

Burdick Newsletter

May/June, 2001



German Burdicks (?!)

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(In January I received an email from Dan Lundy (jardam@concentric.net) about a reference he saw to the Burdick family on Rootsweb, which happened to be in German. I, of course, filed it away in my utterly superb filing system (you long-time readers know what that means!) About two weeks later, I received a totally unrelated email from Josef Bauerdick (j.bauerdick@worldonline.de) who lives in Germany, inquiring about whether the American Burdicks had come from the German Rhineland via Dutch settlers in 1614. Naturally, it took my slightly rusted steel-trap brain only a few days to grasp the possible connection. Following is the account of what has transpired over the last couple months, with connections between Germany, England, Indiana, California, and Florida. All of the research is Josef's, I'm just telling the story. If this isn't a great example of electronic communication, I don't know what is! - HB)

I sent Dan's German entry on to Josef, which he graciously translated into English. It turns out that Dr. J. Alan Burdick (burdick@creative-net.net) was trying to make contact with a small group of Burdicks in Germany! A couple days later, Josef sent me another email (this one really made me feel like the 60's may have been too much for me) informing me that J. Alan was none other than the father of my long time email correspondent Dakin Burdick (burdickd@indiana.edu) (you may recall that Dakin is the one digitizing Nellie Johnson's Burdick genealogy book). Josef also pointed out that J. Alan's entry was posted on Rootsweb -- in English! It also turns out that Graham Burdick (gb@clara.co.uk) in Norfolk, England, was also in on the search. We also now have Frank Mueller (of the Burdick International Ancestry Library) in direct contact with Josef, as well as Dr. Dwight Messimer (DRMessimer@aol.com), a German historian and colleague of the late Charles Burdick, from San Jose State University. Whew!

Needless to say, there's a lot of activity going on to determine if we Burdicks originate from Germany, not England as we've always thought! Wouldn't that be a hoot?! The whole experience has convinced me to leave this kind of research to the people who know what they're doing. Here's what Josef has determined thus far:

1. There are 230 families with the name Bauerdick/Burdick or closely related names in Germany.
2. 70% of them still live in a German district about the size Rhode Island.

3. The name "Burdick" is a combination of common German words. "Bur" and "dick" (or "diek") are German words used in the Rhine Area, the Netherlands and Northern Germany (the Low-German dialect.)

4. "Bur" or "Bauer" means farmer (remember the "Boers" who went to South Africa?) The German word "teich" means pond and is derived from the 13th-century word "tich". The former Saxon/old-German word was "dik", which means "pond" or "dike" (old-Dutch is "dijk"; old-English is "dic" from which "ditch" "dig" and "dike" are derived; Swedish is "dike"; Baltic is "diegty"). All of these words go back to the old Indo-European verb "dheigh" which means to engrave or to dig out.

5. The first recorded "Burdick" family appeared in Hövel, Germany in 1563.

6. This Burdick family must have been rich and important. They were Roman Catholics. Around 1550 nearly 90% of all Germans were forced to become members of the new Lutheran church. This particular Catholic Burdick family may have followed one of two directions: (a) they left the country, because they refused to change their religion or (b) they lived in one of the few remaining Catholic areas in Northern Germany. If the later is true, the search for the German Burdicks focuses on the Rhine area, in Westfalia and Oldenburg.

7. The Burdicks must have settled in Westfalia sometime between 1535 and 1563. In 1535, Burdick was an unknown surname on the tax roles in the dukedom of Westfalia, which belonged to the Archbishop of Cologne between 1368 and 1803/04. It appears that the Burdicks were administrators of nobility grounds, members of a so-called "Freiheit".

