

Chapter 2

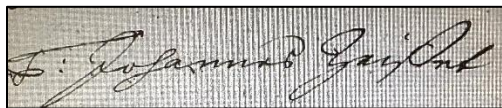
Zeissets of the 19th Century

This chapter begins with Johannes, the grandson of Abraham Zeisset, Sr., discussed in the previous chapter. We will learn about all Johannes' children, and then return to the firstborn, Jakob, the ancestor of our six Zeisset siblings. We will follow their moves through Menzingen and Sindolsheim before arriving in Kreuzfeld.

Since we will see more emigration to America, it should be noted that name spellings are Americanized, removing the umlaut marks (two little dots over vowels). Also, Johann and Johannes are two different names in Germany.

Johannes Zeisset (1794–1855) – direct line

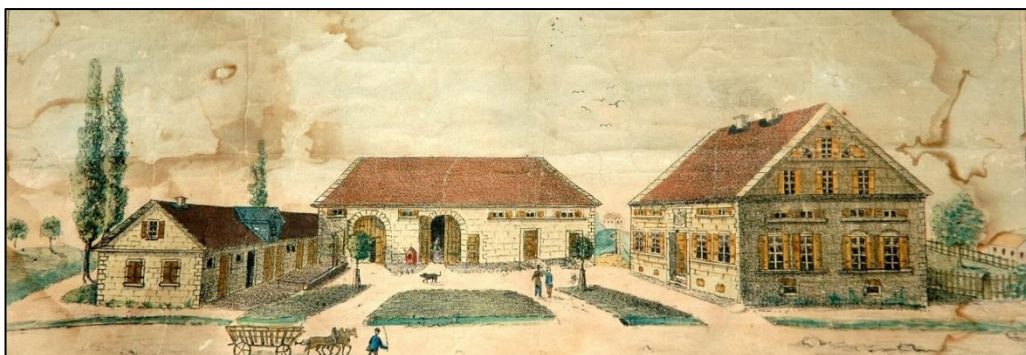
We know Johannes was born at Lautenbach, where some of the extended Zeisset family moved around 1778. Jakob was his father, and Magdalena Plestcher was his mother. His father died in 1813, when Johannes was 19 years old. This is where our story begins.



Johannes Zeisset's signature 1815

Johannes paid a tax of 22 florins in lieu of military duty in February 1815. Because he was under 25 years of age, he was prohibited from marrying unless he paid a redemption fee for mandatory military service. Twenty-two florins

was a hefty fee, perhaps worth as much as one year's wages, but he was about to be married. He had to petition the district administration at Neckarsulm to admit his bride because she was coming from different district, Dammhof near Eppingen.



Artist's rendering of the Dammhof, not dated. Source: Elaine Baer, Riley, Kansas 2002

Johannes married Christina Bär in April 1815 at Lautenbach. Christina was born in 1798, at Dammhof, to Matthäus Bär and Barbara Schmutz. Christina was a sister of Barbara Bär who married Georg Zeisset, ancestor of the Pennsylvania Zeissets.



Location of Dammhof in relation to Rauhof and Oedheim

The Bär family has been well documented by other researchers. They came to Ittlingen, Germany, around 1650, from Hausen, Canton Zürich, Switzerland. They were trying to escape persecution since they were also Mennonites. They have been traced back to the mid-16th century. For this chapter, the focus remains on the Zeisset family.

After Johannes and Christina married, Johannes continued to farm at Lautenbach. He probably farmed with his brother, Abraham, until Abraham's death in 1817 at 30 years of age.

Johannes and Christina had five children while living at Lautenbach. Their first child was born in 1816 and was named Jakob. He would become the grandfather of our six Zeisset siblings. Johannes and Christina had a daughter, Magdalena, born in 1819.

Several Zeisset families moved to Menzingen around 1823 to rent a different farm. To make matters more confusing, one of the other Zeissets was named Johann (1786–1825), a first cousin of Johannes (1794–1855). Menzingen is now a district within the municipality of Kraichtal since 1971.

The first Zeisset event reported in Menzingen church records was the death of twins born to Johann (1786–1825) and his wife Magdalena in February 1824.

