
Early History and Germanic Origin of Küschwert

(and Similar Spellings)



Fichtelgebirge

This heading names "Küschwert" in the title but equally represents other spellings of the medieval name. Since the early written records our original surname has had over 74 various spellings. Among the modern variants used today Kisseberth, Kissenberth, Kisabeth, Küspert (Kuespert), Kispert and Kisaberth are the most common.

The first known written record takes place between 1442 and 1451 when a Kunz Küschwert is mentioned as being a wealthy citizen in Wunsiedel documents. It is with Kunz Küschwert that we begin our surname. He is considered the probable progenitor (an originator of a line of descent) of our family. In June of 2000 I received a genealogical printout of research conducted by Karl Reichert of Nürnberg which lists a Jacob Küschwert in 1453 as a citizen of Sinatengrün, a tiny village about 2 miles from the larger town of Wunsiedel. It is with these two individuals that our surname begins.

The Fichtelgebirge is the location of our ancient Küschwerts. This area is one the most beautiful places in the world. Located in Oberfranken (Upper Franconia) in northeast Bavaria near the Czech border, The Fichtelgebirge loosely translated simply means "spruce or pine mountains." This chain of mountains is arranged like a horseshoe around an inner hill-landscape. The highest mountain is the "Schneeberg (Snow Mountain) with its peak rising to 3,447 feet above sea level. The Fichtelgebirge has dense pine forests and is dotted with resorts, which makes it truly a most picturesque place to live and to visit. The rugged mountains are composed mainly of metamorphic rock and were once rich in a variety of minerals, but now only lignite and iron are found in large quantities. Selb, the chief town of the region, is a major center for porcelain production. We have had several Küspert ancestors involved closely with the porcelain industry. Georg Küspert was a well-known porcelain artist in the Fichtelgebirge. Other major industries include cotton textiles, forestry, granite quarrying, and tourism.

Some of the towns and villages associated with our surnames are Wunsiedel, Selb, Schönwald, Weißenstadt, Marktleuthen, Thiersheim, Marktredwitz, Tröstau, Ebnath, Richenbach, Röslau,

Sinatengrün, Breitenbrunn, Wertheim am Main, Nagel, Tiefenbach, Brand, Bad Alexandersbad, Thierstein, Kirchenlamitz, Wampen and Hohenberg a. d. Eger. All are located in the Fichtelgebirge area of northeastern Bavaria except the town of Wertheim am Main which is to the west where the states of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg meet.

After researching our surname history for over 16 years I have decided to finally record my findings to date (July 2000). This is a culmination of close to 100 years of research spanning three generations. Dr. med. Fritz Wilhelm Kisseberth (1913-1995) did extensive studies on the family name and whom I consider first and foremost the leading authority as to the origin of our unusual surname and its variants. Before him his father Friedrich Wilhelm Kisseberth (1880-1951) had started the research. The interest was initiated during the time of the National Socialism movement in the 1930s when each German family had to prove their "Aryan" ancestry back at least three generations. Another ancestor, Professor Fritz Kissenberth released his genealogical findings in the form of a beautiful family tree chart (Ahnentafel) Kissenberth in 1913.

Since 1984 I have concentrated my efforts on only the Kisabeth - Kisseberth - Kisaberth - Kissenberth spellings of our surname. But in 1998 I realized without studying the additional surnames of Küspert and Kispert I would not be presenting a complete picture of our surname beginnings.

At this time I would like to explain a little about surnames. Before record keeping began, most people had only one name, such as John. As the population increased, it became necessary to distinguish between individuals with the same name. Adding descriptive information usually solved the problem. John became John the smith, John son of Matthew, John the short, or John from Heidelberg. At first "surnames" applied only to one person, not to the whole family. After a few generations, these names became hereditary and were passed on from generation to generation.

The bulk of European surnames in countries such as England and France were formed in the 13th and 14th centuries. German surnames originated slightly later. The norm is that in the 11th century people did not have surnames, whereas by the 15th century they did. The first hereditary surnames on German soil are found in the second half of the 12th century. However, it was not until the 16th century that they became stabilized, that is, virtually universal and fixed in form from one generation to the next.

