

**Descendants of
the Barths of
Weislingen and
Frohmühl, Alsace**

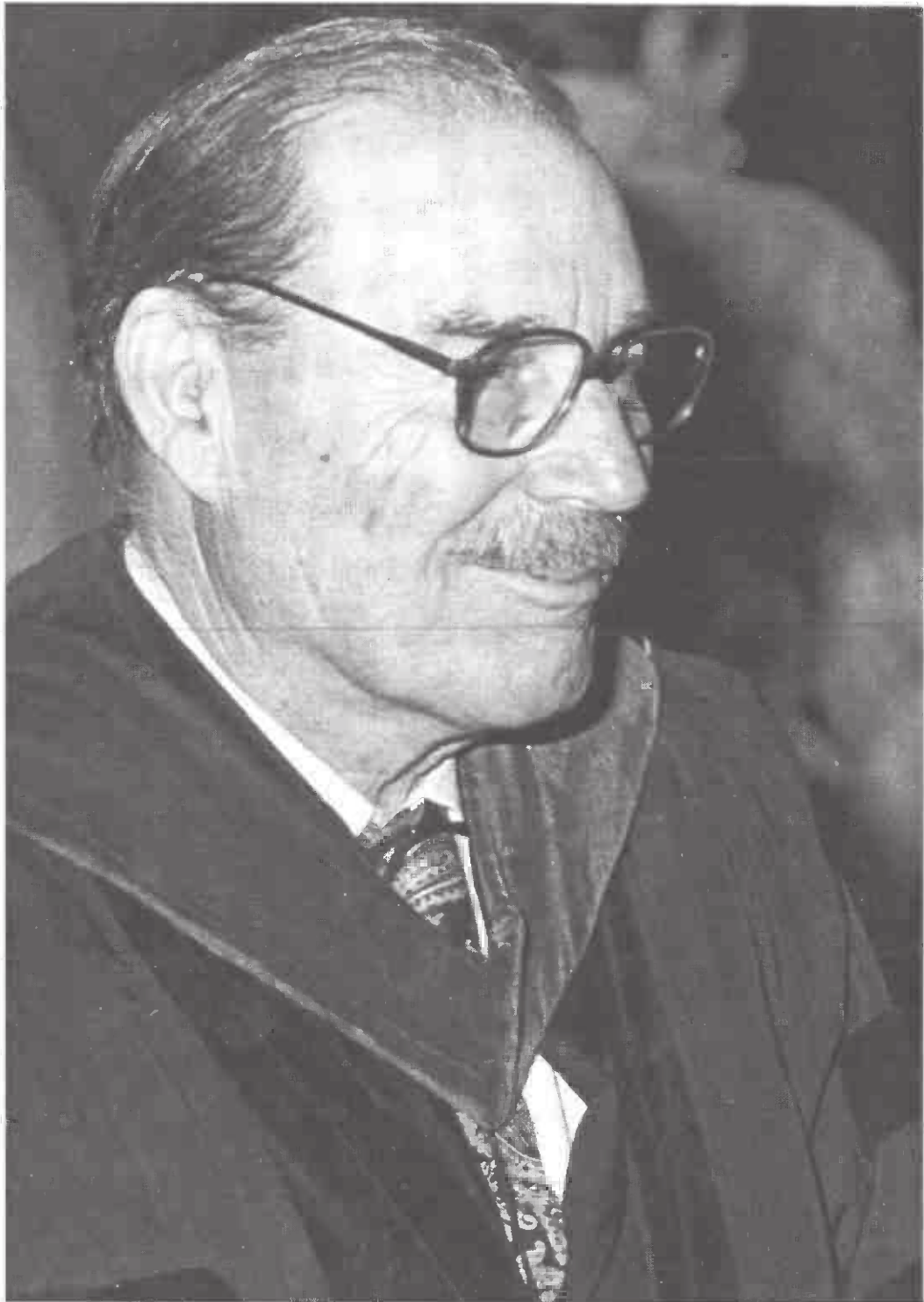
Second Edition

By

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In memory of Reverend Joseph Nicholas Barth, Sr., who always made me feel welcome in the Barth family. Photograph 1985.

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Chapter 3

The History of the Barth Family in Alsace, France

In my previous book on the Barth family published in 1998, I stated in the title and elsewhere that Nicholas Barth was born in Strasbourg, as we previously believed based on Henry Barth's Bible and on family tradition. After the first book was published, we learned that Nicholas was not from Strasbourg, though there is still a family tradition that he once had worked at his trade of stone-cutting on a restoration project on the Cathedral in Strasbourg. Perhaps this misled some people to believe that he was from Strasbourg. Nicholas (III) Barth, the immigrant to Kansas, was born in Frohmühl in Alsace, France, twenty-eight miles northwest of Strasbourg. However, after marriage he lived a couple miles away in the town of Weislingen, where the first five of his children were born before he immigrated with his family to America in 1878. Later five more children were born in Kansas. It seems likely that the house in which he lived in Weislingen originally belonged to his wife's family, which was from Weislingen, since three generations of his own family were all born in Frohmühl. Their house in Weislingen was sold in 1879, a year after the family immigrated, by Nicholas (III)'s elder brother Jacob (Jacques), using a power of attorney sent to him from Salina, Kansas for the purpose. Marie-Odile Pérès, a French genealogist in Strasbourg, has helped us find considerable information about the Barth ancestors in Alsace and before that in Lorraine.

Historical Background of Alsace

Most Americans, when they think of Europe, imagine the modern map of a small number of relatively large nations. Probably a relatively few Americans know exactly where Alsace is, and those who do may think of it together with Lorraine. The association of Alsace with Lorraine is a very modern quirk of history dating back only one hundred thirty years to 1871 when the German leader Bismarck seized these two territories from France as partial outcome of the Franco-Prussian War, after which Germany held them for only about fifty years until the end of World War I. The idea of Alsace-Lorraine was one that would have been completely unknown to Alsatians of the 18th and 19th centuries. The Barths, like so many early European immigrants to America, came from a Europe that was almost unimaginably different from that which we know today. Europe throughout the Middle Ages, though theoretically divided into several large kingdoms and empires, was actually a complex tapestry of a multitude of small and tiny feudal kingdoms, duchies, bishoprics, principalities, free states, and territories controlled by one dynastic family or another. The political map changed very often, and the allegiance of local rulers to distant kings was often both tenuous and fickle. This was a period during which common people seldom had a local ruler strong enough to protect them, so they were often oppressed by taxation, the greed of local lords, military conscription, wars sometimes decades long being waged in their homelands, religious persecution, not to mention disease and plagues. At one time the plague, or the Black Death as it was called, is thought to have killed as much as one-third of the population of all Europe, and smallpox, typhoid, and many other diseases also took their toll. The often-changing political map caused the uprooting of large parts of the population, which often undertook long hazardous journeys in their attempts to escape from exceedingly harsh or unjust conditions in their homelands.

So the Barths did not so much come to America from France or Germany, as they came from Alsace, which in 1878 was more a distinct place with its own distinct history and dialect than it is today. To try to clarify this local historical background, we have included a brief historical synopsis and some maps. From the summary below it can be seen that excluding the 20th century, Alsace was German for more than 850 years, while French only for about 223 years from 1648 to 1871.

