "call name."¹⁵ *Gertrude*, used in sacramental registers, likely was the saint's name and forename of her baptismal sponsor.

9. New York State, Department of Health, "Birth, Death, Marriage and Divorce Records," *New York State Department of Health* (http://www.health.state.ny.us/vital_records/ : accessed 25 June 2010).

10. Monroe County, "Vital Records," *MonroeCounty.gov* (<http://www.monroecounty.gov/health-VitalRecords.php> : accessed 29 May 2010).

11. City of Rochester, "Historic Marriage Records Research," *City of Rochester* (<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/app.aspx?id=8589936475> : accessed 29 May 2010).

12. Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church (Rochester, N.Y.), Baptisms 1:29, Francis Joseph Peter (29 June 1847). Also, 1:68, Francis Joseph Peter (23 February 1851); 1:100, George Peter (17 June 1853); 2:43, Anna Mary Peter (16 September 1855); 3:7, Mary Josephine Peter (28 November 1858); 3:54, Balbina Peter (21 July 1861). In the first five she is Gertrude. In the last she is "Cath."

13. Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church (Rochester, N.Y.), Baptisms 4:12, Joseph Peter (19 February 1865); 4:52, Eliz. Barbara Peter (27 April 1868). Also, Holy Family Catholic Church (Rochester, New York), Baptisms 1:52, Pancratius Peter (24 July 1870); Deaths Book (1864–1936), p. 62, Elizabeth Peter (15 November 1875); FHL microfilm 1,432,393. Also, Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Marriages Book 3, 1877, no. 5 (chronologically arranged, n.p.), Hauck-Peter (8 February 1877); FHL microfilm 1,432,395, item 9. The bride's mother was Gertrude. No civil record of this marriage was found in Rochester.

14. Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church (Rochester, N.Y.), Marriages 3, 1877, no. 8, Stuvenhaver-Peter (11 May 1877). No civil record was found in Rochester for this couple. Also, Holy Family Catholic Church, Marriages, 1864–1942, p. 114, no. 6, Londo-Peters; FHL microfilm 1,432,393. Also, Holy Family Catholic Church, Death Book, 1864–1936, p. 182, line 5, Catherine Peters (23 January 1890). Also, Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church (Rochester, N.Y.), Marriages 3, 1892, no. 34, Peters–Striegel.

15. Arta F. Johnson, *The Origins, Development, and Meanings of German Names* (Columbus, Ohio: privately printed, 1984), 18–20. Also, Edward R. Brandt et al., *Germanic Genealogy: A Guide to Worldwide Sources and Migration Patterns*, 3rd ed. (St. Paul, Minn.: Germanic Genealogy Society, 2007), 48–49.

In civil records, only once, in 1865, was she called Gertrude.¹⁶ All other civil records of Conrad Peters's wife give her name as Catherine, Cath., or Kate.¹⁷ *Catherine* was the name she used in the community. Cultural context and chronology support a conclusion that Conrad's wife's name varied with the recorder. As she got older she more consistently was known as *Catherine*.

Table 1 compares census details. Except for the 1870 birthplace, they appear consistent for one woman. Conrad was born in Baden near the Württemberg border.¹⁸ The enumerator may have copied the birthplace from Conrad's entry or misunderstood the informant.

Reported ages support Conrad's having one wife born between 1825 and 1827.¹⁹ Her baptismal name was possibly *Gertrude* and her call name or second name, *Catherine Eberle* was probably her maiden name rather than a prior husband's because when her first known child was born in 1847 she was twenty-two or younger, a reasonable age for a first marriage.

16. 1865 N.Y. census, Monroe Co., Rochester, ward 11, part 2, p. 21, dwell. 131, fam. 148, Conrad Peter household; FHL microfilm 833,775.