Of all the research done on our current spellings nothing is known about the origin of the name Küschwert. It has never been researched. Our actual surname, Küschwert and its variants, died out sometime in the 1600's eventually giving way to the more common modern spellings of Küspert - Kispert - Kisseberth - Kissenberth - Kisaberth - Kisabeth we use today.

In Dr. Kisseberth's studies he mentions some possibilities as to the origin of the name Kuschwert. It is conceivable that the word "kuren" in the sense of "to choose" or "to elect" could have significance. To choose a "schwert" (sword) is present. The antiquated form of "kuren" is "kiesen." This word form is another possible origin of the name. Very simply "Kuschwert" means to choose a sword or a sword that chooses.

Heinz L. Zulauf, a native German genealogist suggests; "Ein Schwert, das kürt." (A sword that elects or chooses). He lists a possible sequence of names over time could be: Küschwert, Küschbert, Küsbert, Küspert, Kispert. Mr. Zulauf thinks that our Dr. Kisseberth's breakdown of "kuren" and "Schwert" is very close to the truth on our surname meaning.

Another possible origin of the name Küschwert in the opinion of Don Watson who heads up the Hessen on-line genealogical research group offers quite an imaginative interpretation. He says

that Kues = kiss and that Swerdt = sword. A knight kneeled and kissed the sword of his King or Lord. He also mentions Pert = point, point of the sword & Berth = the scabbard, the place the sword was kept. The idiom changed over time and across boundaries. For example, basically the Küschwerts who stayed in the Fichtelgebirge area became Küspert and Kispert while those who migrated to the west to Wertheim am Main became Kisseberths and Kissenberth.

In his book German-American Names, George F. Jones gives simple meanings to given names, significance and origin. In his opening paragraph Mr. Jones states; For example, the German dictionary tells us that the word Kuss means "kiss," but it does not tell us that the name Kuss is most often a shortened form of Dominicus. This could have significance for our origin. In his dictionary we take kuss=kiss and schwerd, schwert or schwerdt=sword. Thus, we again arrive at to kiss or to choose or elect a sword.

In order to establish some sort of closure to our surname origin I would like mention another possible theory, possibly the most factual but with some unanswered questions. Max Gottschald in his book "Deutsch Namenkunde" (Berlin 1971) shows under the main stem Geisel, der kurzere Stamm GIS: Gisbert, Giesebrecht, Gies/bert(s), brich, Gis/bert, bier, Kispert, Küspert, Kisse(n) berth. What does all this mean? He is telling us that our surnames come from the root word Geisel that is actually Gisbert or Gilbert. Here is a clipping from an old newspaper series titled "Gilbert-Your Name":

"In ancient times hostages were the chief prize of warfare for they could be exchanged for great ransoms. Teutonic tribesmen spoke of hostages as Geisel that the personal name Gisbert, then Gilbert evolved. Since hostages were generally persons of noble birth the name has a regal flavor."

From "A Dictionary of Surnames" (1988) by Patrick Hanks and Flavia Hodges:

Gilbert

1. English (Norman), French, and Low German: composed of the elements gisil = hostage, noble youth + berht = bright.

Giesebrecht

Geselbert, Gisbert, Gilbert, Giese, Geisel

"Darauf weist schon Fischart hin, wenn er sagt: "Westfalen heißen Gisbart". Giselbert hieß ein lothr. Herzog des 10. Jh., ein Schwiegersohn Schwager Kaiser Heinrichs I.; Giselbert, Graf von Lützelburg, 1104, war ein Schwager Kaiser Heinrichs II.; Geselbertus oder Giso hieß ein Aachener Schöffe um 1250, Gisbert der erste Abt von Maria Laach um 1130, hl. Bischof von Meaux, 1015, Fest 13. Februar, Gilbert oder Gisbert ein Heiliger aus England, der Stifter des Ordens der Gilbertiner, 1189, Fest 4. Februar. Auch heute ist Gisbert im Rheinland hin und wieder als VN anzutreffen. Die Mehrzahl der unten angeführten von altd. Giso und Giselo abzuleitenden Kf kann im Einzelfalle, besonders wenn sie aus dem Oberdeutschen kommen, auch zu Giesel-her, mar Giesmar usw. Gehören.