"Always closely tied to the Rhine River which forms its eastern boundary, Alsace was a border region for most of its history. It was first conquered by Julius Caesar in the 1st century BC and remained a part of the Roman province of Prima Germania for the next six centuries. The region was conquered by the Alemanni, a Germanic tribe, in the 5th century AD and then by Clovis and the Franks in 496. Under his Merovingian successors the inhabitants were Christianized. In the 9th century, this

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region became part of the heartland of the reconstituted Roman (more accurately "Carolingian") Empire of Charlemagne."¹

500-814 Upon the decline of the rule of the Roman Empire, Europe was left with a patchwork of post-tribal groups. These were loosely the Alamani (Swabians), Burgundians, Bavarians, Franks, Saxons, Lombards, and the so-called "Romance" peoples of Italy, southern France, and Spain. These were neither racial groups nor ethnic groups, but groups tied to particular regions by common history and ancestry. These competed with one another continually. The first to gain major ascendancy over the others were the Franks, whom we would think of today as Germanic, who founded the "Carolingian" empire that gradually expanded, especially during the reign of Charlemagne, who lived from 742 to 814. Under Charlemagne, this empire became the dominant power in Europe, including all of modern France and Germany and parts of Spain, Poland, Italy, and other countries.²

843-888 After the death of Charlemagne in 814, this empire fragmented under separate regional leaders, and by 900 there had begun a much smaller empire in central Europe known by various names. This basically Germanic empire eventually grew to dominate Europe, known as the Holy Roman Empire.

900 The region that later became Alsace was eventually absorbed into the Holy Roman Empire as part of the Duchy of Swabia in the Treaty of Meerssen in 870. At about this time, the entire region began to fragment into a number of secular and ecclesiastical lordships, a situation that prevailed until the 17th century.¹ The Duchies of Upper and Lower Lorraine were much larger at this time than later on, as was the Kingdom of Burgundy.

1097 The Roman Empire of the German Nation was the largest power in Europe and included the Kingdom of Burgundy. It was roughly twice the size of the Kingdom of France at this time. The entire Kingdom of Burgundy separated Alsace from France politically.

1138-1254 Alsace was well inside the borders of the Holy Roman Empire under the Staufen or Hohenstaufen regime. The Hohenstaufen was one of the most powerful secular families of Swabia, and in 1152, this family placed its leading member on the German throne as Friedrich I Barbarossa. Frederick was instrumental in the recovery of the monarchy from its dissipation following the Investiture Contest. His success was partially due to his policy of motivating imperial fiefs to support the monarchy, and in 1212, Alsace was organized for the first time as we know it today. Frederick set up Alsace as a province ("procuratio" was the Latin term) to be ruled by ministeriales, a non-noble class of civil servants. The idea was that such men would be more tractable and less likely to alienate the fief from the crown through their own greed. The province had a single provincial court (Landgericht) and a central administration with its seat at Hagenau.¹

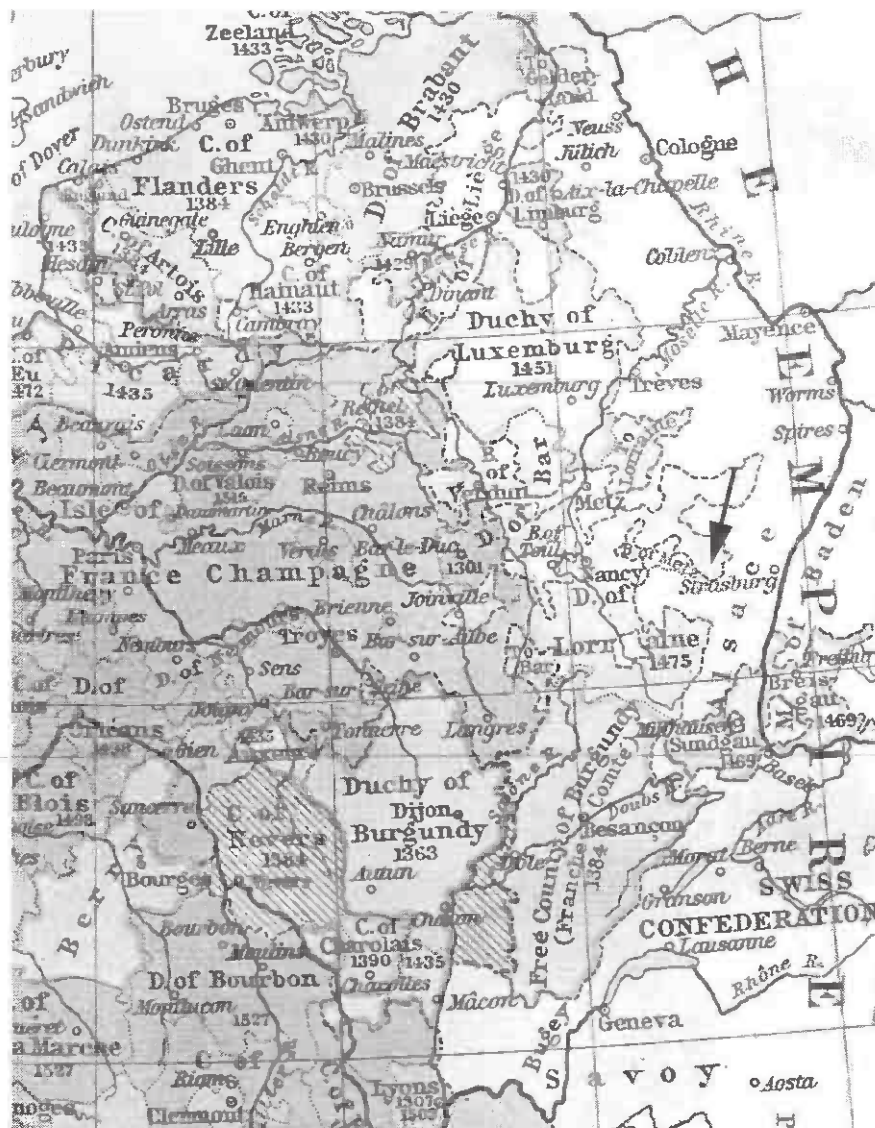
1262-1477 Emperor Friedrich II designated the bishop of Strassburg to administrate the province of Alsace, but this was challenged by Count Rudolf of Habsburg, who received his rights from Friedrich's son, Konrad IV. Strassburg (Strass=street and burg=fortification), which had been an episcopal see since the 4th century, began to grow and to become the most populous and commercially important town in the region. In 1262, after a long struggle with the ruling bishops, its citizens gained the status of free imperial city. Strassburg was a stop on the Paris-Vienna-Orient trade route, as well as a port on the Rhine route linking southern Germany and Switzerland to the Netherlands, England, and Scandinavia. Strassburg became the political and economic center of the region. Around this time, German central power declined following years of imperial adventures in Italy, which ceded hegemony in Europe to France, which had long since centralized power. Now France began an aggressive policy of expanding eastward, first to the Rhône and Meuse Rivers, and when those borders were reached, aiming for Alsace on the Rhine. In 1299 the French proposed a marriage alliance between Philip of France's sister and Albrecht of Austria's son, with Alsace to be the dowry. However, this alliance was never concluded. In 1307, the town of Belfort was first chartered by the counts of Montbéliard.

