

# EARLY HISTORY STORIES

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Fall 2002

## KISSEBERTH IN THE FRANCO PRUSSIAN WAR (1870-1871)

*In the small courtyard at the Evangelische Church in the village of Kirch Brombach there is a large monument (Denkmal) dedicated to a few area residents who lost their lives in the Franco Prussian War. Among those listed is a Friedrich Kisseberth.*



Most of us have only heard the Franco Prussian War mentioned and do not know any details. This was a famous 19<sup>th</sup> Century conflict between France & Prussia. This war actually led to the formation of the German Empire in 1871. It was started when France wanted the Prussians to never agree to the candidacy of any future prince of Hohenzollern. France feared encirclement by a German empire, as had happened before in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. The Prussian King William did not reply. Bismarck the Prussian Prime Minister answered with strong propaganda and knew the consequences could be war. France declared war on the North German Confederation on July

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### Special points of interest:

- Kisseberth in the Franco Prussian war 1870-71
- History of Kisseberth and living in America
- Book ready for orders.
- Families in the News
- Family Reunion 2002
- DNA Studies

## GREETINGS

It has been a long time between newsletters and for this we apologize. Both Gordon and I have been very busy both in our daily work schedule and trying to finish our family history book in addition to keeping our web sight current. We would like to thank you for your patience and understanding.

Well, it's finished!!! Our Family History Book is FINALLY completed. This endeavor has taken over five years to assemble and close to 20 years for our research. Again, thanks for the patience. Details on the book are found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our dear mother, Bertha Kisabeth passed away on April 29<sup>th</sup>. She was an extraordinary lady and we will miss her dearly. I hope that you had a chance to meet her at some of the 11 family reunions she attended.

13, 1870. The French were to suffer a military defeat. The French army was not as prepared as it would have people believe, and they also thought that the south German states of Bavaria, Baden and Württemberg would remain neutral. When this did not prove to be the case the French found them faced by superior numbers.

In September Napoleon III and his army of 100,000 men surrendered at Sedan. By January 19, 1871, Paris was under siege and France was forced to open negotiations for surrender. The Treaty of Frankfurt, signed on May 10<sup>th</sup>, ended the war between France and Germany. The treaty provided that the French provinces of Alsace & Lorraine, including Metz, were to be ceded to the German Empire.

Our Friedrich Kisseberth was born September 15, 1849 in Kirch Brombach, Odenwald, Hessen-Darmstadt. His parents were Friedrich & Anna Catharina (Delp) Kisseberth. The father was a "Lumpensammler"

*Friedrich Kisseberth (1849-1870)  
was my 5<sup>th</sup> cousin three times  
removed*

in Kirch Brombach and his first wife was Eva Maria Buser. The senior Kisseberth was the father of 11 children but many of them died in infancy. The male line of this Kisseberth line died out with the death of young Friedrich.

In records obtained by our noted historian, Dr. med. Fritz Kisseberth (1914-1995) the only mention of the young Friedrich's military career was that he was unmarried and died at a field hospital in the town of Nierstein (ledig zu Nierstein im Lazarett als Soldat). The records show that he died on November 3, 1870 but on the monument it lists January 28 as the date of death.

Friedrich Kisseberth was undoubtedly serving in the small Hessen-Darmstadt force. The old Hessen was taken as a Prussian province in 1866- that year the Hessen (Kassel) army ended, all troops got a special number as Hessian and as Prussian regiments. For example, Infantry

Regiment 183, 10 Hessisches, so in the 1870/71 war against France the former Hessen-Kassel soldiers now served as Prussian soldiers. However, Hessen-Darmstadt took part with its own army, as did Württemberg, Bavaria, Saxony and Oldenburg.

At the time of this writing an attempt to find out more on the young Kisseberth's military career is underway. We do know that he died as a 21-year-old soldier fighting for his country. Mr. Manfred Elgert, a local historian and very dear friend has attempted to secure some additional information on our Kisseberth's military record. He has just informed me that it is very difficult to find any records of the Franco Prussian War era but that he is still researching.

Friedrich Kisseberth (1849-1870) was my 5<sup>th</sup> cousin three times removed.