The Zeisset family suffered several deaths in 1825. Johannes and Christina's fourth child, Catharina, died at Menzingen in January 1825, shortly after her fourth birthday. Cousin Johannes (1786) died in May 1825, and then another cousin,

Isaak (1801), died in July 1825. Johannes and Christina's sixth child, the first of their children born at Menzingen, died in September 1825.



Kraichtal – Menzingen in the lower left corner. Lautenbach, south of Oedheim is shown in the upper right corner.

So many deaths in a short period of time must have been discouraging to the Zeissets in their new home. When Johann (1786) and Isaak (1801) died, not only did the family lose the provider, but the farm lost a worker. Johannes' mother, Magdalena Pletscher Zeisset, died at Menzingen in February 1826.

In addition to the five children born at Lautenbach, Johannes and Christina had seven children while living at Menzingen, but the first three died within a few months of birth. Finally, a daughter, Barbara, born in 1828, became the couple's fourth child to survive infancy. Three more sons were born, Matthäus (1830), Johann (1833), and Abraham (1838).

The Menzingen Estate



**Zeisset family members
at the Menzingen Water Castle 2006**

We visited the ruins of the *Wasserschloss*, or water castle, at Menzingen on the Zeisset Family Tour to Germany in 2006. We were told the Zeisset family farmed the grounds belonging to a Baron who owned the castle, and that the Zeissets lived in the building immediately in front of the castle.

A brief history of the *Evangelische Kirche* of Menzingen published in 1998 reported a population of 1,500

residents in the mid-19th century. Of these, there were only seven Catholics, 100 Jews, and 32 Mennonites. Most of the Mennonites were Zeissets.

Mennonite families known to live at the Menzingen farm during these years were: Johannes and Christina Zeisset; Johann Zeisset's (1786) family – his widow, Magdalena Schmutz, who married Samuel Dürstein a year after Johann's death; Isaak Zeisset's widow Elisabetha Hege, who married Daniel Bähr in 1828 and remained in Menzingen; and Samuel Brand and his wife, Barbara Kaufmann.

Johannes and Christina's oldest son, Jakob, married Johanna Epp at Menzingen in 1838. They were the grandparents of our six Zeisset siblings. Before that story is told, the other children of Johannes and Christina Zeisset will be summarized because of their connections to other branches of our Zeisset tree.

Johannes Zeisset (1794–1855) and Christina Bär (1798–1866)

Jakob (1816–1861) and Johanna Epp (1817–1889)

Grandparents of our six Zeisset siblings

Magdalena (1819–1884) and Matthäus Bär (1809–1859)

Bär family at Niedersteinach; Baer family in Kansas

Barbara (1828–1884) and Jakob Schmutz (1817–1885)

Parents of John Schmutz at Junction City, Kansas

Matthäus (1830 – 1896) and Friederica Ribstein (1831 –1869)

Direct line of Raphael Zeisset

Johann (1833–1878) and Jakobina Behr (1833–1901)

Direct line of Illinois Zeisset family

Magdalena Zeisset Bär

The second surviving child of Johannes and Christina Zeisset was Magdalena (1819–1884). She will be mentioned in our history as the mother of the Bärs at Niedersteinach, some of whom immigrated to Kansas.

Magdalena was born in Lautenbach in 1819 and moved with her parents and brother to Menzingen around 1823. She married Matthäus Bär at Menzingen in 1839. They immediately made their home at Niedersteinach.

Matthäus Bär was born in 1809 at Dammhof, an estate nine miles east of Menzingen. Niedersteinach was quite a bit farther away from Menzingen – 87 miles northeast. Magdalena Zeisset Bär's mother, Christina Bär, was also born at Dammhof, but the two were not related. Magdalena and Matthäus lived at Niedersteinach the rest of their lives. Niedersteinach will become more important to our Zeisset family later.

Barbara Zeisset Schmutz

Barbara (1828–1884) was the third living child of Johannes and Christina Zeisset. She was born at Menzingen and married Jakob Schmutz at Streichenberg in 1850, a castle south of Sinsheim. The 2006 Zeisset Tour participants may remember it as a place we were unable to visit because of pouring rain.

Barbara and Jakob Schmutz settled in Obersteinach, very near Barbara's sister Magdalena at Niedersteinach. Only four of Barbara and Jakob's nine children survived childhood. Their son, John Schmutz, immigrated to Kansas in 1883. He settled in Dickinson County, later moving to Junction City, where he died in 1924. John Schmutz married a widow named Sophia in 1884, shortly after his arrival in Junction City. This couple did not have children.