During the next century, France was militarily shattered by the Hundred Years' War with England, which prevented for a time any further expansion in the direction of the Rhine. After the conclusion of the

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war, France was again free to pursue its desire to reach the Rhine and in 1444, a French army appeared in Lorraine and Alsace. There it took up winter quarters, demanded the submission of Metz and Strassburg, and launched an attack on Basel. In 1469, following the Treaty of St. Omer, Upper Alsace was sold for money by Duke Sigismund of Habsburg to Charles of Burgundy, who ruled over the Netherlands as well as Burgundy. Although Charles was the nominal landlord, taxes were paid to the German Emperor. The Emperor was able to levy this tax and arrange a dynastic marriage to his advantage to gain back full control of Upper Alsace (apart from the free towns, but including Belfort) in 1477, when it became part of the particular demesne of the Habsburg family, who were also hereditary rulers of the Empire.¹

1494 (see map below) Alsace was still far inside The Holy Roman Empire. The Kingdom of Burgundy had shrunk, and been partitioned. The Kingdom of France was still relatively small, but growing. Louis XI's reign from 1461 to 1483 added the Duchy of Burgundy to France, but the Free County of Burgundy to the east passed from Burgundy to Hapsburg upon the death of Charles the Rash in 1477, along with the Duchies of Luxemburg and Brabant.



1494. At upper-right is the north-south black line of the Rhine River. Along its western bank is Alsace, a province of the Holy Roman (Germanic) Empire, still buffered from France on its western boundaries by the independent Duchies of Luxemburg and Lorraine, and by the Free County of Burgundy. These states were not yet under the direct control of France. The darker area to the west of these states is France.³

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1523-1648 During the Reformation in the 16th century, Strasbourg was a prosperous city, whose inhabitants accepted Protestantism as early as 1523. Martin Bucer was a prominent Protestant reformer in the region. His efforts were countered by the Roman Catholic Habsburgs, who tried to eradicate what they viewed as "heresy" in Upper Alsace. As a result, Alsace became a mosaic of Catholic and Protestant territories. This situation prevailed until 1639 when most of Alsace was conquered by France, which wished to prevent its control by the Spanish Habsburgs, who wanted a clear road to their valuable and rebellious possessions in the Netherlands. This occurred in the greater context of the Thirty Years' War. In 1646, beset by enemies and to gain a free hand in Hungary, the Habsburgs sold their Sundgau territory, which was mostly in Upper Alsace to France, which had already occupied it, for the sum of 1.2 million thalers.



1648. Map shows region around Alsace just prior to commencement of French rule over Alsace. The Rhine River runs north-south through the map. Alsace on Rhine's west bank is part of the Holy Roman Empire, buffered on the west by Duchy of Lorraine and the Free County of Burgundy. Major cities of Alsace have some independent control over lands immediately adjacent to them.³

The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) was one of the worst periods in the history of Alsace, and it caused large numbers of the population especially in the countryside to die or flee, because the land was successively invaded and devastated by many armies, among them Imperials, Swedes, and French. During the period of the Thirty Years' War, German control over Alsace was gradually weakening. There were still small states between Alsace and the Kingdom of France, and the surrounding territory was fragmented. To the west of Alsace, Franche Comte (Free County of Burgundy) was Hapsburg until 1674, and the Duchy of Lorraine was Hohenzollern. Most of Alsace was the Ecclesiastical State known as the Bishopric of Strasbourg. The city of Strasbourg itself was one of about ten independent "Imperial Cities," which were strung

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along the west bank of the Rhine and which included a small amount of land surrounding the cities. When the hostilities finally ceased in 1648 with the Treaty of Westphalia, most of Alsace went to France with some towns remaining independent. The treaty stipulations regarding Alsace were extremely byzantine and confusing. Some historians believe this was done purposely so that neither the French King nor the German Emperor could gain complete control, thereby assuring Alsace some measure of autonomy. Supporters of this theory point out that the treaty stipulations were authored by Imperial plenipotentiary Isaac Volmar, the former chancellor of Alsace.

1648 Alsace became French for first time by the terms of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which concluded the Thirty Years' War and placed Alsace under the sovereignty of France. Alsace constituted a province of the Kingdom of France until the French Revolution. After 1648 and until the mid-18th century, numerous immigrants arrived from Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Lorraine, Savoy and other areas. Between 1671-1711, Anabaptist refugees came from Switzerland, notably from Bern. Strassburg became a center of the early Anabaptist (Mennonite, Amish) movement. France continued to consolidate her hold over Alsace with the Treaty of Nimwegen in 1679, which brought more towns under her control. In 1681 France occupied Strasbourg. These territorial changes were reinforced by the Peace of Rijkswik (Ryswick) in 1691, which ended the War of the Palatinate, also known as the War of the Grand Alliance or the War of the League of Augsburg, although the Holy Roman Empire did not accept this peace until 1697. Thus, by this lengthy, incremental process Alsace was eventually entirely controlled by France.¹

1789-1799 During the French Revolution, France was divided into administrative districts called departments, and Alsace was split into the French departments of Bas-Rhin and Haut Rhin.

1871 The two Alsatian departments of Bas-Rhin and Haut Rhin, together with part of Lorraine, were annexed back into the German Empire by the German leader Otto von Bismarck after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871. Alsace remained German a second time for only a short period until the end of World War I, when it again became French. Hitler referred to the period of World War II as "The Third Reich" (1934-45), asserting his "new" empire's continuity with the First Reich (962-1806) and the Second Reich (1871-1918). However, as noted above, Alsace was lost to the "Second Reich" in 1648, long before 1806.²

The Barths of Alsace, France

Between the 12th and the 14th centuries, the region surrounding Weislingen fell under the influence of a multitude of lords. However, in about 1332, control of this region passed to the Lords (Counts) of nearby Lichtenberg. In 1480 the Lichtenberg family found itself with no male heir, so the heiress of Lichtenberg near Weislingen and Frohmühl, Anna von Lichtenberg, married Grafen Philipp von Hanau. This marriage gave rise to the local ruling family name Counts of Hanau-Lichtenberg. Hanau was in Hesse near Frankfurt, one hundred miles from Alsace, but administration of the region in Alsace remained with the family in Lichtenberg. Through still later marriage, this family also became allied with Hesse.⁴ A brief passage from a history of Altekendorf a few miles from Weislingen gives an impression of conditions in the area during the Thirty Years' War in the 15th century.