17. 1850 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., Town of Chili, p. 307, dwelling 391, family 391, "Conrad" Peters household. Also, 1855 N.Y. census, Monroe Co., pop. sch., Town of Gates, unpaginated, dwell. 15, fam. 20, "Peter Conrad" household; FHL microfilm 833,737. Also, 1860 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., Town of Gates, p. 155, dwell./fam. 1220, Conrad Peters household; NARA microfilm M653, roll 785. Also, 1870 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., Town of Gates (North Chili post office), p. 14, dwell. 108, fam. 107, Conrad Peter household; NARA microfilm M593, roll 971. Also, 1875 N.Y. census, Monroe Co., pop. sch., Town of Gates, p. 23, dwell. 182, fam. 192, Conrad Peters household; FHL microfilm 833,781. Also, 1880 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., Town of Gates, enumeration district (ED) 46, p. 22, [dwell./fam. nos. not given], Conrad Peters household; NARA microfilm T9, roll 861. Also, Monroe County, N.Y., Deed Book 391:474, John H. Martindale estate to Conrad and Catherine Peters; County Clerk's Office, Rochester. Also, Rochester, N.Y., Municipal Archives, marriage, Londo-Hauck, 26 April 1887, roll no. 1, p. 264; database, search terms=Peter Londo, 1876-1907, "Historic Marriage Records Research," *City of Rochester [NY]* (<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/app.aspx?id=8589936475> : accessed 30 May 2010). Also, Rochester, New York, Municipal Archives, marriage, Peters-Reinfeld, 10 August 1877, roll no. 1, p. 278; database, search terms=Jas Peters, 1876-1907, "Historic Marriage Records Research," *City of Rochester [NY]* (<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/app.aspx?id=8589936475> : accessed 30 May 2010). No church marriage for this couple was found. Also, Monroe Co., N.Y., Deed Book 438:437, Conrad and Catherine Peters to George Wick. Also, Monroe Co., N.Y., "A Verified Transcript from the Register of Death," Cath. Peters, 23 January 1890 [no register number]; Monroe County Department of Health, Office of Vital Records, Rochester; copy in author's files. Also, Monroe Co., N.Y., Letters of Administration 9:608, estate of Kate Peters; Surrogate's Court Clerk's Office, Rochester; FHL microfilm 1,004,148. Also, Rochester, New York, Municipal Archives, marriage, Peters-Striegel, 25 October 1892, roll no. 2, p. 43; database, search terms=Bernard Peters, 1876-1907, "Historic Marriage Records Research," *City of Rochester [NY]* (<http://www.cityofrochester.gov/app.aspx?id=8589936475> : accessed 30 May 2010).

18. Katholische Kirche Sinzheim, Taufen (1825), Conrad Peter.

19. In 1850 she is twenty-three. In 1855 she is twenty-nine. In 1860 she is thirty-four. In 1865 she is thirty-nine. In 1870 she is forty-four. In 1875 she is forty-eight. In 1880 she is fifty-four.

Table 1
Census Data for Catherine Peters in Household of Conrad Peters

CENSUS YEAR	AGE	BIRTH YEAR	BIRTHPLACE
1850 ^a	23	1826–27	Germany
1855 ^b	29	1825–26	Germany
1860 ^c	34	1825–26	Biar [Bayem] ^h
1865 ^d	39	1825–26	Bavaria
1870 ^e	44	1825–26	Wurtemberg [sic]
1875 ^f	48	1826–27	Germany
1880 ^g	54	1825–26	Germany

a. 1850 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., population schedule, Town of Chili, p. 307r, dwelling/family 391, “Coonrad” Peters household; microfilm publication M432, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), roll 528.

b. 1855 N.Y. census, Monroe Co., pop. sch., Town of Gates, unpaginated, dwell. 15, fam. 20, “Peter Conrad” household; microfilm 833,737, Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City, Utah. Here Catherine is called his wife.

c. 1860 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., Town of Gates, p. 155, dwell./fam. 1220, Conrad Peters household; NARA microfilm M653, roll 785.

d. 1865 N.Y. census, Monroe Co., Rochester, ward 11, part 2, p. 21, dwell. 131, fam. 148, Conrad Peter household; FHL microfilm 833,775. Here Gertrude is called his wife.

e. 1870 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., Town of Gates (North Chili post office), p. 14, dwell. 108, fam. 107, Conrad Peter household; NARA microfilm M593, roll 971.

f. 1875 N.Y. census, Monroe Co., pop. sch., Town of Gates, p. 23, dwell. 182, fam. 192, Conrad Peters household; FHL microfilm 833,781. Here Catherine is called his wife.

g. 1880 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., Town of Gates, enumeration district 46, p. 22, [dwell./fam. nos. not given], Conrad Peters household; NARA microfilm T9, roll 861. Here she is called his wife.

h. The German place name Bayern (Bavaria) was often phonetically spelled as “Bairn,” “Beirn,” “Byron,” and “Biren” in the United States. On other census pages for the Town of Gates, the same enumerator recorded “Biran” and “Biren” as birthplaces. See Roger P. Minert, *Spelling Variations in German Names: Solving Family History Problems Through Applications of German and English Phonetics* (Provo, Utah: GRT Publications, 2000), 37.