Barbara and Jakob's oldest daughter, Christina Schmutz, married Heinrich Kaufmann and remained in Germany as did her younger sister, Anna, who married Christian Landes. This couple lived, at least for a short time, at Niedersteinach. Barbara Zeisset and Jakob Schmutz lived the rest of their lives in Obersteinach. Barbara died in 1884 and her husband, Jakob, died in 1885.

Matthäus Zeisset

Johannes and Christina Zeisset's second son was named Matthäus. He was born in Menzingen in December 1830 and married Friederica Ribstein, also of Menzingen, in 1857. This couple is the **ancestral line of Raphael Zeisset**, our German cousin, whom many of us met on the Zeisset tour in 2006.

Matthäus and Friederica had ten children, but only two survived infancy – a daughter named Friederika (1860–1928) who later married Heinrich Bär (1847–1921), and a son, Matthäus Zeisset (1868–1938).

Of special interest regarding the daughter, Friederika (1860–1928), is a 1926 letter she wrote to Anna Baer Bletscher in Leonardville, Kansas. She talks about some of the history pertaining to this Bär line. Friederika and Heinrich Bär never had children together, but Friederika was a beloved stepmother to Heinrich's children by his first wife.

Friederica Ribstein Zeisset died two days after twin sons were born in May 1869. Her husband, Matthäus Zeisset (1830–1896), then married Magdalena Funk in 1870, and this couple had five more children, with three who survived childhood: Heinrich (1873–1903), Jakob (1878–1971), and Barbara (1881–1976), who married Friedrich Dürstein.

Matthäus Zeisset moved with his family to Laudenberg, Germany, between 1869 and 1871 and then to Hohenlindenhof in 1879. Hohenlindenhof is only a short distance from Überlingen, a town on Lake Constance.

Matthäus and Friederica Zeisset's son, Matthäus, married Christina Horsch at Daisbach, Baden, Germany in 1895. Matthäus Zeisset, Sr., died in Hohenlindenhof in 1896 and his wife, Magdalena, died in 1903.

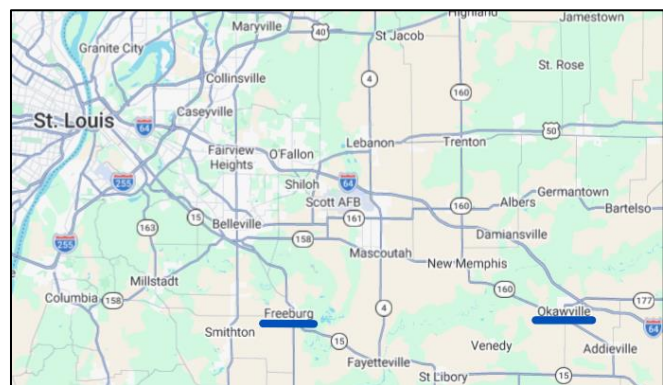
Johann Zeisset – ancestor of the Illinois Zeissets

The third son of Johannes Zeisset and his wife Christina Bär was Johann (John) (1833–1878), born at Menzingen. I previously reported that Johann Zeisset arrived in the United States on the 9th of August 1854 aboard the *SS Carolus Magnus*, but this was incorrect. We know John married Jacobina Carolina Frederika Behr of Beilstein, Germany (about 40 miles east of Menzingen), on July 10, 1853, in Belleville, St. Clair County, Illinois. He will be referred to as John in Illinois.

The mystery of John's arrival has been solved. Frederika was the only member of her family to emigrate, so I looked for her in the ship records. Frederika Behr was listed as a 19-year-old male, traveling with 19-year-old Joh. Zeisset, listed as a female, on the *SS St. Petersburg*, arriving in New Orleans, Louisiana on November 6, 1852.

"Joh. Zeisset" was mentioned in a May 1853 New Orleans newspaper on a list of German letters at the post office. Interestingly, his marriage to Frederika Behr in Illinois was reported in a Würzburg, Germany newspaper in October 1853, along with four other German couples who were married in Belleville, Illinois.