"Altdorf and Eckendorf were completely destroyed [in the Thirty Years War] and a greater part of the population killed. The two towns were afterwards partially resettled by Swiss immigrants. [In]1662 twenty-six Swiss immigrants were known by name, the majority of which had been born in the Canton of Bern."⁴

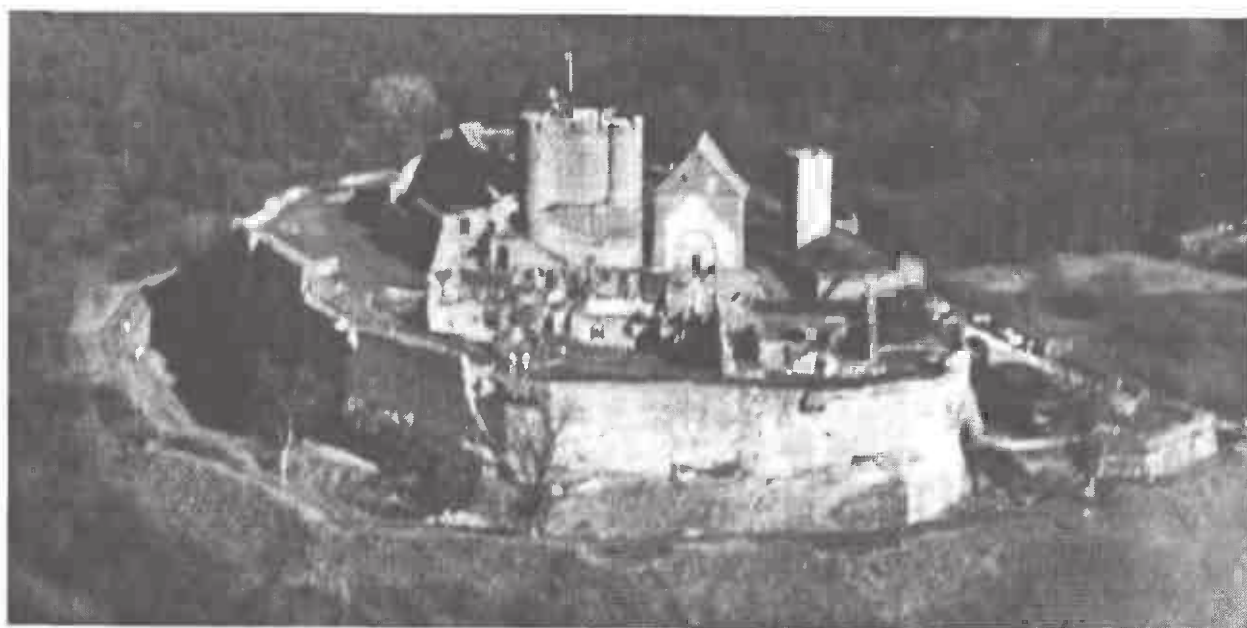
So far we have explained that France gained nominal control of all Alsace in 1648 by the Treaty of Westphalia, which marked the end of the Thirty Years' War, some two hundred and thirty years before the Barths immigrated to America. Yet even today in the Weislingen region of Alsace, a large part of the population still speaks a dialect of German as their first language, despite speaking French as well. In research about a different family from Alsace, I learned a lot about the history of two towns not far from Weislingen and Frohmühl called Altdorf and Eckendorf. These towns still exist, though today they have combined into the one town of Altekendorf. On the detail map below it can be seen that the lords who controlled the region for centuries from their castle in the town of Lichtenberg lived about in the middle between Weis-

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lingen and Alteckendorf, and equidistant from both. Thus, it seems likely that Weislingen was governed by the same lords and had a similar history, though it was not researched in detail, as Alteckendorf was.

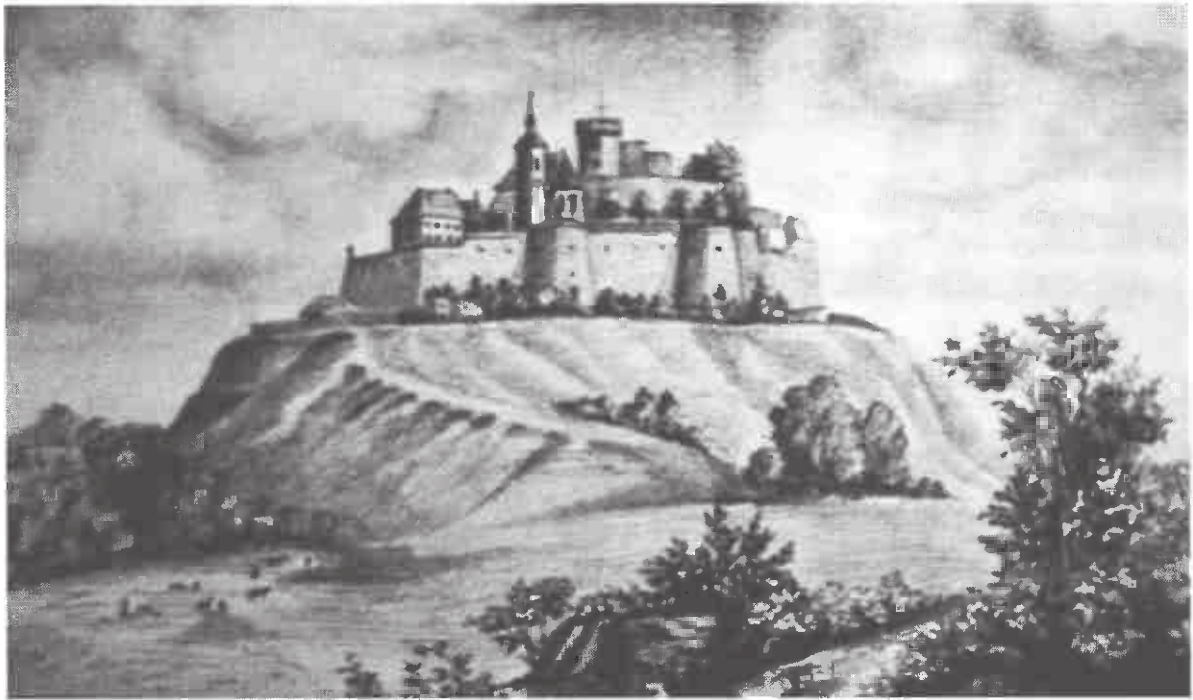
In the 18th century the region around Lichtenberg was still under the ownership of the descendants of the Counts of Hanau-Lichtenberg, then based in Hesse in Germany, though the towns were in Alsace, which was politically French. While all of Alsace had been loosely under the Germanic culture of the Holy Roman Empire prior to the Thirty Years' War, the region became technically French in 1648, though in fact it was ruled locally by this nearby Alsatian and German family, which resided in their castle at Lichtenberg until the late 18th century. After the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, it took France more than thirty years to consolidate her control over all parts of this new border region so far from Paris. Not until October 1678 did a French General, Marshal de Créquy, occupy the castle at Lichtenberg, using as a pretext the alleged attack on one of his convoys. This was just one step in a widespread consolidation effort by the French to extend their control over their Alsatian possessions, especially strategic ones, not previously directly controlled by France. This action compelled the then-absentee Hanau-Hesse-Lichtenberg family in 1680 to acknowledge Louis XIV King of France as their Lord.⁵ Yet even after 1680, the same family at Lichtenberg continued to rule over the region, albeit after this time in the name of the French King. The French occupation of the castle at Lichtenberg continued, and the castle was expanded and built up by the French until, by 1795, five hundred French soldiers were garrisoned there. The French continued to occupy the castle until 9 Aug 1870, when it was forced to surrender after being badly damaged by a day-long modern artillery bombardment by the German forces of Bismarck, which at that time annexed Alsace and Lorraine from France. By the end of the 18th century, the region around Lichtenberg, as well as all of Alsace were firmly under the government of France, despite the fact that the Germanic culture was only gradually influenced by these political changes.