GEORGE EBERLE

On 8 August 1862 in Rochester Conrad Peters and George Eberle were mustered into Company I of the 108th Infantry New York State Volunteers. George was nineteen years old and Conrad thirty-seven.²⁰ George, son of Christopher Eberle and Catherina Kunz, was born 25 March 1843 and baptized

20. Compiled service record, George Eberle, Pvt., Co. I, 108 N.Y. Inf.; Carded Records, Volunteer Organizations, Civil War; Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s–1917, Record Group (RG) 94; NA-Washington. Also, Compiled service record, Conrad Peter, Pvt., Co. I, 108 N.Y. Inf., Civil War, RG 94, NA–Washington.

in St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Rochester.²¹ After 1852, when his mother died, George lived with his father in Gates.²²

The company, raised by Captain William Graebe, comprised primarily German-speaking immigrants from the Rochester area.²³ The unit engaged in some of the war's heaviest fighting. About one-third of the regiment perished in the Battle of Gettysburg.²⁴ George served as an orderly in the battle's aftermath, likely carrying the dead and wounded from the battlefield.²⁵

On 15 May 1864 at Guinea Station, Virginia, Confederates captured George, transferred him to Richmond, and imprisoned him at Andersonville in Georgia.²⁶ For a few months, George endured privations and the scorching Georgia summer. On 6 September 1864 he was admitted to the hospital with "scorbutus" (scurvy), a condition caused by malnutrition.²⁷ He died on 21 October 1864.²⁸

On 31 May 1865 Catherine Peters, presumably Conrad's wife, and others filed a monetary claim based on the death from service-related causes of George

21. St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Baptisms 1:143, George Eberle (1843); FHL microfilm 1,432,393.

22. For George's mother's death, see Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Deaths 2, chronologically arranged, Katharina Eberle, 2 September 1852; FHL microfilm 1,432,395, item 15. For George's residence, see 1855 N.Y. census, Monroe Co., Town of Gates, unpaginated, dwell. 397, fam. 425, Christopher Eberly household; FHL microfilm 833,737. Also, 1860 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., Town of Gates, p. 164, dwell./fam. 1295, Christian Everly household; NARA microfilm M653, roll 785. In 1860 "George Everly," eighteen, was enumerated with "Christian Everly."

23. New York State Adjutant General's Office, *A Record of the Commissioned Officers, Non-commissioned Officers, and Privates of the Regiments Which Were Organized in the State of New York and Called into the Service of the United States to Assist in Suppressing the Rebellion, Caused by the Secession of Some of the Southern States from the Union A.D. 1861, as Taken from the Muster-in Rolls on File in the Adjutant-General's Office*, 8 vols. (Albany: Comstock and Cassidy, 1864–68). For Company I, 108th Regiment, see 4:78.

24. Frederick Phisterer, comp., *New York in the War of the Rebellion 1861–1865*, 3rd ed., 6 vols. (Albany: J. R. Lyon, 1912), 1:311.

25. Extract of Special Order No. 164, 7 July 1863, from Head Quarters 3rd Division 2nd Army Corps, in compiled service record, George Eberle, Private, Co. I, 108th N.Y. Inf., Civil War, RG 94, NA–Washington. In the aftermath of Gettysburg, orderlies transported the wounded and dead or carried messages for Corps staff.

26. Compiled service record, George Eberle, Pvt., Co. I, 108 N.Y. Inf., Civil War, RG 94, NA–Washington.

27. *Selected Records of the War Department Commissary General of Prisoners Relating to Federal Prisoners of War Confined at Andersonville, GA, 1864–65*, microfilm publication M1303, 51 rolls (Washington, D.C.: NARA, 1993), roll 2, for vol. 113, Original Register of Federal Prisoners of War Admitted to the Hospital at Andersonville Prison, Ga., February 1864–April 1865, p. 231, admission no. 11271, George Eberle.