The John Zeisset family is listed in the 1860 Federal census in Freeburg, St. Clair County, Illinois. Freeburg is 23 miles southeast of St. Louis, Missouri. Two sons, William and Frank, were listed on the census. William John Zeisset was born in Freeburg, St. Clair County, Illinois, in February 1857. He married Mary Hoffart in Clinton County, Illinois and this couple had twelve children. Many Zeisset descendants remained



Section of Missouri and Illinois map showing Freeburg and Okawville, Illinois

in Clinton County, Illinois. The son listed as Frank was Phillip Zeisset who married Caroline Koester, moved into St. Louis, and had three children. Phillip and Caroline both died in St. Louis.

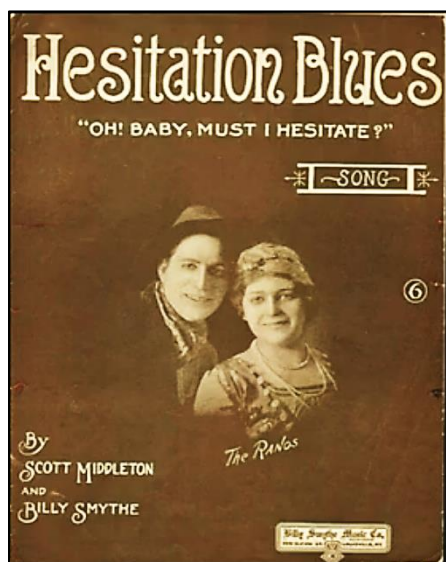
The 1870 census listed John Zieser at Freeburg with his wife, Frederika, and their five children: Henry, John, Phillip, George, Helena, and William. George was born in 1863 but died in 1873.

John Zeisset, died in Okawville, Washington County, Illinois in 1878, from meningitis. Frederika remarried Jacob Lehr sometime over the next two years. She survived her second husband and died in St. Louis, Missouri on the 16th of June 1901, where she lived with her daughter, Magdalena. The name Magdalena was often shortened to Lena, as was the case here.

The 1900 census lists the number of children born to each woman and lists the number of living children. Frederika reported seven children, with four living in 1900. The four surviving were John, Phillip, Lena and one other. Lena's son became famous in music circles, so his story is told in the following section.

Billy Smythe, Famous Blues Musician

Magdalena, daughter of John and Frederika Zeisset, was born in 1865 in Freeburg and married Charles Schmitt in St. Louis in 1884. Charles was born in Erie, Pennsylvania and moved to St. Louis where he first worked for the railroad. He eventually became a factory watchman.



The Schmitts lived their married life in St. Louis where they raised six children: Mae, William, Albert, Charles, Edna, and Helen. The father, Charles, died in St. Louis in 1933, while Magdalena lived until 1947. She died in Rockbridge, Illinois where she lived with her older daughter.

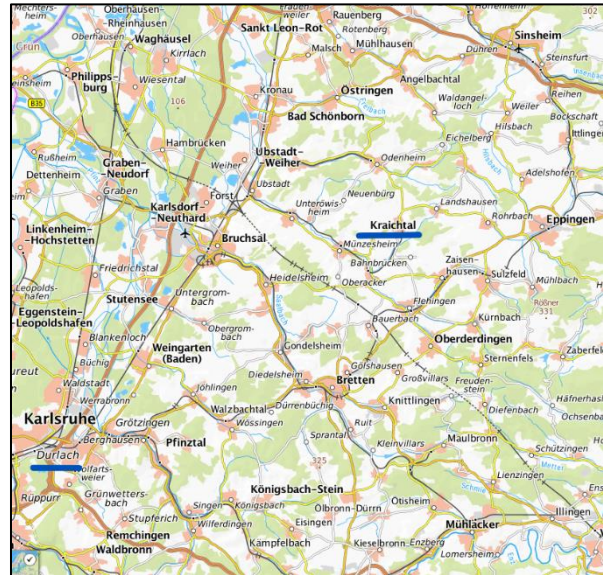
The Schmitts' oldest son, William, gained some fame as a piano player in St. Louis. He changed his name to Billy Smythe and married Edith Middleton in 1910. She was also a musician, as was her brother Scott. They moved to Louisville, Kentucky where Billy became a composer and music publisher. He played and wrote ragtime and blues music, the most famous being "Hesitation Blues," which he wrote with Art Gillham and Scott Middleton. "Hesitation Blues" has its own Wikipedia page!