The castle at Lichtenberg was not far from Weislingen and only a couple miles from Ingwiller. The Lords of Lichtenberg started their castle atop a commanding hill in the early 13th Century, and Conrad of Lichtenberg, the Bishop of Strasbourg, enlarged it in 1286. So the territories surrounding Lichtenberg, including Eckendorf and probably also Weislingen and Frohmühl, had been under the control of this powerful local family for centuries before the immigration of the Barths and the influence of the distant rulers of Hesse. Shortly before the Barths immigrated in 1878, all of Alsace and the neighboring territory of Lorraine were annexed by the German leader Bismarck in 1871 and became known as the German territory of Alsace-Lorraine for the next fifty years until the end of World War I. Very likely this annexation of Alsace by Germany was a major factor in influencing the Barth family to immigrate.

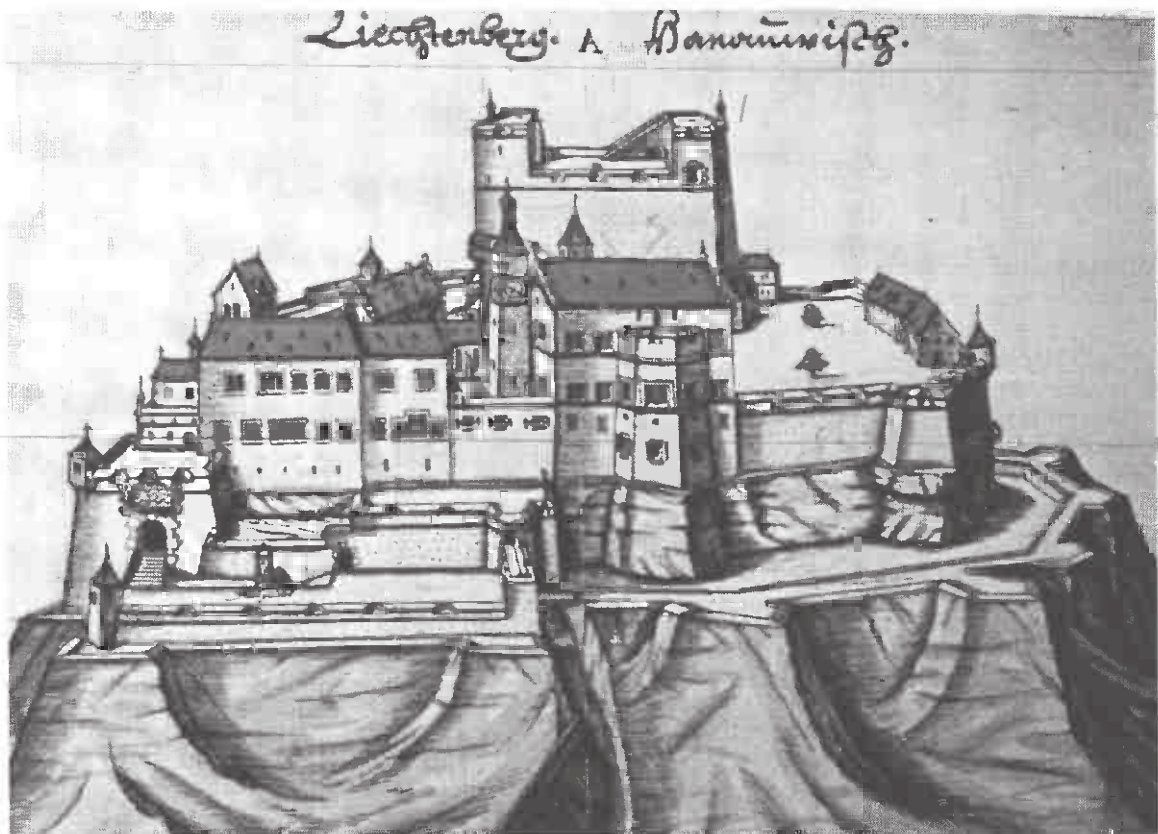


Modern photograph of Lichtenberg Castle showing damage from 1870, probably taken ca 1970 before recent renovations began.

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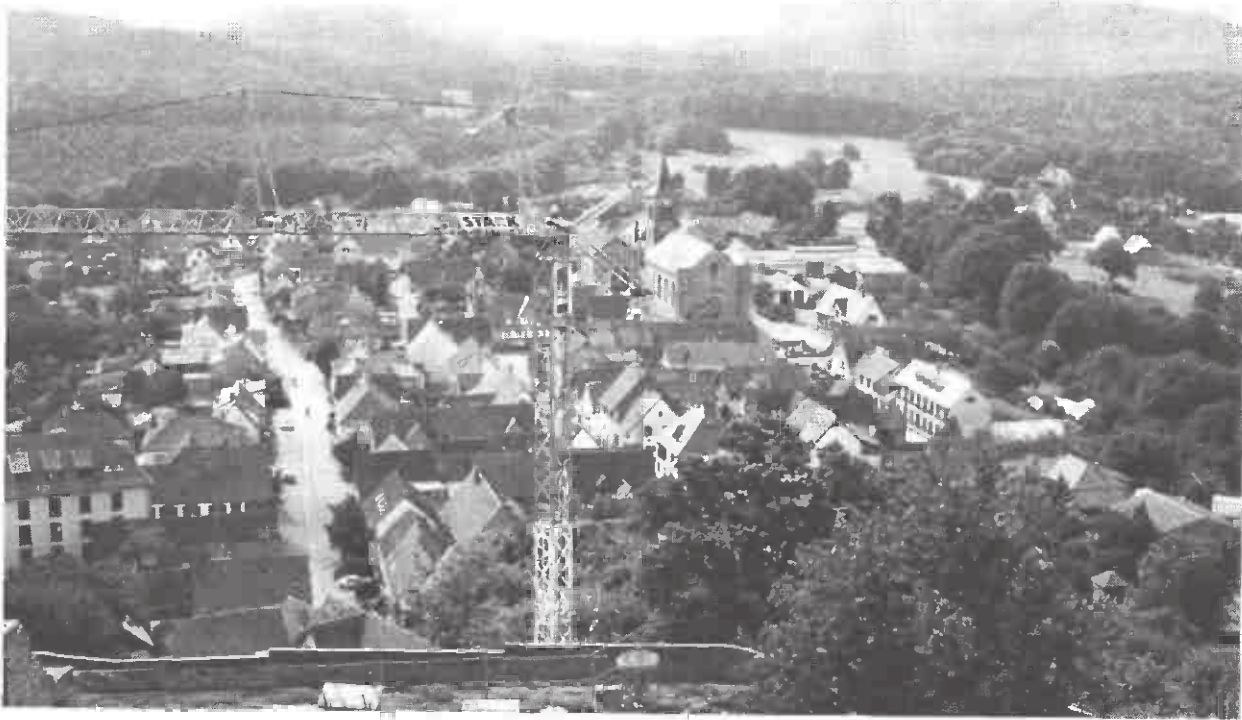


Romantic artist's conception of Lichtenberg Castle in medieval times.