28. *Ibid.*, roll 4, for vol. 42½, Register of Deaths and Burials of Federal Prisoners of War Confined at Andersonville Prison, GA, Sept. 16, 1864–Apr. 28, 1865, p. 74, grave no. 11263, George Everly. Also, Compiled service record, George Eberle, Pvt., Co. I, 108 N.Y. Inf., Civil War, RG 94, NA–Washington.

Eberle.²⁹ The government consequently paid \$191.60 to Alfred G. Mudge on 27 February 1866.³⁰ In the 1860s Mudge was a pension agent, attorney, and judge in Rochester, with an office in the courthouse.³¹ Catherine Peters might have heard of Mudge from an article featuring him as a friend of pensioners and claimants. He helped them navigate federal rules and prepare required paperwork.³²

Catherine Peters based her claim on “An Act to authorize the Employment of Volunteers to aid in enforcing the Laws and protecting Public Property.” Section 6 provided for payment to heirs if a soldier’s death resulted from service:

That any volunteer . . . who may be wounded or otherwise disabled in the service, shall be entitled to the benefits which have been or may be conferred on persons disabled in the regular service, and the widow, if there be one, and if not, the legal heirs of such as die, or may be killed in service, in addition to all arrears of pay and allowances, shall receive the sum of one hundred dollars.³³

George never married and his parents had died by 1865.³⁴ Catherine Peters, as one of his heirs, likely was his sister.³⁵ Unfortunately, the original claim file and letters that might confirm her relationship to George are missing.³⁶

29. George Eberle, Registry of the 108th Regiment Infantry, New York Volunteers; Registers of Settled Claims, compiled 1861–1900, vol. 8, entry 443, Office of the Second Auditor; Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, 1775–1978, RG 217, NA–Washington. George Eberle was erroneously recorded as serving in Co. C of the 108th Infantry. The only Eberle in the 108th regiment was George of Co. I. See National Park Service, “Search Regiments,” database, *Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System* (<http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/regiments.cfm> : accessed 15 November 2011), for search terms Union, New York, 108, Infantry.

30. “Records of Auditors Certificates,” vol. 10, claim no. 208859, Catherine Peters et al.; Numerical Registers of Treasury Certificates Paid, compiled 07/16/1862–08/30/1899, entry 456; RG 217, NA–Washington. The author thanks Angela McGhie for retrieving this record.

31. *Rochester Daily Union City Directory for 1861* (Rochester: Curtis, Butts, 1861), 248. Also, 1860 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., p. 36, dwell. 243, fam. 242, Alfred Mudge; NARA microfilm M653, roll 782. Also, 1865 New York census, Monroe Co., pop. sch., Rochester, ward 1, p. 30, dwell. 169, fam. 179, A. G. Mudge household; FHL microfilm 833,774.

32. “Military Claims,” *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, 21 July 1864, page 2, col. 4.

33. United States Congress, *U.S. Statutes at Large*, vol. 12 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1863), 268–71, “An Act to authorize the Employment of Volunteers to aid in enforcing the Laws and protecting Public Property.”

34. See Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Deaths 2 (1848–1879), chronologically arranged, Christopher Eberle (12 March 1863) and Katharina Eberle (2 September 1852).

35. At this time in New York the property of an intestate without living spouse, issue, or parents was inherited by full-blooded siblings. See “An Act to abolish entails, to confirm conveyances by tenants in tail, to distribute estates real of intestates, to remedy defective conveyances to joint tenants, and directing the mode of such conveyances in future,” in *Laws of the State of New York Passed at the Session of the Legislature Held in the Years 1777, 1778, 1779, 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783 and 1784, Inclusive* (Albany: Weed Parsons, 1886), 1:501–2, Sixth Session, Chapter 2.