There is a long list of artists who have performed the piece, including Willie Nelson, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Janis Joplin, and many others.

Billy moved to San Antonio, Texas around 1934 where he managed and later owned a radio station. He and his wife were divorced before 1940. He died in Corpus Christi, Texas in 1972.

Abraham, youngest son of Johannes and Christina

The fourth son of Johannes Zeisset and Christina Bär was named **Abraham**, born in Menzingen in 1838 and married Magdalena Schenkel in Durlach, Baden, Germany in 1868. Abraham was a citizen of Durlach, a town just outside of the city of Karlsruhe. He lived in Karlsruhe for the duration of his married life and worked there as a *Kutscher*, or coachman. Abraham and his wife, Magdalena, had three daughters and one son, all born in Karlsruhe, but only one of these children survived. The daughter, Maria, was born in 1870, married in 1894, but died when she was only 32 years of age in Durlach. Abraham (1838) also died young, in Karlsruhe in 1881 –



Map showing location of Durlach and Menzingen (Kraichtal), underlined in blue

so he was only 42 years old at the time of his death. Abraham and his wife were members of the Protestant church. Abraham even departed from the naming patterns of the past and named his son, Theodor, but he lived only one and a half years so the Zeisset name from this line ended with the death of Abraham in 1881. Other Zeisset descendants would live in this area in coming years.

With Johannes and Christina's other children summarized, the story returns to their firstborn son, Jakob, whose descendants became central to the Kansas branch of the family.

Jakob Zeisset (1816–1861) – direct line

Johannes and Christina's firstborn, Jakob Zeisset, was born a little over a year after they were married. He would become the grandfather of our six Zeisset siblings. Jakob was born at Lautenbach in 1816 and moved with the family to Menzingen when he was 7 years old. Jakob was a farmer, like his father.

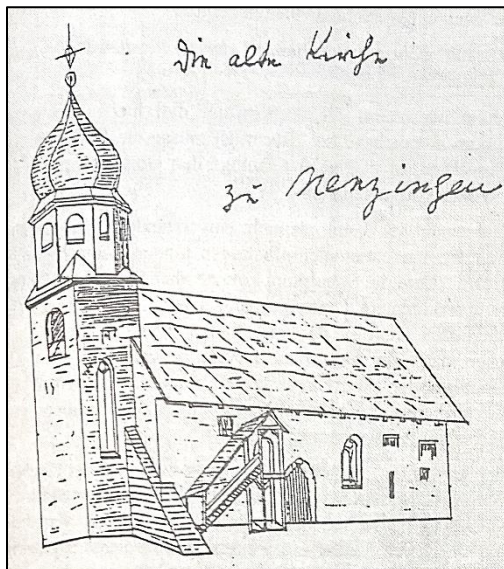
Birth of Jakob Friedrich Zeisset – direct line

Menzingen church records documented the birth of Jakob Friedrich Epp to Johanna Epp on May 30, 1837, with his baptism the following day by the Lutheran pastor, who noted that the infant was illegitimate (*unehelich*). Nine of 62 births in Menzingen in 1837 were illegitimate.

Over a year later there is an entry in the church record, in smaller writing, stating that Jakob Zeisset freely and willingly, with confirmation by Johanna Epp, explained that he was the father of Jakob Friedrich and wants his last name to be changed to Zeisset. The entry was signed by both parents and two sponsors on September 13, 1838. Jakob Friedrich was the only one of Jakob and Johanna's children to be baptized as an infant. Remember that Mennonites did not believe in infant baptism but instead baptized their children around 12–14 years of age.

Occasional illegitimate births were noted among Mennonites but seemed to be less common than among Protestant and Catholic families. In this case, Jakob was noted to be a Mennonite, while Johanna was *evangelisch*, or Lutheran. Jakob and Johanna were married by the Lutheran pastor on November 4, 1838. Their wedding date was previously listed as October 16, but that was the date of the marriage permit. Jakob was 22 when he was married, and Johanna was 21.

Johanna Luise Epp (1817–1889)



Old Menzingen Church

Source: 1848-1998 church history

Johanna would become the grandmother of our six Zeisset siblings. Her father's family had lived in Menzingen for many years. Her ancestral Epp line can be traced back to the mid-1600s in Menzingen.