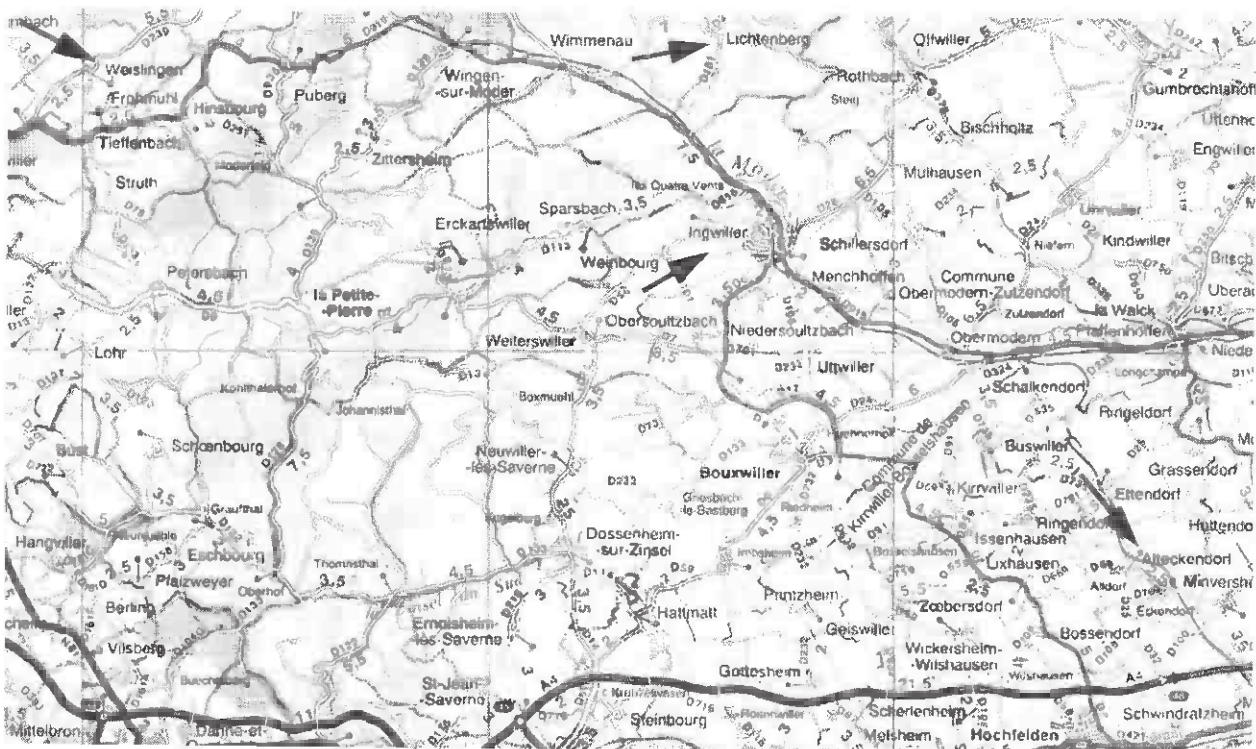


Another medieval view of Lichtenberg Castle. The actual appearance of the castle doubtless also changed from one century to the next as fortifications were enlarged and strengthened and as the castle evolved.

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View over the town of Lichtenberg in Aug 2000 from the parapet of the castle. An impression of its dominance over the surrounding countryside can be seen. The structure in foreground is a derrick being used in the castle's renovation.



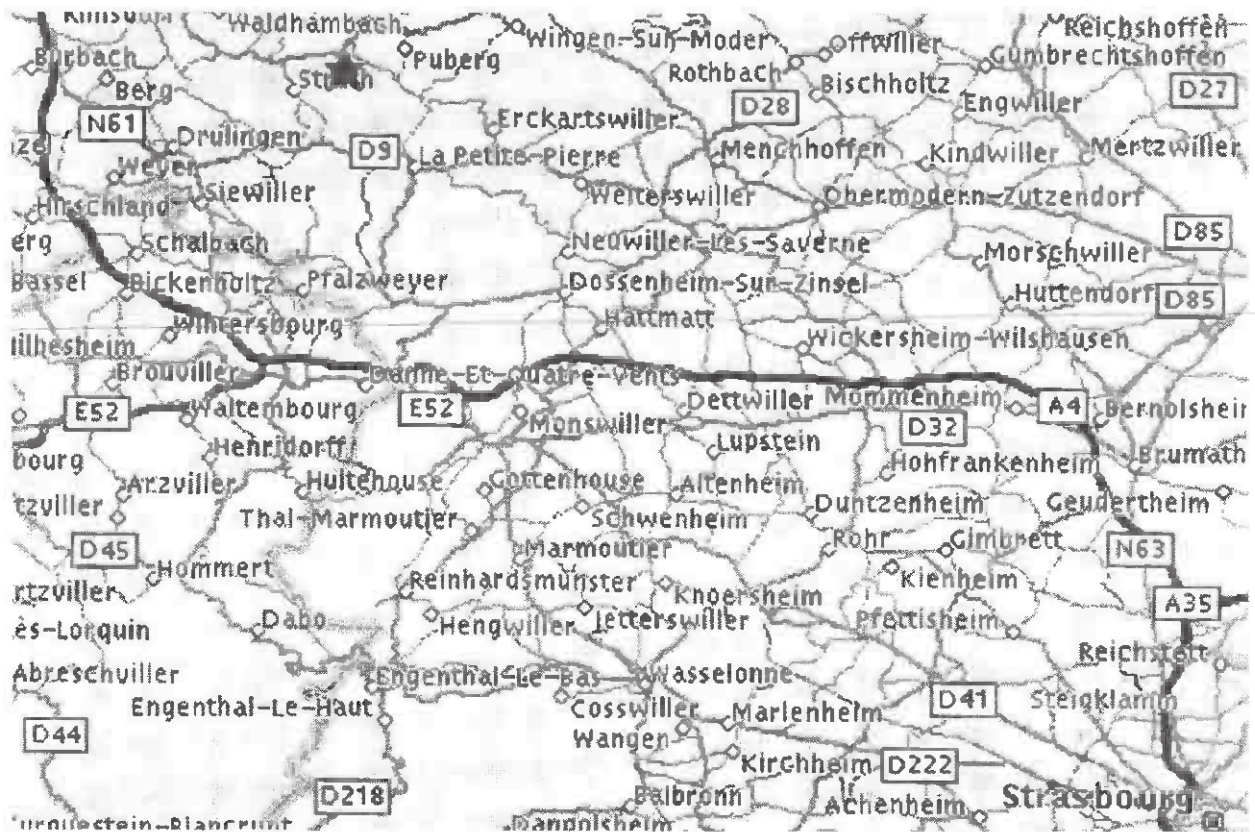
Modern map showing Weislingen at top-left, with Frohmuhl and Tiefenbach just under it, in relation to Lichtenberg at top-center. Ingwiller, the main trading town in the area, is much larger than Lichtenberg and just south of it. The Dark line at the bottom is the main highway A4 to Strasbourg, about twenty-five miles away to the southeast. Alteckendorf is at lower-right.