36. DeAnne Blanton (Archivist, National Archives, Washington, D.C.) to author, e-mail, 25 May 2010; author’s files.

Table 2
Christopher Eberle Family in Germany and America

BAPTISMAL RECORDS ^a	1850 UNITED STATES CENSUS ^b
Christopher Eberle, b. 14 December 1799*	Christopher Eberte, male, b. 1797–98
Catharina Kunz, b. 12 February 1799	Catharine Eberte, female, b. 1797–98
Elisabeth Eberle, b. 23 March 1825	
Gertrude Eberle, b. 13 February 1827	[married, in Conrad Peters household]
Francis Joseph Eberle, b. 14 September 1829	[died young in Germany ^c]
Francis Eberle, b. 9 July 1832	Fransis [sic] Eberte, male, b. 1831–32
Gertrude Eberle, b. 1 August 1835	Catharine Eberte, female, b. 1834–35
Catharina Eberle, b. 11 January 1838	
George Eberle, b. 25 March 1843	George Eberte, male, b. 1842–43

*A gap in the Waldhambach baptism book exists for years 1798 to 1801, the start of the French Republic's control of civil registration in the Palatinate. Christopher stated in his naturalization papers that he was born on 14 December 1799. See text for reference. The civil record agrees. See Waldhambach, Rheinland-Pfalz [Rhineland-Palatinate], États-civil, birth of Christoph Eberle, 23 Frimaire VIII [14 December 1799]; Verbandsgemeindearchiv [community association archives], Annweiler am Trifels, Germany; copy received 11 August 2010, author's files.

a. With one exception, noted above, these birth dates are from Leimen, Waldhambach, and Rochester Catholic Church baptismal registers. See Leimen Katholische Kirche [Leimen Catholic Church] (Leimen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany), Taufregister [baptismal register], 1785–1804, p. 74, Catharina Kunz (1799); microfilm 400,489, item 1, Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City. Also, Leimen Katholische Kirche, Taufregister, 1803–1856, Elisabetha Eberle (1825), pp. 118–19; FHL microfilm 400,487, item 2. Also, Waldhambach Katholische Kirche [Waldhambach Catholic Church] (Waldhambach, Rheinland-Pfalz), Taufregister, 1735–1858; Gertrude Eberle (1827), p. 92; Francis Joseph Eberle (1829), p. 98; Francis Eberle (1832), p. 106; Gertrude Eberle (1835), p. 114; and Catharina Eberle (1838), p. 121; FHL microfilm 400,459, item 1. Also, St. Joseph Catholic Church (Rochester, N.Y.), Baptisms 1, p. 143, George Eberle (1843); FHL microfilm 1,432,393, item 30.

b. 1850 U.S. census, Monroe Co., New York, pop. sch., Town of Gates, p. 544, dwell./fam. 266, Christopher "Eberte" household; microfilm publication M432, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), roll 528.

c. Waldhambach Katholische Kirche, Sterberegister [death register], 1735–1858, p. 79, Francis Joseph Eberle (1831); FHL microfilm 400,459, item 1.

CHRISTOPHER EBERLE

George's father, Christopher Eberle, had married Catharina Kunz on 9 November 1824 at Leimen, Germany.³⁷ They had six children born in the Palatine villages of Leimen and Waldhambach. See table 2.

Christopher and Elisabeth Eberle (likely his eldest daughter) left the Palatinate and arrived in New York on 30 April 1839.³⁸ The rest of his family may have immigrated in 1841, certainly before 25 March 1843, when Christopher's son George was born in New York State.³⁹

On 4 March 1844 at Rochester Christopher declared his intention to become a citizen. On 3 March 1846 he swore he was a subject of the King of Bavaria and was born in Bavaria on 14 December 1799. He declared that he arrived in New York on 29 April 1839, a near date-match to the ship manifest.⁴⁰

Leaving no will or probate, Christopher died in Monroe County on 12 March 1863.⁴¹ He owned no land at his death, and land records do not identify his heirs. In 1852 and 1859 he bought and sold his only real estate.⁴²

The Same Couple?

Christopher Eberle and Catharina Kunz of Leimen and Waldhambach apparently headed a Monroe County family in 1850. See table 2. The family composition is consistent between the Palatinate and New York with three explainable exceptions:

37. Leimen Katholische Kirche [Leimen Catholic Church] (Leimen, Rhineland-Palatinate), Heiratsregister [marriage register], 1803–1856, p. 500, Christopher Eberle and Catharina Kunz (1824); Stadtarchiv Speyer, Speyer, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany; FHL microfilm 400,487, item 2.

38. *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820–1897*, microfilm publication M237, 675 rolls (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1962), roll 38, for manifest, 30 April 1839, *Silvie de Grasse*, Havre to New York, p. 3, line 20, for Christoph Eberle, and p. 1, line 42, for Elisabeth Eberle.