Johanna's father, Bernard Friedrich Epp (1790–1840), was a tax collector. Her mother, Catherine Friederika Grudina (1787–1826), was born in Michelfeld, 15 miles north of Menzingen. The last name was also sometimes spelled Krutina. Johanna's father remarried after his first wife died in 1826 and had seven more children with his second wife. Johanna's younger brother, Friedrich Epp, immigrated to New York in 1847. Her sister, Louisa, married and remained in Menzingen.

It is interesting to note that the surname Epp is associated with Mennonite families, however, Johanna's lineage was evangelical since the time of the Lutheran reformation. During Johanna's youth, it was physically dangerous for members of the congregation to attend church services because of the poor condition of the 300-year-old church. The side had collapsed and the tower was cracked. A new church was completed in 1848 after more than a decade of disputes between the church and the local nobility. For a time, the church met in the town hall.

Johanna and Jakob's Children

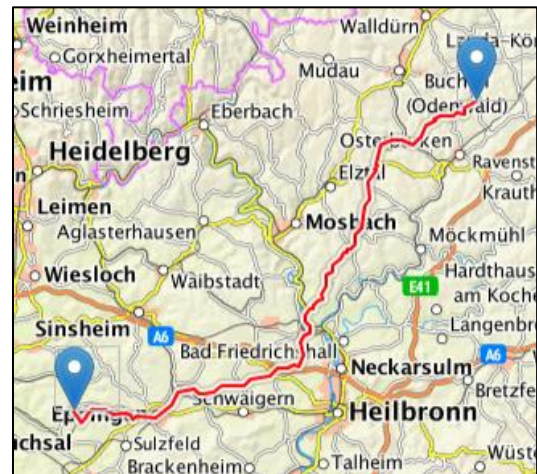
A second son, Isaak, was born to Johanna and Jakob Zeisset in March 1839. They were married by the time of his birth. Because Jakob and both sponsors were Mennonite, Isaak was not baptized at birth. The pastor noted that the mother was "on the other hand" Protestant.

Johannes was the third son born to Johanna and Jakob, on December 29, 1841. The two sponsors were Protestant this time, but Johannes was also not baptized at birth. A daughter, Barbara Friederika, was born in September 1844, but lived only a month. A son, Friedrich, was born in June 1846, and died 11 days later. Then Daniel was born on November 27, 1848. Magdalena would be born at their next home in 1854.

Move to Sindolsheim

Records indicate that Jakob's father, Johannes Zeisset, rented an estate at Menzingen from Candlemas 1833 to Candlemas 1851, eighteen years. Candlemas, also called Lichtmess, is a religious observation on the second of February, forty days after the birth of Jesus, recognizing the ritual purification of His mother, Mary, and the presentation of Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem. There is an old German proverb "The badger peeps out of his hole on Candlemas Day, and when he finds snow walks abroad; but if he sees the sun shining, he draws back into his hole." In America, this day is recognized as Groundhog Day.

One record indicated that Jakob Zeisset bought property at Menzingen after the lease ended in 1851. The Zeissets left Menzingen sometime between February 1851 and 1854 for Helmstheim, where we found the family next in 1854. Menzingen and Helmstheim



One route between Menzingen and Sindolsheim (upper right)

were about 50 miles apart.

Helmstheim is a farm 2 miles northeast of the village of Sindolsheim. The Helmstheimerhof, owned by the Barons of Löwenstein-Wertheim-Rosenberg, was a sizable estate and among the buildings were the house, barns, stalls, blacksmith shop, distillery and a pub, the Wirtshaus zum Golden Pflug. The Zeiset family lived at Helmstheimerhof where Jakob was a tenant farmer, but only for a brief time. The resident of the Helmstheim farm showed me a photograph of the farm from 1854, shown below, when I visited the farm in 2004.



Map of the Helmstheim farm in 1854

Jakob and Johanna's only surviving daughter, Magdalena, was born at Helmstheim on December 28, 1854. Her birth record stated Jakob was a citizen of Menzingen and a tenant at Helmstheim. Shortly after Magdalena's birth, the family moved to Sindolsheim, 62 miles northeast of Menzingen.