FN: Geisebert, Kisbert, Kispert, Küspert, Kissenberth (Mittel und Oberfranken)."

A rough English translation:

"Fischart knew where of he speaks, when he says; "Westfalens are named Gisbert". Giselbart was

the name of a 10th century nobleman, a son-in-law of Emperor Henry I; Gisibert, Count of Lutzelburg, 1104, was a relative of Henry II; Gisibertus or Giso was the name of a juror in Aachen around 1250; Gisbert was the first official of Maria Laach about 1130, Gilbert was also a Holy Bishop of Meaux, 1015 with 13 February as his feast. Gilbert or Gisbert, a saint of England, founder of the Gilbertine order, feast February 4th. Even today Gisbert can be widely found in the Rhineland as a given name. A majority of names stemming from the old Giso and Giselo, especially if they come from Upper Germany, can belong to Giselher, Gisemar, etc...

FN: Geisebert, Kisbert, Kispert, Küspert, Kissenberth are in Middle and Upper Franconia.

Giesebrecht

Gieselbrecht see Giese. Upper German. Gießelbrecht (Bavaria Allgäu region) Petrus Gieselbrecht, Basel 1291, Gieselbrecht of Swidencz, councillor, Brsl. 1297. Rhineland form Gilbert.

Two unanswered questions that I have concerning the Küschwert to Geisel-Gisbert-Giese(l)brecht connection are;

1.. There is no mention of our old medieval name of Küschwert in the Geisel/Gisbert/Giese(l)brecht research instead they jump to the modern spellings of Küspert-Kispert and Kisse(n)berth.

2.. In hundreds of old written documents spanning over 600 years I have never found our surname spelled beginning with a "G".

Mr. Ernest Thode, well-known German genealogist who has written books on the subject, states that Onomasticians (name origin experts) can and do sometimes differ on origins of surnames. He says that because we know the specific origin of our Küspert-Kispert-Kisse (n) berth names coming from Küschwert that this good specific information supersedes general speculation about surname origins.

Mr. Wolfgang Fred Rump, a German genealogist gives his opinion on the whole matter. He says that "surname experts" will tell you that it could be this or that but NO ONE can tell you for sure what a name meant in its original form as no one was there to witness its birth or watch over the variations which occurred over the centuries. Some ancestors move a few miles down the road and the local dialect changes his name and sound to something else. If he moved further it might come out completely different.

In June 2000 I sent a letter to one of Germany's top language centers, Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache e. V. asking their experts to research our old name Küschwert in their library of over 16,000 books on the German language and culture. This study can take up to 6-8 months so we'll just have to wait for their results hopefully by the fall of 2000. This may bring some sort of closure to our surname origin. Let's hope!!!!

Until we can get some more precise information this is my opinion on our surname origin:
Küschwer(d)t

German (Bavarian-Franconian)- 15th century (1442) Fichelgebirge, Oberfranken, Bayern.

Küren to choose, to elect, to kiss and Schwer(d)t - sword

By Gerald L. Kisabeth, July 2000

Chronology of Events in German, German-American & Our Family History

1000-100 B.C.: The German tribes occupy the lands from the Baltic Sea to the Danube River and from the Rhine to the Oder River.

800 B.C.-400 B.C.: La Tene culture (Celts) occupy what is now Germany.

9 B.C. - 9 A.D.: The Romans move eastward to the Elbe River. In 9 A.D. they withdraw to the Rhine after Hermann (Arminius) & the Cherusci tribe defeat 3 of the best Roman legions at Teutoburg Forest.

476: Often accepted date as the end of the West Roman Empire.

481-511: The king of the Franks, Clovis, establishes the Frankish Empire.

c.500s: The “Bajuwaren” tribe surfaces in Bavaria.

768 - 814: Charlemagne (Karl der Große) rules what is to become the Holy Roman Empire. In 800 he is crowned emperor of the Holy Roman Empire of German Nations: First Reich

843: Treaty of Verdun: empire divided among Charlemagne's three grandchildren: Charles the Bold - West Franks; Louis the German - East Franks (nucleus of the future German state); Lothar - Middle Kingdom (Alsace-Lorraine).

919 - 1024: German tribes unified.