Written by Gerald Kisabeth  
August 23, 2002



## FAMILY BOOK

Gerald and Gordon Kisabeth have compiled a book and it has been sent to the printers as we publish this newsletter. To save cost it is not a hard cover book, although a few have been ordered for the archives. The cost of the book including shipping is \$35.00. Included in the book is a CD which contains the text of the book and photos in color and a searchable family tree chart. The CD

can be purchased separately for a cost of \$15.00 including shipping.

The book has over 250 pages and includes many picture pages. It covers the history of the name and how we came to America and who we are.

Later in this issue of the newsletter we will have a sample pages and a table of contents. The book can be ordered from

Gerald or Gordon Kisabeth. Address included later in the newsletter.



Family Book Available.

## *Kisseberth/Kisabeth - A Brief History*

**T**his is a short capsule history of our surname. Keep it for an occasional reference when someone asks, "Where did your name come from?"

To start with a history of the surname Kisseberth or Kisabeth we must first backtrack some 300 years. We begin with the old medieval surname of KÜschwert (with numerous variant spellings). It is safe to assume that our written beginnings occurred in the Fichtelgebirge (Fir or Spruce Mountains) of northeastern Bavaria in the vicinity of the medieval settlement of Wunsiedel. The earliest written records show the name Kiischwert appearing around 1400. Over time the KÜschwert name has given way to the modern spellings of KÜspert and Kispert. Many of these descendants have remained in the Fichtelgebirge for centuries.

Documents show that one Georg (Jorg) Kuschwert was listed in the Wertheim am Main Archives as early as 1557. He was a Gastwirt (Innkeeper) at the "Zum Strauß" (Ostrich Inn). One such document shows the innkeeper's mother (Kuschwert) as being from Wunsiedel or Bamberg. We find that his son Alexander, in his lifetime, used the following

spellings: Kuschwert, Khueschwertdt, Kuiswirth, Kisebert, Kisebert and finally Kisseberth. Regional and local dialect can perhaps explain the somewhat drastic spelling changes. Alexander was a prominent area minister who received his education at the University of Leipzig in 1587. Some of our KÜschwert namesakes were associated with this great university early in the 1500s. Alexander served the patronage of Kirch Brombach, which is located in the Odenwald area of Hessen□Darmstadt.

The actual spelling of Kisseberth was not a fixture until our ancestor Johnn Michael

*To start with a history of the surname Kisseberth or Kisabeth we must first backtrack some 300 years.*

(1637-1694) used it as mayor of Kirch Brombach. It was with his son, Leonhard (also a mayor), that the village of Nieder Kinzig became our home for the next one hundred and sixty years. After three generations of village farmers eleven of the Johann Friedrich Kisseberth (1777-?) family migrated to America in 1842. Actually, his son Johann Georg Kisseberth and his wife

came to America ten years earlier, being the first to immigrate here in 1832.

The family of **Georg Friedrich & Maria Catharina (Schimpf) Kisseberth** arrived in Tiffin, Ohio July 1842. Their son, Georg had already been well established in Tiffin for ten years. The following is a capsule summary of our Kisseberths, here in America:

**George Friedrich Kisseberth II. (1806-1870)** was called George Fred Kisseberth. He settled in the Burgoon□-Bettsville area where the counties of Seneca & Sandusky join. They had two sons, John and William. John remained in the vicinity where his descendants use the Kiseberth (Kisaberth) spelling today. The other son William relocated in Williams County, Ohio and several of his descendants have settled in and around Toledo. Daughter Anna Maria married Henry Smith and lived in Putnam & Sandusky Counties.



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# News from the Families

## Kisabeth

Robert Scott Kisabeth has started classes at the prestige Citadel. Robert is the son of Dr. Charles & Anne (Daniel) Kisabeth of Charleston, South Carolina & the grandson of Robert McClellan & Jimmye (Harris) Kisabeth of nearby Kiawah Island. Young Robert Scott follows in the footsteps of two uncles and three cousins on his mother's side of Citadel graduates. Also a distant cousin Dr. Michael Kissenberth was an academic All-American linebacker for the Cadets back in the late 1980s.



