

The 1761 Baptism of Johann Adam Barre (Bär or Bare): The Importance of Seeking Primary Source Evidence

Prepared by Dr. John V. Richardson Jr.

A baptismal record was generated in 1761, but the exact meaning of German text has been confounded. Furthermore, the local church states that their original baptismal records are missing.¹ Thus, the need to locate that original German text and to translate it into its proper English equivalence. The completion of this task could benefit any descendant interested in joining the DAR or the SAR, given that both the father and the son² served in the American Revolution.

Background:

On Sunday, 15 February 1761, Johann Adam Bär was baptized at "Heiligen Dreyfaltigkeit" aka The Church of the Holy Trinity aka Zion's aka Lehigh Church in Lower Macungie Township, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania.³ His baptism was recorded in German by the Rev. Jacob Fridrich Schertlin, who served from August 1754-1765.

In 1975, Raymond E. Hollenbach,⁴ an amateur but "sharp self-taught genealogist"⁵ and church historian asserted that the German text should be translated into English as a

¹ According to Donna, their Church Secretary, but especially Kevin L. Rupert (119 Schweitz Road, Fleetwood, PA 19522 at 610-682-5083) who fulfills baptismal requests.

² See DAR A004499 and SAR P-106514/109530.

³ According to Charles C. Roberts et al.'s *History of Lehigh County, Pennsylvania and a Genealogical and Biographical Record of Its Families* (Allentown, PA: Lehigh Valley Publishing Company Ltd., 1914), "About one mile northward from the borough of Alburtis, where the road leads across the Little Lehigh, lies the property of the Lehigh Church [continues on 762]. The first name by which this congregation was known had been the 'Church of the Holy Trinity.' Subsequently, for some reason or other, the date being unascertainable, it was called 'Zion's,' which name it now bears, although more commonly it is known as 'Lehigh Church.' The congregation dates from 1745...The original idea had been to build a 'Union' church [of Lutheran and Reformed members]...The first church was begin directly after the purchase of the land, and, in 1750, was dedicated to the service of God by the Rev. Philip Heinrich Rapp...The church was founded, built and dedicated entirely as a Lutheran....according to History of Lehigh County, p. 762, col. 1--762, col. 2

⁴ Raymond E. Hollenbach, *Records of Lehigh Church [aka] Zion's Lutheran Church, Lower Macungie, Lehigh County* (Denver, CO: Area Keys Publishing Company, 1975), p. 11.

⁵ James M. Beidler to Richardson, 29 March 2019.

"child raised by them." The implication being that this child was adopted; regrettably, he did not provide the original German text.

-11-		
Philip Jacob Berre & w (a child raised by them)	Johann Adam Feb. 15, 1761	(names omitted)
Georg Michael Gaißenberger w. Margaretha	Anna Margaretha Feb. 15, 1761	(omitted)
Philip Straub Barbara	Catharina Elisabetha Mar. 1, 1761	Catharina Klein and Elisabeth Mertz, sis
Balthasar Maute w. Catharina	Anna Barbara Mar. 1, 1761	Joseph Egner, Jacob and Anna Barbara Tre single
Michael Kohler & w Maria Margaretha vulgo Elisabetha (commonly Elisabeth)	Anna Catharina Mar. 12, 1761 bapt. at home	Johannes Heinle Anna Catharina
Dewalt Schotten Christina Elisabetha	Lorentz Mar. 15, 1761 Dom. Padmarum	Lorentz Kähnle, Vors w. Gertraut

Figure 1. Entry from Hollenbach (1975), Page 11

In 1992, Humphrey published his comprehensive book, *Pennsylvania Births: Lehigh County, 1734-1800*,⁶ but oddly the Bär/Berre baptism is not listed therein.⁷

In 2018, the local Lehigh church secretary and the volunteer searcher indicated that their church volume of baptisms from that era is missing. However, the author located a microfilm in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Library in Philadelphia (XCh 392, xx530) and hired Sharon Martini of Keystone Genealogical LLC to retrieve a scan:

⁶ John T. Humphrey, *Pennsylvania Births: Lehigh County, 1734-1800* (Washington, DC: Humphrey Publications, 1992).

⁷ Oddly, Humphrey lists the entry before (Philip Drescher) and the entry after (George Michael Gaißenberger), but not Philip Jacob Berre's child, Johann Adam; so somehow, he overlooked this entry.