1000 -1500: Jewish expulsions: from German areas (100-1350), from Hungary (1300s), and from Austria (1400s).

1123- 24: Plague sweeps France and Germany.

1152-1190: Reign of Frederick I (Barbarossa), of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, who converts the Slavs to Christianity. Age of Chivalry.

1241: Hanseatic League formed.

1273-1806: Hapsburg dynasty begins; ends with abolition of Holy Roman Empire by Napoleon in 1806.

1348-1365: More than 25 million Europeans die in the Bubonic plague.

c. 1440: In Mainz, Johann Gutenberg invents the art of printing with movable type.

1442-1451: First mention of surname Küschwert- Kunz Küswert, a rich citizen appears in Wunsiedel documents.

1471: famous artist Albrecht Durer born.

1491: Heinrich Küschwert of Weissenstadt attends the University of Leipzig.

1517: Protestant Reformation begins; Luther fastens 95 theses on Wittenberg church door.

c. 1520: Anabaptist movement develops in Switzerland and Germany.

1521: Luther's arrest by Charles V, for Diet of Worms. Luther translates New Testament into German, devising new written form of German.

1524: Peasants revolt against their feudal overlords in a bloody rebellion.

1524: Protestant church records begin in Nürnberg.

c. 1550: First known Küschwert to emigrate from Fichtelgebirge. Georg Küschwert listed as Innkeeper at “*Zum Strauß*” (Ostrich Inn) in Wertheim am Main.

- 1555: Peace of Augsburg: subjects must adopt the religion of their respective local rulers or emigrate.
- 1583: Gregorian calendar is adopted by most Catholic countries in Europe - by Prussia in 1612, by most Protestant countries in 1700.
- 1587: Alexander Kisseberth (Küschwert) name pastor at Kirch-Brombach.
- 1600: Surnames in common use throughout German areas (in some areas as early as 1100).
- 1618-1648: Thirty Years War devastates Germany; the country disintegrates into numerous independent principalities.. Many records are burned. Population drops from 20 million to 13 million.
- 1633: Outbreak of plague in Bavaria.
- 1637: Leonhard Kisseberth named Criminal Magistrate at Castle Breuberg.
- 1648: Peace of Westphalia ends Thirty Years War. Holy Roman Empire dissolved. 350 different German states.
- 1650: Introduction of church records in most German areas.
- 1653: Germans from Heidelberg introduce vineyards and winemaking to America.
- 1681-83: William Penn founds Pennsylvania. First permanent German settlement in America is founded at Germantown,PA.
- 1685: World famous composer Johann Sebastian Bach born in Eisenach on March 21.
- 1701: Frederick III, elector of Brandenburg, renames his duchy the Kingdom of Prussia and becomes King Frederick I.
- 1711: An estimated 500,000 die of plague in Austria and German area.
- 1727: The German population of Pennsylvania numbers around 20,000.
- 1732: Benjamin Franklin publishes the first German language newspaper in America, the *Philadelphia Zeitung*.
- 1740-86: Under Frederick II (The Great) Prussia becomes a great power.
- 1749: Birth of the “Gothic Shakespeare,” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.
- 1756: Birth of music genius Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in Salzburg.
- 1770: Composer Ludwig van Beethoven born in Bonn, Germany on December 16.
- 1781-1864: Serfdom abolished in northern Europe and in all German territory by 1848.
- 1792-1815: Napoleonic wars against revolutionary France between Prussia, Austria and others.
- 1813: Famous opera playwright Richard Wagner born in Bayreuth.
- 1815: Napoleon defeated at Waterloo. Congress of Vienna reduces number of independent states to 39.
- 1816: Crop failures and famine spark first significant emigration from Germany to America.
- 1826-37: Cholera ravages Europe, with 900,000 victims in 1831 alone.
- 1832: 1st Kisseberth Immigration to America, Johann Georg Kisseberth (1809-1860) to Tiffin, Ohio.
- 1833: Johannes Brahms, famous composer born in Hamburg, Germany on May 7.
- 1842: 1st “Official” recorded emigration from village of Nieder-Kinzig by Georg Friedrich Kisseberth I & sons Georg Friedrich and Johann Philipp & their families.
- 1842: Johann Nicolaus Küsspert & Margaretha Barbara Nürnberger invited to be married with the Crown Prince of Bavaria. Immigrates to America (about 1846) name later spelled Kispert.
- 1848: German Revolution.
- c.1849: John/Wolfgang Kispert family from Bavaria immigrates to Jefferson County, Wisconsin
- c.1850: Johannes Kissenberth immigrates to New York

1850s: John Paulus Kispert is early pioneer in Ingo County, California during “Gold Rush.”