8. There was a long, close relationship between the Burdick family and the monastery of Meschede, since no landlord of the time would give an important administrative position to an "unknown". Therefore, the search concentrated on a 60-mile circular area around Meschede. Meschede had vineyards in Limperich (now a part of Bonn). In 1402 Meshede had an exchange of farmland with the monastery of Siegburg: Meschede gave the vineyards to Siegburg, and received new farms near Geseke and Büren (near Paderborn). There are still a few Bauerdick/Burdicks in this area today. A document from 1630 mentions a "Schulte Burdick" from Olpe, near Freienohl (4 miles west of Meschede), but in the tax list of 1563 this name does not appear. But in Olpe there was a manor belonging to the von Lohe family from Büren. Schulte Burdick may have been the administrator of this large farm, but this is still being researched.

9. Between 1582 and 1584 Westfalia was forced, by Bishop Gebhard Truchsess, to be taken over by the Calvinist religion. Gebhard was defeated by the Catholics in 1584 and many of his followers fled to the Pfalz (Americans call this area Palatinade), or the independent Netherland Republics. The von Lohe families were followers of Gebhard and may have been part of that group. Between 1584 and 1589

Dutch and English regiments (Robert Dudely, Earl of Leychester, for example) helped Gebhard fight the Catholic troops in Bavaria and Spain. Gebhard's bride (or wife), Agnes von Mansfeld, escaped to England after Gebhard's death in 1601. Some years later she was "forced to leave England".

10. There are two streets in Germany with the name "Am Burdiek" (Dülmen, Westfalia near the Dutch border and Jahrsdorf/Holstein). The Dülmen street takes its name from a pond near the Düvelings farm. The street in Jahrsdorf takes its name from a spring-fed pond, which was used by the first Jahrsdorf farmers. In both cases "Burdiek" is the name of a pond, not a surname. The farmers near this ponds had other names.

11. Many Burdicks, Bauerdicks and Burdieks left Germany during the early years of the 19th century and are probably responsible for a lot of confusion in the Burdick genealogies of America. If some of them Americanized their name, an unknown part of the American Burdicks are definitely not descendants of Robert Burdick from Rhode Island.

So where does Josef's extensive research (there's a lot more than the sampling above) lead us and how does it apply to the American Burdicks? Josef has thought though this all very carefully:

After Gebhard died in 1601, some of his Calvinist followers fled to the Netherlands and from there staged military raids deep into Westfalia. There were strong bonds between the Calvinists and the English. The Pfalz, 25 miles south of Bonn, had been a Calvinist country since 1583. In 1610, Kurtfurst Friedrich V. von der Pfalz married the daughter of the King of England and almost became king himself, since the Prince of Wales was physically weak and very ill at the time.

But that did not happen. Instead, Friedrich became King of Bohemia in 1619, and was supported by England with both money and troops. Even with this help, Friedrich was defeated by the Catholics in 1620, losing both Bohemia and the Pfalz. He escaped to the Netherlands and his mercenaries, both German and English, fought in the German War from 1618-1648. At this time, fighting on the European continent was part of a young English nobleman's education. In fact, it was four English and Scottish officers who murdered Albrecht von Wallenstein, the leader of the German emperor's army.

Friedrich's son, Rupert, born in 1618, became leader of King Charles I's army during the English Civil War. Many veterans of the German War fought for Charles, but after their defeat at the Battle of Naseby in 1646 they were forced to flee the revenge of Oliver Cromwell.

So, might our Robert Burdick of Rhode Island have been a refugee from Cromwell's persecution? Was Robert a German mercenary fighting for King Charles? Did he, or his family, originate in Germany where the name "Burdick" was already well

established? Might there be no connection to the "Burdette" family of England? Was he connected to English nobility and, hence, permitted to marry Tacy Hubbard, daughter of a powerful colonist? Could some Burdicks have "re-imported" back to England or Germany, adding to today's confusion?

Perhaps Josef's continuing research will answer those questions. Please contact him if you have information that can help.

Burdick News... Up-To-The-Minute!