Mike also received Cadet of the Year in 1988 & the General McArthur Award. Good luck Robert Scott!!

Emily Kisabeth, sister of Robert Scott and daughter of Dr. Charles & Anne Kisabeth is a straight A student at the University of Georgia and recently spent a month at the famed Oxford University in London, England. Her cousin, Kimberly Kisabeth also studied this past spring at Oxford. She is the daughter of Dr. Robert M. & Brenda (Bailey) Kisabeth of Rochester, Minnesota. Kimberly is class president at Colorado College.

Cousin Craig Kisabeth, math teacher and athletic director at Jefferson County High School in Dandridge, Tennessee entered the political field this year. He ran for State Representative in Tennessee and finished second to the incumbent and made a nice showing.

## Kissenberth

Erwin & Gertrud Kissenberth have just returned from a long summer visit to Europe. They just completed a sailing adventure where they went from Holland to the island of Helgoland to Kiel and returned by way of the Dutch canal system. They had a great and interesting time but the weather was a bit cold with rain.

## Kisseberth

Our dear cousin Nancy Kisseberth Cole once again visited Germany. She has been going each May for the last few years and wants to make this an annual thing. Nancy has stayed and visited distant cousin Robert Küspert and family. While there she stays at the Küspert owned "Pension Siebenstern," a small hotel located in the Fichtelgebirge (Fir Mountains) village of Röslau.

## Küspert



Werner Küspert

Distant cousin Werner Küspert is a jazz musician in Nürnberger, Germany. You can sample some of his music on the Internet at: [www.wernerkuspert.com](http://www.wernerkuspert.com)

## Kispert

I received a nice letter and package from a distant cousin in Germany. Volker Kispert sent his father's Ahnenpass from World War II. The Ahnenpass was an official document used by Nazi Germany to record the ancestors of the person in question. It was a sort of "family tree" only used for a different purpose. It was supposed to prove ones "Aryan blood."

Volker Kispert was a professional soccer (football) player in the famed Bundesliga. He played for over 10 years having gained success for the SV Darmstadt 98 team. Volker now is a manager (head coach). His father Andreas Kispert was born in Schüttwa, Czechoslovakia, which is a small village near the Bavarian border. This Kispert family has lived in this area for over 200 years. They are referred to as "Sudaten Germans." Their ancestors probably migrated from the Fichtelgebirge area earlier in their history.



Volker Kispert  
SV Darmstadt 98

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**Johann Georg Kisseberth (1809□1860)** was called George and arrived in 1832 with wife Anna Catharina (Osmann). He worked in a warehouse in Tiffin for years and purchased his first house there in 1836. In 1844 he purchased a farm in Hopewell Township. All the children were born in America. They were: Gabriel, Amelia (Kipke), William, Jacob, Philip, George, Jonas and Sophia (Kramer). Most of the Jacob & Philip Kisseberth descendants continue to live in the Tiffin, Fostoria and Bascom area.

**Johann Nicolaus Kisseberth (1812□1876)** was the only son who remained in Germany. He married Maria Elisabetha Rexroth and became a shoemaker in Michelstadt. All known Kisseberths living in Germany today are descendants of Johann Nicolaus.

**Johann Philipp Kisseberth (1815□1892)** became known as Philip Kisabeth Sr. Purchased 40 acres of farmland February 1844 in Loudon Township, Seneca County. He married Elisabetha Daum and they had the following children: George, Henry, John, Louisa (Wonderly), Adam, Philip Jr., Jacob, Amelia (Sholl), Mary, William and Catherine (Breining). Some of the children remained in Seneca County, others set up their farms in Defiance County. Grandson William Earl Kisabeth settled in the Plymouth, Michigan area where many his descendants remain today.

**Johann Georg Kisseberth (1818□1871)** immigrated in 1843. This brother became known as John G. Kisseberth. He settled in the Gilboa, Blanchard Township area of Putnam County, Ohio. Married Christina Anna Rexroth and they had four children: Sophia, Ludy, Helen and John G. Jr. There are no known descendants today.