1855: Castle Gardens serves as a processing center for immigrants.

1855: Christopher Kispert (Kisbert) immigration-naturalization in Philadelphia, PA. Apr. 9.

1856: 1st kindergarten in U.S. is organized by Margaretha Meyer Schurz in Watertown, Wisconsin.

1856: Famed inventor of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud born in Austria.

1861-65: American Civil War, in which 23% of the soldiers are German-Americans.

1862: Kisbert/Kispert immigrates from Bremen, Germany to New York.

1864: Alois Alzheimer born in Markbreit, Germany. In 1906 identified the memory-loss ailment named after him.

1864: William Kisseberth purchases land in Williams County near Edgerton, Ohio.

1860s: Martin Kispert family leaves Wisconsin & settles in SE Minnesota.

1870-71: France defeated in the Franco-Prussian War and the unification of Germany on January 18, 1871. 2nd German Reich begins & Otto von Bismarck becomes 1st chancellor.

1870s: First of Kisabeth brothers to relocate to Defiance County, Ohio

1881: Immigration of Christoph Kuespert/Kiespert (1845-1918) on ship Oder.

1883: Death of German philosopher & writer Karl Marx.

1886: Mysterious death of Ludwig II, King of Bavaria.

1888-1918: Reign of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

1892-1954: Ellis Island serves as the U.S. Immigration Center, through which about 20 million immigrants pass.

1905: Albert Einstein publishes his theory of relativity

1907: October 14 - Carl V. Kisabeth, founder of Kisabeth Furniture Co., is born in Hicksville, Ohio.

1909: May 29 - Foster Bryan Kisabeth born near Six Corners, Defiance Co., Ohio.

1912: Wernher von Braun, famous rocket scientist born in Wirsitz.

1914: Leading family historian, Dr. Fritz Wilhelm Kisseberth born on March 14 in Eilenberg, Germany

1914-1918: Start of WWI. German Economy in ruins.

1917: United States declares war against Germany & the Central Powers; German-Americans suffer wave of severe discrimination as America enters the war.

1918: June 30 - Otto Kissenberth receives Prussia's highest military award, the “Pour le Merite.”

1918: Kaiser abdicates. End of 2nd German Reich. Germany forced to give up territories. End of WWII. The Weimar Republic is declared.

1919: Versailles Peace Treaty signed

1921: Hitler establishes the Nazi Party.

1921-23: Extreme inflation in Germany (US\$1=4 billion marks).

1928: Herbert Hoover (originally Huber) elected- first president of German ancestry.

1928: William Earl Kisabeth family relocates to Plymouth, Michigan.

1929-34: The Great Depression: Mass unemployment in Germany during worldwide financial crisis.

1933: Third Reich begins with Hitler's assumption of power as chancellor. Nazi rule begins and anti-Semitism is widespread in Germany.

1933: Albert Einstein leaves his native Germany for America.

1935: "The King," Elvis Presley born in Tupelo, Mississippi on January 8th, a direct descendant of Valentin Pressler, a winegrower, in Niederhochstadt, Germany.

1937: Jacob Kisseberth (1843-1937) dies at 94 years, 9 days making him the oldest true Kis*be*th to live on record.

1938: Reichskristallnacht carried out in Germany, opening way for the Nazi's attempt to exterminate European Jews.

1939-45: WWII. 1/3 of the 11 million soldiers in the U.S. forces in WWII are of German descent.

1939: September 12 - Emil Fritz Kisseberth, SS soldier killed in Poland.

1941: December 11- Hitler declares war on the United States.

1942-1943: Robert McClellan Kisabeth, highly decorated American soldier with 34th Division (Red Bull) seriously wounded in North Africa. Received French Croix De Guerre, Bronze Star with Valor, and Purple Heart with Citation among other high awards.

