

Book Reviews

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*“Don’t be afraid to go in
your library and read
every book.”*

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

THE GERMAN AMERICAN FAMILY OF DANIEL SCHLEMMER, 1795-1870

By William Slemmer, Nathalie Besse and Thomas Besse; printer: Pirrot, Saarbrücken-Dudweiler, Germany, hardback, 150 pp. ISBN 978-3937436-59-3; Order from thomas@besse.de 19 EUR/\$22 US + \$5 postage from Germany.

The contents of this publication is divided into two parts. Part One is about the German ancestry of Daniel Slemmer and Part Two features his American descendants. The several authors have all engaged in extensive research in records both in Germany and in America. The Archives of the town of Zweibrücken and the State Archives in Speyer and Saarbrücken and those in neighboring Saarland have been consulted. Notarial files of the 18th and 19th centuries provided documentation for the Schlemmer/ Schlimmer

family for over 14 generations, starting in 1480. Very early Schlemmer’s were blacksmiths, butchers, and bakers. Later, in Althornbach, they were farmers. Poor harvest and the subdivision of land motivated their eventual immigration to Pennsylvania beginning in 1851.



The Schlemmers are representative of the many Palatinate families who survived the Thirty Years war and resettled depopulated regions of Hornbach. There were marriages with the incoming Swiss settlers.

Daniel Schlemmer Jr. preceeded his parents to America in 1851. He sailed from Antwerp, Belgium to New York, and went directly to East Henderson Township, Jefferson County, Pennsylvania, where he worked on the farm of his mother's brother, Johan Jacob Weber, Sr. In 1858, he married Jacob's granddaughter, Charlotte. Arriving in 1854, his father, Daniel Sr. and wife, Kathrina (Weber) from Althornbach settled in Troutville, Clearfield County, Pennsylvania with nine of their children. Their eldest daughter and her husband, Jacob Schmidt, came over in 1855. Gleanings from church and newspaper records, along with government records, provide a glimpse into the lives of succeeding generations here in America.

Chapters 1-3 were researched and compiled in the German language by Tom Besse. He became acquainted with William Slemmer Jr. of Colorado, when they met in a German archive. They joined forces when they discovered they were researching the same family. This resulted in the translation of Chapters 1-3 and the addition of the American descendants. Unfortunately, Mr. Slemmer passed away in 2015. His work was brought to conclusion by Mr. Besse, and his daughter, Dr. Nathalie Besse, who translated Part I into English, and Gail Slemmer, Bill's widow, who assisted with the editing and completion of Part II.

The book contains a surname index as well as a detailed list of sources for further consultation. A place name register is included and a number of color photos add to enjoyment of this comprehensive and well written book. A list of illustration credits and sources is also included. A copy has been donated to the Pal-Am Library by Mr. Besse.