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The Earliest Barth Ancestors We Know of Came from Lorraine

The earliest Barth record we have found so far is the 1750 birth record in Keskastel, Alsace of Christian (I) Barth and Anna Margaretha Hohberger's first-born child, Maria Catharina Barth. This record along with the other twenty ancestral records found so far can be seen in Appendix A. The record states that Christian and his wife were from the town of Merlebach in Lorraine, close to the city of Saint Nabor. As we have seen in the maps above, Lorraine was a separate Duchy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, located just west of Alsace, but not part of Alsace, which was a separate small country, historically allied to the German kings and emperors prior to 1648. On the maps it will be noted that the borders of these territories meandered around extensively enclosing areas which appear odd on a flat map. This was usually because these boundaries were natural ones of rivers, mountains, and valleys which themselves meandered. Lorraine became part of France before Alsace did, and thus, Christian Barth and his wife may have been more culturally French than the people in Alsace they settled amongst shortly before 1750, first in Keskastel, and shortly afterwards in Frohmühl, where the last eight of their ten children were born. The town of Keskastel is only about ten miles northwest of Frohmühl, about the same distance that Frohmühl is from Ingwiller and Lichtenberg on the map just above. The birth record of their second child states that Anna Margaretha Hohberger was not herself from Merlebach but from a town near Merlebach called Wechsheim, sometimes spelled Wexheim.

Genealogical research of this sort requires more time and skill than might at first be supposed, and lack of funds prevented further pursuit of this research. However, it is quite likely that a great deal more might be learned about both the Barth and Hohberger families, by pursuing church records in Merlebach and Wechsheim, which we were unable to do. Church records in many parts of Europe, including France, often extend back in time to the mid-sixteenth century, so if these two families had resided in these towns for two hundred years prior to Christian and Margaretha leaving for Alsace, a lot more about them might still be discovered. However, a very great deal of genealogical research is never published, because researchers postpone publication always hoping for additional data. I thought it better to publish what we could.



Modern map showing relation of Frohmühl and Weislingen at star in upper left with Strasbourg 28 miles away at lower-right.

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Of Christian (I)'s ten children we know that five died young. However, at least three besides Nicolaus (I) married and likely had large families, and a fourth may have also. So it is likely that Christian Barth and his wife Anna had many descendants in Frohmühl, not just the descendants of our direct ancestor Nicolaus (I), and some very likely named Hermann and Weidenbach. These ancestors could likely also be traced just as the ones found were traced through the church and civil records.

Nicolaus (I) Barth and His Family

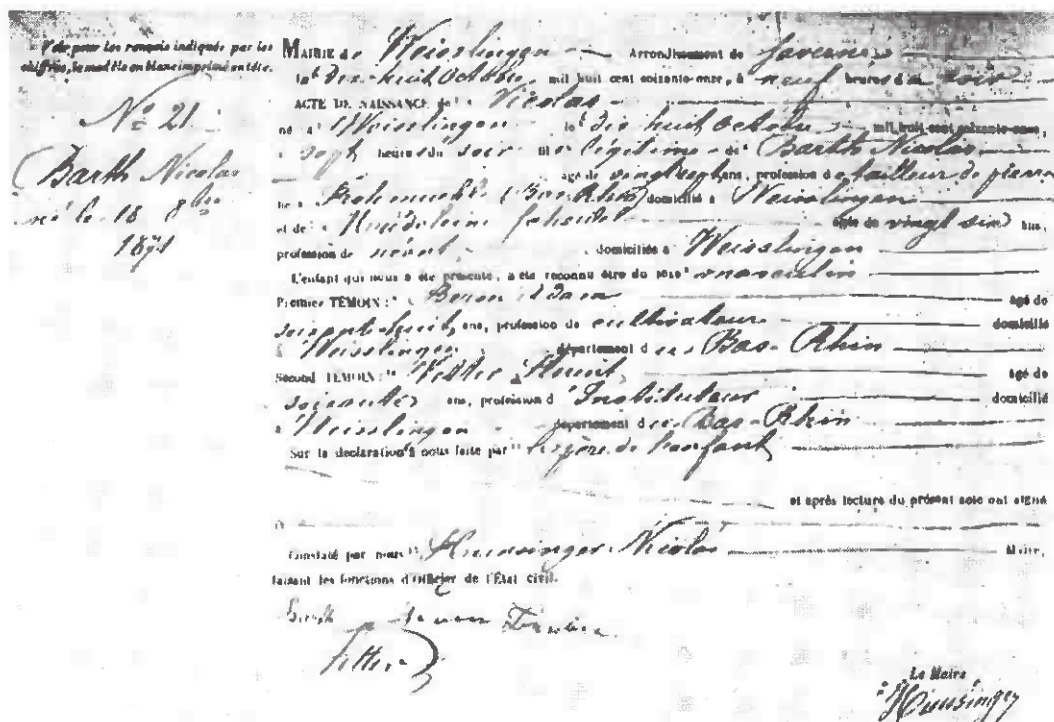
Joannes Nicolaus (I) Barth was the seventh-born child of Christian (I) and Anna Hohberger Barth. He was born in 1765 in Frohmühl and married a second time in 1789 to Christine Mör when he was age twenty-four. His first wife, Barbara Pfander, died the same year, likely from childbirth. No child survived from this first marriage. The only child we know about from this second marriage was Nicolaus (II), who was not born until 1808, a good eighteen years after his parents' marriage. Thus, it seems very likely that Nicolaus (II) had at least several siblings born before him and that some likely survived. Records of these siblings and their descendants also could be pursued. I wish to emphasize that the information found was only that sought in the direct ancestral line, and a much fuller picture could probably be obtained, time and money permitting.

Nicolaus (II) Barth and His Family

Nicholas (II) Bath was born in 1808 in Frohmühl and married Barbe Dérié there in 1837. They had three children before Barbe died as a result of childbirth in 1849. The third child, Marie Catherine, also died at the same time after seven days. In this case, there probably were not other children born to the family, and Nicolaus (II) did not remarry and died eleven years after his wife. The two surviving children were Nicholas (III), the immigrant to Kansas, and his three-years-elder brother Jacob, or Jacques, as he was known in French.

Nicholas (III) Barth and His Family

Nicholas (III) Barth was born in 1844 and married Magdalena Scheidel in Weislingen in 1869. The church they were married in was built eight years before their marriage and is still standing.



Example record of the birth of Nicholas (IV) Barth in 1871 in Weislingen. This and 20 other records are shown in Appendix A.

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Though Nicholas (III) was born in Frohmühl, and his father, grandfather, and great grandfather also had lived there, doubtless along with many cousins, after marriage Nicholas (III) live a couple miles away in Weislingen. He and his wife Magdalena had their first five children in Weislingen before they immigrated to Kansas in 1878. One of these first five children died young, but the other four immigrated to America with their parents. In America, Nicholas (III) and Margaretha had five more children, all of whom survived. Of the total of nine of their surviving children, all married and eight had children, some many children. Only Lucy had no children of her own, but she raised her niece Lottie after her brother Nicholas (IV)'s first wife Lottie died in childbirth.