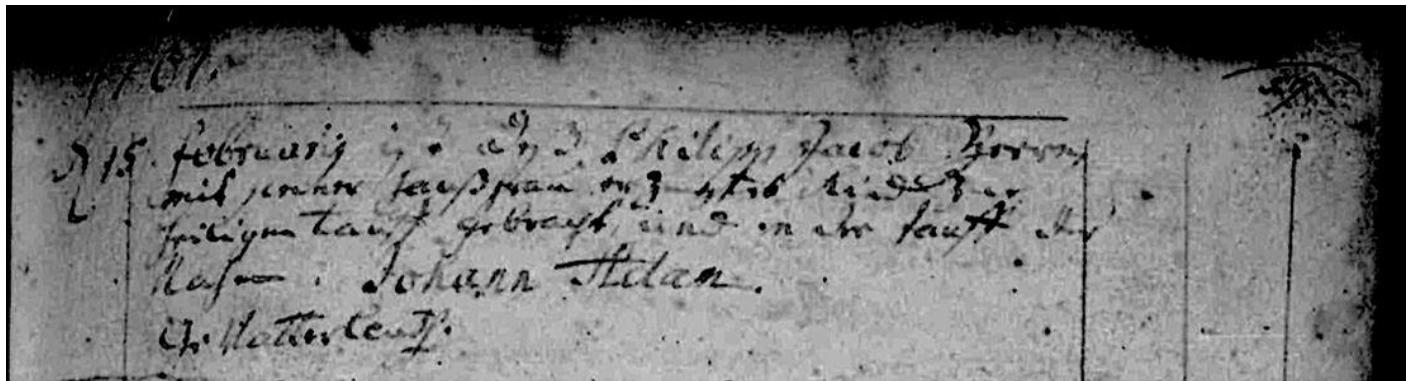


Figure 2. Close Up Scan of Baptismal Entry on page 59 of the Kurchen Buch (see full page at end of document)

In January 2019, Mary Ross, one of translators for the Ohio Chapter of the Palatines to America provided the initial German transcription and English translation:

German: den 15 February ist deß Philipp Jacob Barre mit seiner Haußfrau erzeugtes Kind zur heiligen tauft gebracht und in der tauft der Nahm: Johann Adam.
Gevatterleuth

English: On the 15th of February Philip Jacob Barre and his housewife brought a begotten child to holy baptism and in the baptism the name: Johann Adam. Godfathers [no names given]

During the ensuing weeks, the author discussed this translation with several German language folks including Warren Bittner and James Beidler. On 27 March, Warren wrote that "The transcription and translation are good. The only question is the word after hausfrau. It's a little difficult to make out without examining several other entries to say for sure. It might possibly give the first name of the mother, it might be the 'a second child,' but I think your transcription 'erzeutes' is the best guess." A few days later, Jim wrote to me on 29 March: "It literally says 'ein erzeugtes Kind' which means 'a child conceived by him and his wife' in this context. Erzeugt is a word that would not by any means allow the child to be adopted." But for a definitive answer, he referred me to his expert, Katherine Schober of SK Translations.

Her text and conclusion is as follows:



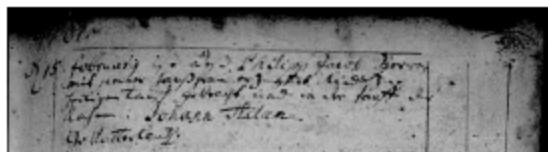
Katherine Schober
SK Translations
German-English Genealogy Translations

April 26, 2019

To whom it may concern at the DAR and SAR:

I, Katherine Schober of SK Translations, German-English Genealogy Translations, do believe that the Johann Adam mentioned in the below record is the natural born son of Philipp Jacob Berre (a last name which may also be spelled using the "ä" in the place of the first "e") and his wife. The record in question uses the German phrase "erzeugtes Kind", which literally means "the child produced by" the mentioned parents.

There is nothing in this record indicating that the child was adopted, as a 1964 translation would suggest; on the contrary, the word "erzeugtes" implies that the parents "created/produced" the child mentioned. Ernest Thode's *German-English Genealogical Dictionary* also confirms this, translating the word "erzeugt" as "conceived". The original translator may have mistaken this word as a variation of "erziehen" ("to bring up"), but this is not the word on the record.