Jakob Zeisset (1816–1861) and Johanna Epp (1817–1889)

1. Jakob Friedrich (1837) and Margaretha Müller (1842)
Parents of our six Zeisset siblings
2. Isaak (1839) and Bertha Hettinger (1843)
3. Johannes (1841) and Elisabetha Bär (1845)
7. Magdalena (1854) and Johann Belzner (1846)
Ancestors of Maria Trepp

Records at the Neuenstein Archive indicate the Zeissets lived at *Schlossgut Sindolsheim* – the farm of the Sindolsheim castle. This castle is a large, long building at the bottom of the street leading to the church. After a devastating fire in

1801, the castle was rebuilt and still stands today with four different living quarters, so four families can occupy the building.

Johannes Zeisset, Jakob's father, died on April 30, 1855, soon after moving to Sindolsheim. He was 60 years old. Johannes was buried at Sindolsheim and interestingly, the pastor did not record him as being a Mennonite.

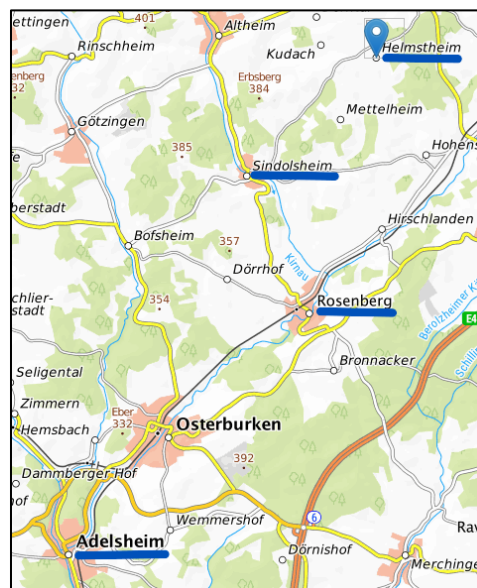
The Sindolsheim *Heimatbuch* – a local history book published by most German towns and villages, listed the population of Sindolsheim for various years. The first Mennonites were noted in the 1845 report, with only seven people, out of a total population of 712. There were 70 Jews living in Sindolsheim at this time. Interestingly, only two Catholics were noted. The Mennonite family living in Sindolsheim in 1845 was Jakob Frey, with his second wife, Elisabetha Bechtel, and their children. Most of the Frey family remained in Sindolsheim.



Sindolsheim Castle 2008
Zeisset family lived in one of the sections

The Sindolsheim Mennonite population reported in 1855 had risen to sixteen, which now included the Zeisset family – Christina (Johannes was likely dead by the time the population was counted), Jakob and Johanna, and their five children. By 1865, the number of Mennonites was down to eight – the Zeisset family left in 1863.

Jakob was only 45 years old when he died six years after his father, Johannes. His death occurred on September 8, 1861, and he was listed as a Mennonite. Both Jakob and his father, Johannes, were buried at the church cemetery in Sindolsheim. Now there were two Zeisset widows with the family group – Christina, widow of Johannes, and Johanna, widow of Jakob.



**Map showing Helmstheim,
Sindolsheim, Rosenberg, and
Adelsheim, top to bottom.**

The Zeisset tenancy of the Sindolsheim estate ended on *Lichtmess* February 1863. The Zeissets, except for Isaak, moved to Rosenberg, a small town about three miles south of Sindolsheim, where Johanna purchased a home.

Isaak Zeisset, Jakob and Johanna's second son, was the first of Jakob and Johanna's children to marry. He was listed as a *Landwirt* – farmer and Mennonite in the marriage notice on June 30, 1863. His Lutheran bride was Bertha Hettinger from Eberstadt, a town about 30 miles south of Sindolsheim.

Isaak and Bertha's daughter, Emma Louise, was born on November 9, 1863, at Sindolsheim and was baptized on the 18th of November. Infant baptism was a distinct change for the Zeisset family, indicating they were not continuing to practice Mennonite ways. This birth indicated that at least some of the Zeisset family continued to live at Sindolsheim after Jakob's death. Jakob Friedrich was listed as a witness at the baptism, and he was still living at Sindolsheim. It should be noted that some of Bertha Hettinger's family lived at Sindolsheim, and that her parents and a sister later died there.