39. For the 1841 immigration of Francis Eberle, Gertrude Eberle's probable brother, see 1900 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., Rochester, ED 124, sheet 1B, dwell. 14, fam. 16, Frank Ebble household; NARA microfilm T623, roll 1077.

40. Monroe Co., N.Y., Naturalization Petitions, 1823–1906, box 1895, Christopher Ebele; Courthouse, Rochester; FHL microfilm 980,260.

41. Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Deaths 2, Christopher Eberle (12 March 1863). Also, Monroe Co., Probate Index, 1821–1970, E–J; County Clerk's Office, Rochester; FHL microfilm 833,794.

42. Monroe Co., Deed Book 106:33, Childs to Eberle; FHL microfilm 825,865. Also, *ibid.*, 154:174, Eberle to Schaefer; FHL microfilm 825,890.

1. Elisabeth Eberle, born in 1825, is absent from the 1850 Christopher “Eberte” household in Gates. She may have died or was living under a married surname.
2. Catharina Eberle, born in 1838, also is missing from the 1850 household. Emigrating as a young child, she may have died en route. No death record appears in Waldhambach, Leimen, or Rochester Catholic registers.⁴³
3. Gertrude Eberle, born in 1835, corresponds to *Catharine* in the census. As *Gertrude*, she died in 1850.⁴⁴

Further Supporting Evidence for the Same Man

Christopher used a variation of the Current script taught in Germanic areas during the 1700s and 1800s.⁴⁵ His signature appears on European and American documents spanning thirty-five years. Nearly identical in letter forms, size, and slope, they support the conclusion that the man from Leimen and Waldhambach settled in Monroe County. See figure 1.

Merging Identities: Catherine Peters of Monroe County and Gertrude Eberle of Germany

Conrad Peters’s wife, Catherine alias Gertrude, fits into the Christopher Eberle family as the child Gertrude, born 13 February 1827. Catherine Peters was born between 1825 and 1827. Her birth date, birthplace, religion, and baptismal name mesh with the child born in Waldhambach. Gertrude was the forename of her baptismal sponsor in Waldhambach.⁴⁶ No evidence conflicts with a conclusion that the adult Catherine Peters was the Waldhambach child Gertrude Eberle.

43. No Eberle child’s death is recorded in the Waldhambach or Leimen Catholic Church death registers from 1838 to 1843. See Waldhambach Katholische Kirche [Waldhambach Catholic Church] (Waldhambach, Rhineland-Palatinate), Sterberegister [death register], 1735–1858; Stadtarchiv Speyer; FHL microfilm 400,459, item 1. Also, Leimen Katholische Kirche, Sterberegister, 1804–1856. No Eberle child’s death appears in Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church death book or St. Joseph’s Catholic Church death book from 1839 to June 1850. See Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Deaths 1 (1848–1861). Also, St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, Deaths 1 (1836–1850); FHL microfilm 1,432,394.

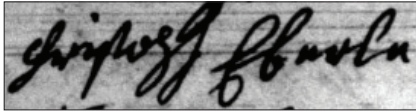
44. Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Deaths 1, chronologically arranged, Gertrude Eberle (26 July 1850); FHL microfilm 1,432,395.

45. Roger P. Minert, *Deciphering Handwriting in German Documents: Analyzing German, Latin, and French in Vital Records Written in Germany* (Woods Cross, Utah: GRT, 2001), 4–6.

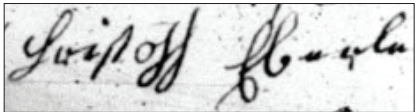
46. Waldhambach Katholische Kirche, Taufregister [baptismal register], 1735–1858, p. 92, Gertrude Eberle (1827). Gertrude Kugle[r] was the sponsor. The child’s forename was often chosen to honor the godparent. See Brandt et al., *Germanic Genealogy*, 49.