**Margaretha Elisabetha Kisseberth (1821□1879)** became Mary Elizabeth. She was the only daughter of Georg Friedrich Kisseberth I and married George King in Tiffin on October 9, 1842. The couple had eight children: Mary, Sophia, Catherine, Elizabeth, Louisa, Amelia, George and Anna Eliza. The Jack Michaels and Virginia Smith families are the only known living descendants of Mary & George King.

Well, that's the short story of our Kisseberth/Kisabeth name. Remember, our people have been farmers, teachers, lawyers, judges, mayors, doctors, coaches and ministers but above all we are proud to have our great name .... **Kisseberth and Kisabeth.**

Written by Gerald I, Kisabeth August 2002

**www.kisabeth.com**

Don't forget to visit us on our website. It is located on the web at [Www.kisabeth.com](http://Www.kisabeth.com). It contains stories of historical value, has back issues of the newsletters, updates on the reun-

ions and more. Also it has a guest page available so that you can let us and others know what you want or need on our site or just leave us a message. ]

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## DNA & Genealogy

*DNA (Deoxyribonucleic acid), in layman's terms, can be simply described as the molecular material from which genes are made. It is the substance that regulates physical differences and similarities among people. Just a few years ago DNA was virtually unheard of. Like fingerprints in 1920, a short time ago DNA was looked upon as scientific mumbo-jumbo that really proved nothing. Now the incredible accuracy of DNA testing is widely accepted.*

Why DNA testing for genealogy? Why not just look up the records and be done with it? Let's face it – the paper trail runs cold or is nonexistent before a certain date in time. I am trying to relate all Kisabeths and variant-spelled clans (Küspert-Kispert-Kisseberth-Kissenberth-Kisaberth) from around the world. After working on our family history for almost 20 years and interacting with these various clans, it was clear to me that we might have to test our DNA in order to relate all the clans together.

Our written records show that the surnames Kisseberth-Kissenberth-Kisabeth and Kisaberth come from a common ancestor, Jörg (George) Kuschwert of Wertheim am Main in the mid-1500s. Our records also show that the old medieval name of Küschwert originated in the Fichtelgebirge area of Bavaria about 1400. But to bridge the gap between Kisseberth and Küspert/Kispert we may need the help of DNA testing.

All men and only men have a Y chromosome. This biological fact allows us to trace back in time a direct, largely unchanged genetic line of inheritance from father to son. Every woman has the same mtDNA (mitochondrial DNA) as her mother, her maternal grandmother, and so on. A man has the same mtDNA as his mother, but it will not be passed to his daughters, instead, his wife's mtDNA will go down in their daughter's lines, and in the lines of their daughter's daughters. As surnames are generally inherited along male lineage, this is a possible indication that the male bearers of a particular surname, especially if it is uncommon (like Kisseberth - Küspert ....) may be related.

I have become very interested in this DNA testing for genealogy. Now that our family history book is complete I would like to do a study on the scientific connection of our various surname spellings.

There are various laboratories capable of performing DNA/Genealogy testing. The only problem is the cost. DNA testing is not cheap!! Actually it is quite expensive. The price ranges from about \$150 to \$300. I am willing to be the first volunteer from the Kisabeth-Kisseberth line. What we need is a Küspert and Kispert volunteer. If we can get just 1 lone Küspert and Kispert family member to submit to the DNA testing (and of course to pay the roughly \$200 fee) then we will have our connection. Perhaps we can start a DNA Kisseberth-Küspert-Kispert donation fund. Please, all I ask is to at least, think about volunteering. Remember, we need just 1 Küspert and 1 Kispert to start the testing. But also remember, you must be pretty positive that you are a continuing Küspert or Kispert male line. That is, you are quite sure that there is no instance of taking the mother's maiden name or adoption involved. This would be considered a mutation and testing would not show any connection. Also, I understand the extreme need for privacy and confidentiality, even when the goal is simply genealogy rather than courtroom or medical determinants. Most of the testing labs conform to State and Federal privacy legislation.

Some of the web sites that explain DNA-Genealogy testing are:

[www.genetree.com](http://www.genetree.com)

[www.duerinck.com/project.html](http://www.duerinck.com/project.html)

[www.familytreedna.com](http://www.familytreedna.com)

In this newsletter I wanted to just brief our family members on DNA Genealogy. Please think about it and let me hear from you, both pros and cons. If you wish to telephone or email me please feel free to do so. In the upcoming months I hope to keep everyone informed as to our progress.