The new (and soon to be improved) Burdick web site is, at long last, up and operational! You can find it at <http://www.burdickfamily.org>

Susan McMackin Reynolds (SPrimeMD@aol.com) reports that her son, Ryan, is over the "hump" and on his way to making it through Air Force basic training. She wants to thanks all the Burdick family who sent words of encouragement to Ryan. (*Me, too! -- HB*)

And on another happy note, Grant Burdick (GBurdck@aol.com) wishes to thank all of you (*Me, too! -- HB*) who sent words of encouragement and said prayers for his mother, Roberta Burdick (wife of Alvin Burdick). At last report, Mom is continuing to recover from her heart surgery, is able to stand, and is almost off the respirator.

CWO Ron Lucinski (Warsawinn@aol.com) of Hot Springs, Arkansas, is trying to find the famliy of Howie Burdick, a dear friend of his who was killed in action in Vietnam in 1968. Ron had talked to Howie's mother in central New York state in 1982, but has lost her number and would like to reconnect with her or Howie's family. If you can help, please contact him.

Amy Bly (cowpoke64@madbbs.com) has come across a Burdick Road in the town of Stockton in Chautauqua county, NY.

Joe Burdick (jburdick@ee.net) saw Lisa Burdick on "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire" in late March. Anyone know more?

Hugo Burdick (hugoburdick@hotmail.com), of the United Kindom Burdicks, has a new baby boy, Louis Toussaint Burdick, born December 26, 2000. Another generation of Burdicks secured!

On a sad note, Meredith Dyer Sweet (MeredithSweet@aol.com) reports that Elizabeth Burdick Harvey, 74, of Newport RI died March 3, 2001. She was born in Newport, on September 16, 1926, daughter of Archie W. and Georgina Hanna Burdick and was married to Vernon A. Harvey for fifty years. Having studied at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY, and the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence,

she was a noted Newport artist and illustrator and was also recognized for her fine needlepoint. She was the sister of the late Archie H. Burdick and leaves a sister, Marguerite B. Sweet of North Providence, RI and two nephews, Ralph F. Sweet of Long Island, ME (my husband) and Bradford B. Sweet of North Providence, RI.

Sandy in Ohio (Sandykp@aol.com) is desperately looking for information about her ancestor, Harriet Burdick, originally of Summit Co., Ohio. She moved to Champaign county, Illinois (no date known) and married John Dundon, a farmer. Harriet and her sister, Caroline Burdick, are buried in Champaign county. John remarried after Harriet's death, to Mrs. E. A. Burlingame, and they later moved to Spokane, Washington where John was buried in 1898. Any information would be appreciated.

Maria Johnson (mjohnson@digitaldune.net) has shed some light on a long-standing Burdick story: that Tombstone, Arizona was named after William Burdick, whose nickname was Tombstone. She heard from Art Austin (aaustin@pr.state.az.us) Assistant Park Manager, Tombstone Courthouse State Historical Park, who has the definitive answer. The town of Tombstone received its name from the Prospector Edward Scheffelin in 1879 when the town was incorporated. Ed had named his two initial claims the "Graveyard" and "Tombstone". The Graveyard proved to be worthless but Tombstone made him rich! Remembering the prophecy of finding only an Apache bullet and his "tombstone", Ed suggested to the first City Council the name of Tombstone for the new town. As for William Burdick, Mr. Austin has been working in Tombstone for over twenty years and his name is not familiar with anything at all concerning the history of Tombstone and southeast Arizona. There goes another family legend shot to heck!

But there's another Burdick legend that IS true. Anyone who's driven around the American Southwest has likely seen the ubiquitous windmills that dot the landscape. If you've seen them in west Texas or areas of southern New Mexico and northern old Mexico, there's a good chance they were installed by Byrl H. "Tex" Burdick. From the 1920s to today, Tex's company, Burdick & Burdick, has operated out of El Paso. Even though he doesn't run the company anymore, Tex is still living in El Paso -- at age 100! T. Lindsay Baker, Director of the Texas Heritage Museum at Hill College, Hillsboro, Texas, captured Tex's contribution to history in word and picture (Tex took photographs throughout the years) in his 1992 book, "Blades in the Sky", available from Texas Tech University Press. Baker also publishes the Windmillers Gazette newsletter, which can be found at <http://www.windmillersgazette.com>

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