We are very fortunate to have a photograph of the Zeisset family at Sindolsheim. It was sent to Bettie Zeisset Hoerman by one of the German cousins, a son of Johannes Zeisset (1841). We know it was taken at Sindolsheim because Jakob Zeisset died there in 1861. Magdalena appears to be about 6 years old, which puts the date of the photograph at about 1860.



Zeisset family at Sindolsheim about 1860
Back row: Johannes, Jakob Friedrich, Isaak
Front row: Daniel, Jakob, Magdalena, Johanna

The Zeissets lived in Rosenberg for a very short time, maybe only a year. They were about to move to Kreuzfeld.

Move to Kreuzfeld

Jakob Friedrich Zeisset, with his mother, had arranged to rent the Kreuzfeld farm from the Prince of Hohenlohe-Öhringen. Below is a translation of the transcribed document regarding the rental. It gives us several details about our Zeisset family. The spelling variation between Jakob and Jacob is not significant.

...1864, as the lessee of the Sindolsheim estate; the attached certificate to this effect, dated March 12, 1863, has been provided by the estate's owner. Since Candlemas of this year, the Widow Zeisset has resided with her five children in Rosenberg, near Sindolsheim, where she purchased a house.

An attached document dated 12 March 1863 officially attests that the Widow Zeisset possesses assets valued at 10,000 to 12,000 florins, and the enclosed certificate dated the 4th of this month gives Jacob Zeisset a favorable character reference.

The eldest son, Jacob Zeisset (aged 28–30), intends to move onto the Kreuzfeld leasehold estate with his mother initially; however, he plans to marry soon, and his bride will bring a dowry of several thousand florins. Until Jacob Zeisset is able to provide the lease security deposit of 1,500 florins himself, Schoolmaster Hettinger and Pharmacist Strelin of Sindolsheim have pledged surety for him, as recorded in the attached protocol dated the 4th of this month. Furthermore, the lease security deposit provided by Ströbel—secured by a lien on real estate—should not be released until the sub-lessee has actually paid the stipulated sum of 1,500 florins.

Under the terms of the existing contract, the Widow Zeisset and her eldest son Jacob would take over the Kreuzfeld leasehold estate for the remainder of the lease term (until Candlemas 1870) and fully assume the obligations of the lessee, Ströbel—including liability for the return of the inventory in kind and for the value of the farm equipment. In view of the fact that the documentation provided regarding the takeover of the Kreuzfeld estate by the Widow Zeisset and her eldest son, Jacob, appears to offer sufficient security—and given the favorable impression made by the son, who comes across as a sensible and articulate man—it would seem appropriate to proceed with the proposed sublease arrangement.

The Widow Zeisset holds substantial stocks of fodder and straw in Sindolsheim and intends to sell them there rather than transport them to Kreuzfeld—a distance of approximately nine hours' travel—and instead wishes to purchase the supplies currently held by the tenant, Ströbel, at the Kreuzfeld estate; both parties therefore earnestly request a decision as soon as possible.

Respectfully, Rent Office B.

Noteworthy details from the above translation are that Jakob had a good character reference, and that his wife would bring a bit of money to the marriage. The travel time from Sindolsheim to Kreuzfeld was said to be nine hours. Johanna's estate of 10–12,000 florins was substantial. It is difficult to clarify what a florin would be worth today. One estimate suggests 1,500 florins in 1864 Württemberg would be worth \$15–35,000 today in the United States.

The Zeissets moved to Kreuzfeld in February 1864. Christina, Jakob Friedrich's grandmother, had been living with the family at Sindolsheim and Rosenberg. She moved to Niedersteinach to live with her daughter, Magdalena, who had married Matthäus Bär. By this time, however, Matthäus had died (in 1859), and Magdalena was married to her second husband, Jakob Bühler.

We have followed the Zeisset family from Rauhof to Willenbach and Lautenbach, then to Menzingen, then Sindolsheim, and finally to Kreuzfeld where we will meet a new generation of Zeissets. Our six Zeisset siblings were born at Kreuzfeld, but they would not only leave Kreuzfeld; they would leave Germany and never return.



The map above shows the route of the Zeisset family: Starting at Rauhof in 1680, then going to Lautenbach, then Menzingen, then Sindolsheim, and finally Kreuzfeld nearly 200 years later