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## Family Reunion 2002

On August 3, 2002 we once again held our Annual Family Reunion. This was our 12<sup>th</sup> straight affair since we started up the reunion tradition in 1991. Remember, our various families use to celebrate separate family reunions back in the 1800 & 1900s but we didn't hear about the gatherings until they were printed in the area newspapers during the 1920s & 1930s.

Thanks to the efforts of Gordon & Gerald Kisabeth, sons of Foster & Bertha Kisabeth, the Annual Kisa-beth-Kisseberth-Kisaberth-Kissenberth-Kuespert-Kispert Reunion held its inaugural event on August 10, 1991. We had our largest crowd in '91 with 138 family members present. Since then, our attendance has slackened somewhat but this is the reason we hold this gathering every year. Some of our relatives cannot attend each and every year.

History was made on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. We had our first centurion attend. Nellie (Diemer) Kisseberth –Mrs. Rollie Kisseberth was 100 years young on April 11, 2002. She and lovely daughter Nancy Kisseberth Cole showed for the reunion at 11 am. Also our current honorary president Foster B. Kisabeth was first on the scene sporting his edelweiss Bavarian cap. Fos was ONLY 93 in May of this year. Both Gordon & Gerald Kisabeth had the banner, table, computer etc... all in place by 11 AM.

History was also made shortly after 11o'clock on the third. We presented Howard Cotrell with the first KÜSCHWERT to Kisabeth History Book. Pictures were taken with the co-authors, Gordon and Gerald Kisabeth and even a few lucky (or unlucky as the case may be) signed copies were available. We had about 10 first edition copies available as the book has just started to roll off the printer.

It was a very humid and hot day!!! Temperatures reached well into the 90s. Fun was had by all. The kids enjoyed the great Olympic-sized pool and Nellie & Fos were cooled by their good cold beers (could be the secret to both of their longevity). Our attendance was down a little but we hovered around the fifty mark for most of the day. To those who couldn't make it, you missed out on some great home cooking. We had homemade meatloaf, German potato salad, three different pasta salads, various meats and chicken salad plates, cold potato salad and boy did we have the desserts: lemon meringue & blueberry pies, brownies (peanut butter & chocolate) were among the sweets presented. A beautiful reading, written by Lisa Deasley was read by her father Gordon Kisabeth before our meal. A moment of silence was held to honor all our deceased family members.

Nellie Kisseberth was the oldest at 100 years while little Cole William Deasley (son of Brian & Lisa (Kisabeth Deasley) was the youngest at 18 months. Mildred & Dennis Welford traveled the farthest. They are from Birmingham, Alabama & Mildred is the granddaughter of our Jacob Kisseberth (1843-1937) of Bascom.

Keep in mind August 2, 2003 for the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Reunion. Remember, here you are a stranger only once!!!

## KISABETH HISTORICAL REVIEW

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*You are a stranger but once!*

We're on the Web.  
[www.kisabeth.com](http://www.kisabeth.com)

## REUNION 2003

**Keep in mind August 2, 2003** for our 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion. Let's make plans now to attend. Let's see some Kisaberths, Kissenberths, Kuespert and Kispert's next year. See you there! It will be located in Bascom, Ohio in Meadowbrook Park which originated in the late 1890's . The "Old Meadowbrook Park" was located on the north side of Wolf Creek with it's entrance to the west of the Gem Manufacturing Company. Actually it had it's beginnings as part of the Tiffin, Fostoria, and Eastern Railway (commonly known as the Old Street Car Line or Interurban). This will be our 13<sup>th</sup> straight affair since we started up the reunion tradition in 1991. Remember, our various families use to celebrate separate family reunions back in the 1800 & 1900s but we didn't hear about the gatherings until they were printed in the area newspapers during the 1920s &

1930s.

The runion will be held at the Beech shelter again in 2003. We have been using this shelter for the last 10 or 11 years.



Any questions about the reunion call or email Gerald or Gordon Kisabeth