1945: May 8- Unconditional surrender of Germany to the Allies. Hitler commits suicide in Berlin. End of Third Reich.

1945: May 19- Johann Küspert, soldier in famed Waffen SS was killed in Pisek, Czechoslovakia

1944-1946: - Merlin Kispert wears #33 for University of Minnesota Golden Gophers football team.

1949: The Federal Republic of West Germany & German Democratic Republic of East Germany are created.

1952: General Dwight D. Eisenhower (German ancestry) elected President.

1961: Construction of Berlin Wall begins.

1963: Milo Commodore Kisseberth dies. He had served in both WW1 & WWII for both the U.S. Army & U.S. Navy.

1969: - Both cousins David J. Kisabeth (4th Infantry) & Gerald L. Kisabeth (1st Air Cav.) return home from Vietnam War with numerous citations and awards.

1970: Supermodel Claudia Schiffer born in Dusseldorf, Germany on August 25.

1973: Both East & West Germany are admitted to the United Nations.

1973: German-American Henry Kissinger becomes Secretary of State and wins the Nobel Peace Prize.

1973: Supermodel Heidi Klum born on June 1 in Bergische Gladbach, Germany.

1985: Brothers Gerald L. & Gordon W. Kisabeth begin Kis*be*th research.

1987: Head Coach Craig Kisabeth leads Jefferson County High School football team to Tennessee State Championship with a perfect 15-0 record.

1988: Charles Wm. Kisabeth receives his M.D. at age thirty-seven. He also was a graduate in Engineering from Georgia Tech University.

1988: Michael Kissenberth named Citadel "Cadet of the Year" & football captain selected Academic All-American.

1989: November 9 - Fall of the Berlin Wall

1990: German reunification completed.

- 1990: U.S. Census reports, German-Americans are largest ethnic group- 58 million (23%)
- 1991: Robert McClellan Kisabeth Jr. named Medical Director of Mayo Clinic Laboratories.
- 1991: Kis*be*th Family Reunion is restarted in Bascom, Ohio, the area of our 1st settlers.
- 1994: Andrew Scott Kissenberth, linebacker University of Florida & member of winning Gator Bowl team.
- 1997: July 28 - Death of John Phillip Martin Kispert in Nerstrand, Minnesota making him the oldest Kispert to live on record (98 years).
- 2001: July 21 - Foster & Bertha Kisabeth celebrate their 68th Wedding Anniversary.
- 2002: February - Completion of Family History Book.
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A Primer of Our Ancient German Tribes

I wanted to include a brief “primer” of the ancient Germans. Most of us are not too familiar of our very distant forefathers.

In the early history of the Germanic lands many different tribes migrated to settle the area. As descendants of the Germans who in turn migrated to America we may wonder about our ancient ancestors and their various tribes.

During the last three years I have been gathering information if the ancient Germans tribes. In the not too distant future my plans include a more details probe into the specific tribes, their history and the lands that they occupied.

The Germans are defined as a great ethnic complex of ancient Europe, a basic stock in the composition of the modern peoples of Germany, Switzerland, Austria, N. Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, N and central France, Lowland Scotland and England. From archaeology it is clear that the Germans had little ethnic solidarity; by the 7th century B.C. they had begun a division into many peoples. They did not call themselves Germans



The Celts are the first recorded peoples of the territory now known as Germany. Scandinavian tribes gradually migrated from the north and conquered them. These northern people then settled the territory between the Elbe and Oder rivers and turned to agrarian pursuits. Although the earliest mention of the Germans is by a Greek navigator who saw them in Norway and Jutland in the 4th century BC, their real appearance in history began with their contact with the Romans. The chief historical sources for the culture and distribution of the Germans are Tacitus'

Germania and Agricola and the remnants in later ages of early Germanic institutions. In the 1st century BC the area comprised an estimated 4 million people and land had become a scarce commodity. Because of this overpopulation, several tribes in the region began to emigrate including the Visigoths to Spain, the Vandals to North Africa, and the Angles and Saxons to England. Other tribes such as the Teutons and Cimbri were defeated and destroyed.