We Visit Frohmühl, Alsace, France in July 2000



— At the entrance to Frohmühl in July 2000. L to R: Simon Barth Norwalk, Natasha Ramona Salvo, Julian Joseph Norwalk.

The town of Frohmühl is built in a shallow valley, through which a railway line now runs. Its charming stone church was only built in about 1930. Before that Catholics in the town worshipped at the church in nearby Dieffenbach, now called Tieffenbach, about two miles away, and that is where many Barth family records in Alsace were discovered and where doubtless more could be found. Other records were civil records. Many other examples of these are shown in Appendix A. We met a very kind women working in her garden, who took us to see another older woman who knew more about the town's history. This woman indeed could remember Barths living there, although she could only remember one who was still living there, and this was a woman married to a man of another name. Our guide eagerly agreed to help us find this other Barth descendant, which she did. Unfortunately, this woman, who appeared to be in her fifties, had never known her grandfather and only knew his name had been Nicholas also but knew no further details about him. He might have been a child of Jacob Barth, Nicholas (III)'s brother who stayed on living in Frohmühl after Nicholas (III) left for America, or he might have been some other cousin. We did not have time to remain and try to sort it out by visiting the town hall to examine records. This would probably have taken quite a while to do. But at least we did meet one Barth in Frohmühl, who almost certainly was a relative, though we could not prove it at the time.

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The town of Frohmühl lies in a shallow valley with a railway embankment through the middle. Church is center to left of tracks.



Typical Alsatian house in Frohmühl. Large doors were once for horse and wagon. Shutters, flowers in window boxes, and tile roofs, were very common.

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1930 stone church in Frohmühl seen across railway embankment behind trees in foreground.



Closer view of relatively new Frohmühl church taken from top of railway embankment. School is to the right of the church.

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Catholic church in Tieffenbach, a couple miles from Frohmühl, where three generations of Barths worshipped.



Another view of Tieffenbach church showing that it is built on a relatively steep hillside.

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Visit to Weislingen, Alsace, France in July 2000

The town of Weislingen today is somewhat larger than Frohmühl, which is only a couple miles away. It has two churches, both a Catholic and a Protestant one, which appear quite similar to one another. We spoke at some length to several elderly residents, but none could recall any Barths having lived there. We did not have time to inquire after the other ancestral surnames such as Scheidel and Dérié. We also did not visit the cemetery, but were told that it only contained relatively recent graves.



Barth descendant Natasha Salvo, the author's wife, poses on the outskirts of Weislingen.



The town of Weislingen also lies in a shallow valley. The steeple of the Protestant church can be seen at center to right of tree.

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Joe Barth, Sr. took this view of Weislingen in 1933. His brother Frank found it again in 2000, which lead directly to this book.



Same view of Weislingen from in front of Protestant church taken in 2000. Not much has changed. Second house on right is gone,

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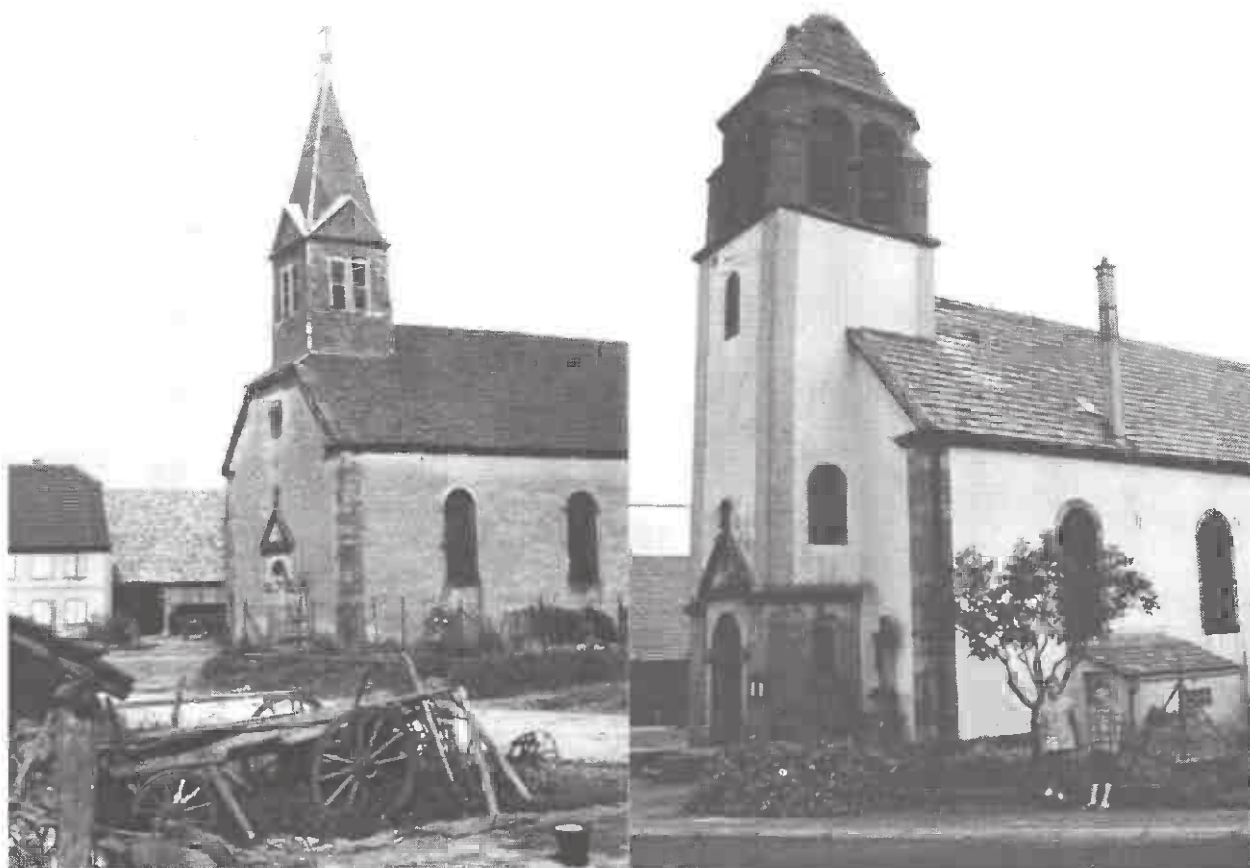


Same street showing church where Joe Sr. and the author stood to take the two pictures above. Our rented VW is parked to right.



Closer view of the Protestant church in Weislingen. It is quite similar to the Catholic church and other churches we saw in Alsace.

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At left is Catholic church in Weislingen photographed by Joe Sr. in 1933. At right is the same church in 2000. The steeple was rebuilt and enlarged, though the original entrance was preserved, and moved forward a few feet to the new front of the church.



Another view of the Catholic church in Weislingen in which Nicholas (II) Barth and Magdalena Scheidel were married in 1869.

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Third view of Catholic church with author's wife Tasha Salvo and Simon Norwalk in foreground. Julian clowning behind Tasha.



Close-up of decoration over the entrance to the Catholic church in Weislingen showing the year 1861 in which it was built. This was eight years before the marriage of Nicholas (II) Barth and Magdalena Scheidel took place in this same church.