Transcription and Translation:

German: d. 15 February ist deß Philipp Jacob Berre mit seiner Hausfrau erzeugtes Kind zur heiligen tauff gebracht und in der tauff der Nahme: Johann Adam
Gevatterleuth:

English: On the 15th of February, the child conceived by Philipp Jacob Berre and his wife was brought to holy baptism and in baptism [given]¹ the name: Johann Adam.
Godparents:

For any questions, please feel free to contact me at language@sktranslations.com.

Kind regards,

Katherine Schober

¹ The word "given" is not in the record, but is implied.

In summary, Hollenback is simply mistaken. Based on several different authorities, the original German text clearly states a direct kinship relationship—the parents (i.e., the father, Philip Jacob and his wife) baptized their natural born child, Johann Adam.

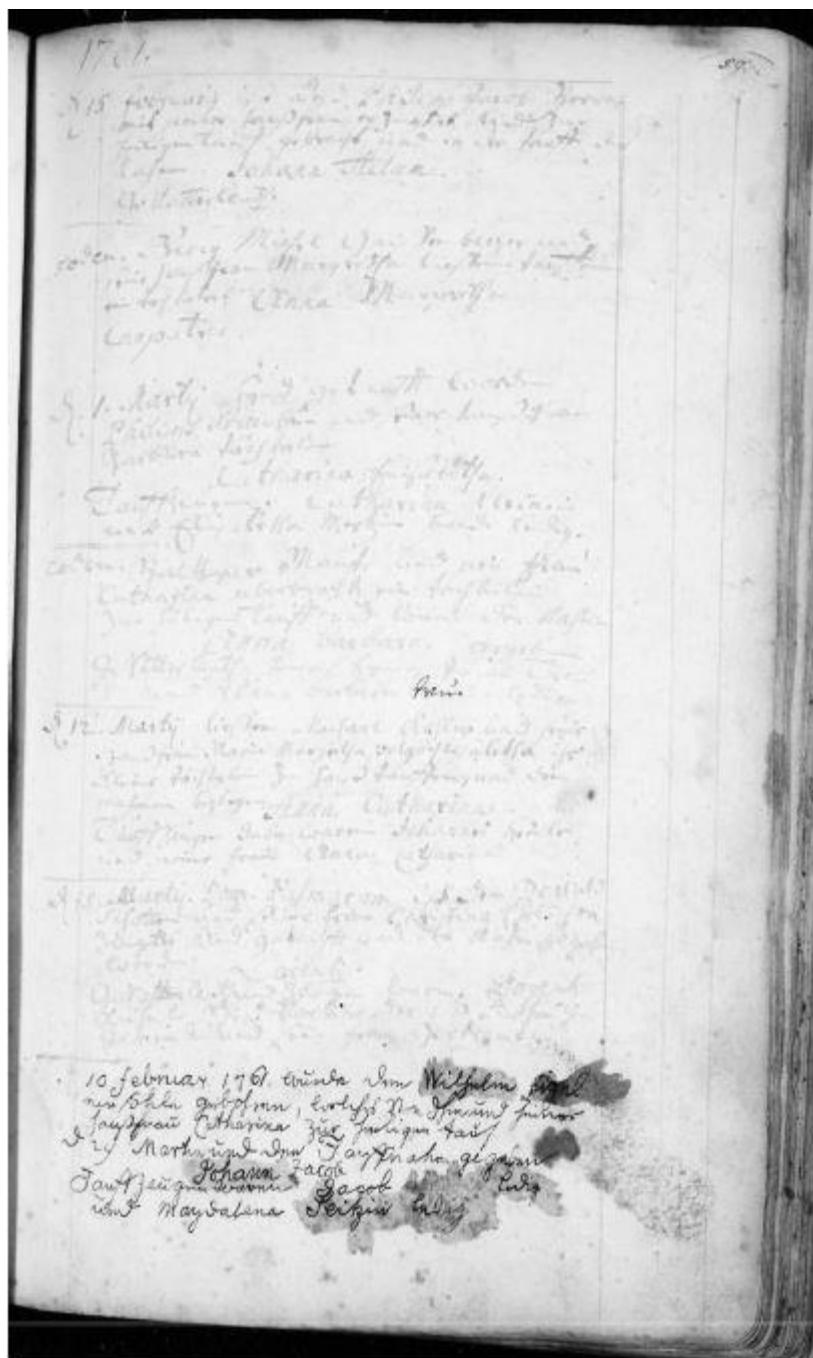


Figure 3. Full Page 59 for 1761 Baptism

Revised: 8 November 2019.