Figure 1

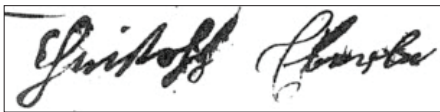
Signatures of “Christoph” Eberle of Germany and America



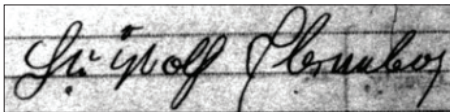
9 November 1824
Leimen, Palatinate (marriage)^a



14 September 1829
Waldhambach, Palatinate
(baptism of son)^b



3 March 1846
Rochester, New York
(oath of allegiance)^c



17 November 1859
Gates, New York (deed)^d

Note: “Christoph” is the German spelling of the male given name Christopher. See Ernest Thode, *German-English Genealogical Dictionary* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1992), 45. See also pp. xii–xiii for an alphabet of German handwriting examples.

a. Leimen Katholische Kirche [Leimen Catholic Church] (Leimen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany), Heiratsregister [marriage register], 1803–1856, p. 500 [p. 34 crossed out], Christopher Eberle and Catharina Kunz marriage (1824); Stadtarchiv Speyer, Germany; microfilm 400,487, item 2, Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City.

b. Waldhambach Katholische Kirche [Waldhambach Catholic Church] (Waldhambach, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany), Taufregister [baptismal register], 1735–1858, p. 98, Francis Joseph Eberle baptism (1829); Stadtarchiv Speyer; FHL microfilm 400,459, item 1.

c. Monroe Co., N.Y., Naturalization Petitions, 1823–1906, box no. 1895, Christopher “Ebele” oath of allegiance, 3 March 1846; Courthouse, Rochester; FHL microfilm 980,260.

d. Monroe Co., Deed Book 154:174, Christopher Eberle to Christian Schaefer; County Clerk’s Office, Rochester; FHL microfilm 825,890.

CONNECTIONS AND PARALLELS

If a child died young or if a name was particularly important to a family, parents might christen a later child with the same name to ensure that special

names were carried on.⁴⁷ Christopher Eberle named two sons Francis and two daughters Gertrude. Conrad named two sons Francis Joseph.⁴⁸

Christopher's children were baptized with one name and used another call name.⁴⁹ Conrad and Catherine Peters also followed this tradition. The priest baptized Conrad's last son as "Pancratius" in 1870, but he was known as "Bernard" or "Barney."⁵⁰

From 1850 to 1860 the Christopher Eberle family lived in the Town of Gates, the same town as the Conrad Peters family, or nearby.⁵¹ Francis "Frank" Eberle, probable son of Christopher Eberle, lived within two miles of Conrad's family from 1865 onward.⁵² In 1847 Francis Joseph Eberle sponsored the baptism

47. For discussion of children in a family with the same given name, see Larry O. Jensen, *A Genealogical Handbook of German Research*, 2 vols. (Pleasant Grove, Utah: Jensen, 1983), 2:164–65. See, also, Kenneth L. Smith, *German Church Books: Beyond the Basics* (1989; reprint, Rockland, Maine: Picton, 2009), 116–25.

48. For children's births in the Christopher and Catharina (Kunz) Eberle family, see table 2. For Conrad and Catherine (Eberle) Peters's sons Francis Joseph, see Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Baptisms 1:29, Francis Joseph Peter (1847), and 1:68, Francis Joseph Peter (1851); FHL microfilm 1,432,394, item 22.

49. For discussion of multiple given names, see Kevan M. Hansen, *Finding Your German Ancestors: A Beginner's Guide* (Orem, Utah: Ancestry, 1999), 25.

50. For the baptism, see Holy Family Catholic Church (Rochester), Baptisms 1:52, Pancratius Peter (1870). His sponsor was Pancratius Köhler. Also, 1880 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., Town of Gates, ED 46, p. 21, lines 21–26 (no other numbers), "Barney" Peters in Conrad Peters household; NARA microfilm T9, roll 861. Also, Holy Family Catholic Church, Confirmations (1864–1946), 1884 Boys, p. 35, line 52, Bernard Peters; FHL microfilm 1,432,393, item 9. Also, Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church (Rochester), Marriages 3, chronologically arranged, 1892, no. 34, Bernard Peters and Catharine Striegel (25 October 1892); FHL microfilm 1,432,395, item 9.

51. 1850 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., Town of Gates, p. 544, dwell./fam. 266, Christopher Eberle household. Also, 1855 New York census, Monroe Co., pop. sch., Town of Gates, unpaginated, dwell. 397, fam. 425, Christopher Eberly household. Also, 1860 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., Town of Gates, p. 164, dwell./fam. 1295, Christian Everly household.

52. Except for 1869, Frank Eberle appears in Rochester City directories from 1867 through 1902, where his 1901 death is noted. See *The Rochester Directory* (Rochester: publishers vary), for 1867, p. 76; and 1868, p. 132. Also, *ibid.*, 20 (1869): 72, 21 (1870): 71, 22 (1871): 82, 23 (1872): 91, 24 (1873): 102, 25 (1874): 102, 26 (1875): 107, 27 (1876): 110, 28 (1877): 109, 29 (1878): 111, 30 (1879): 131, 31 (1880): 134, 32 (1881): 139, 33 (1882): 147, 34 (1883): 153, 35 (1884): 188, 36 (1885): 159, 37 (1886): 162, 38 (1887): 164, 39 (1888): 174, 40 (1889): 178, 41 (1890): 182, 42 (1891): 189, 43 (1892): 201, 44 (1893): 200, 45 (1894): 205, 46 (1895): 209, 47 (1896): 214, 48 (1897): 218, 49 (1898): 223, 50 (1899): 229, 51 (1900): 232, 52 (1901): 242, and [53] (1902): 236. For images, see "Rochester City Directories by Decade," *Monroe County Library System* (<http://www3.libraryweb.org/lh.aspx?id=1105> : accessed 16 November 2011). Also, 1865 N.Y. census, Monroe Co., pop. sch., Rochester, ward 1, part 2, p. 29, dwell. 186, fam. 214, Francis Eberle household. Also, 1870 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., Rochester, ward 11, pp. 16–17, dwell. 113, fam. 122, Frank "Eberley" household; NARA microfilm M593, roll 970. Also, 1880 U.S. census, Monroe Co., N.Y., pop. sch., Rochester, ED 98, p. 3, dwell. 23, fam. 28, Frank "Ebbly" household; NARA microfilm T9, roll 864.

of Francis Joseph Peters, Conrad Peters's son.⁵³ Again in 1851 Francis acted as sponsor for Conrad's second child named Francis Joseph Peters.⁵⁴

In 1853 Christopher Eberle sponsored the baptism of George Peters, son of Conrad Peters and Gertrude Eberle.⁵⁵ Christopher also was a church associate of Theodore Peters, Conrad's father.⁵⁶

CONFLICTING EVIDENCE

Waldhambach's civil registrations for 1816 to 1833 apparently were destroyed during World War II. Only a name register, containing forename, family name, and date, survives. Its one-line entry for Gertrauth Eberle, born on 14 February 1827, differs by one day from Gertrude Eberle's baptismal record and includes a notation she died the same day.⁵⁷ If Gertrude Eberle died at birth in Germany, how could she have become Conrad Peters's wife? Waldhambach's priest would have recorded that death, but he recorded only Gertrude's baptism.

Another entry in the baptismal register provides a plausible explanation. The entry following Gertrude's documents the death of John Bibus, the Waldhambach schoolmaster who died 26 February 1827 and was buried 28 February 1827.⁵⁸ Cross-referencing the unusual baptismal-register burial entry, the priest inserted a marginal comment between burial-register entries.⁵⁹ If the priest's note was made first, this record-keeping anomaly may have confused the civil registrar. Thinking the priest's notation of John Bibus's death pertained to Gertrude, he may have made an erroneous civil-record entry.

CONCLUSION

No single document from Monroe County names the parents of Conrad Peters's wife, Gertrude "Catherine" Eberle. An understanding of Germanic customs, research into her husband's associates, and evidence from a range of sources solve the mystery of her parentage. Excepting an explainable conflict, evidence agrees that Conrad's wife was daughter of Christopher Eberle and Catharina Kunz from the Palatinate.

53. Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Baptisms 1:29, Francis Joseph Peter (1847).

54. *Ibid.*, 1:68, Francis Joseph Peter (1851).

55. *Ibid.*, 1:100, George Peter (1853).

56. Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Deaths 2:4, account entries, Christopher Eberle, and 2:13, Theodore Peter.

57. Rolf Übel (Archivist, Verbandsgemeindearchiv [community association archives], Annweiler am Trifels, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany) to author, e-mail, 3 August 2010; author's files. Also, Rolf Übel, interview by author, 3 August 2010 and 17 August 2010; notes in author's files.

58. Waldhambach Katholische Kirche, Taufregister, p. 92, John Bibus (1827); FHL microfilm 400,459.

59. Waldhambach Katholische Kirche, Sterberegister, p. 525, marginal note for John Bibus (1827).