Between 12 BC and 16 AD, the Romans tried to conquer the Germanic tribes but only a small portion of southwestern Germany came under their control. In AD 9 Arminius (Hermann), who had been trained in the Roman service, headed an anti-Roman group of Cherusci and this led to the disastrous defeat and annihilation of three Roman legions under the command of Varus in the famous Battle of the Teutoburg Forest.

Some of the Germanic Tribes included:

Alans, Alemanni, Ampsivari, Angivarii, Angles, Ansivarii, Artrivari, Atuatichi, Bajuwaren, Batavians, Belgii, Bructeri, Burgundians, Buri, Caeracates, Cannenfates, Casuarii, Cenni, Chamavi, Chatti, Chasuari, Cherusci, Cimbri, Coldui, Condrusi, Canunefates, Coeresii,

Dulgibines, Eburones, Fali, Franks, Frisians, Gepidai, Getae, Goths, Gugerni, Heruli, Hermionies, Hermunduri, Herules, Huns, Ingavones, Istavones, Juthons, Kugern, Latobrigi, Longobards, Lygii, marcomanni, Marini, Marsi, Mattiaci, Menapi, Narisci, Nemetes, Nervii, Northvolkers, Ostrogoths, Peucini, Poemones, Quadi, Rauraci, Rugii, Salains, Saxons, Scardosi, Schryi, Scrolisi, Seducii, Semnones, Sigambri, Suevi, Tenchteri, Teuteri, Teutons, Thuringians, Treveri, Triboci, Tubanti, Tulingern, Tungri, Twihatn, Ubii, Ulmerugi, Usippi, Vandals, Vangiones, Varini, Visigoths and don't forget our beloved *Vikings* and their later Scandinavian conquests.

My recent research of the old German tribes (Germanen) has led me to meet some very gifted and educated people. I have received valued opinions from such learned professors as Dr. J. Haberstroh, Prof. Dr. Peter Herz and Dr. Christof Flugel. All are archaeologists and experts in their field.

The more common spellings of our name such as Küspert, Kispert, Kisseberth, Kissenberth, Kisaberth and Kisabeth have all evolved from the medieval surname of Küschwert in the Fichtelgebirge area of NE Bavaria. The approximate written date is around 1400. In genealogical respect the 15th century is an excellent beginning in personal surname history but in an actual timeline this era is relatively recent. Who were the ancient ancestors of our Küschwerts and where did they come from? We can only speculate but offer some valued opinions and theories based on facts that may shed some light to the tribes associated with our specific family history.

On most maps of ancient Germany the tribe living in close proximity of the Fichtelgebirge was the Narisci, a subgroup of the larger Marcomanni tribe. I have received conflicting reports on the ancient inhabitants of the area. Most experts agree that the Fichtelgebirge was not populated or at best, sparsely populated, until much later when migrating tribes settled the area.

The first mention of our Küschwert name is in the unseeded area. This is located in the Oberfranken area of Bavaria but also touches the Oberpfalz region. To this day some people of this area consider themselves more as ethnic Franconians while others are committed to the Bavarian ethnicity. Each village seems to have its own dialect.

A very close friend of mine, Mr. Dieter Göschl of Freising, Bavaria has been my “Bavarian mentor” for over a year. We have corresponded over the Internet. He is a very knowledgeable native Bavarian or Alt-Baiern. Dieter is with Texas Instruments and has taught me a great deal of Bavarian history, customs and even some useful phrases. I look forward to our meeting in June of 2002. He states that most scientists of history, archeology and linguistics agree that the Bavarian tribe (Bajuwaren) was comprised of the following:

1. Inhabitants (Celtic Boii, Romanized Celts, Romans in the south, Thuringians & Narisci in the north) who lived in the area during the centuries from the birth of Christ up to the 4th century.
2. Germanic soldiers from various tribes as part of the Roman army mainly in the 4th & 5th century, settling there after retiring and becoming Roman citizens.

3. The key contributors, providing the name Baju-vari (men from Bohemia) migrated from Bohemia about 100 miles west to settle first at the river Danube around the old Roman capital Ratispona (today's Regensburg). From there the Bajuwaren moved upstream the rivers Regen (Nordgau), Inn-Salzach downstream along the Danube (Austria).

It is now generally believed that the Bavarians are the descendants of the “lost” Germanic tribe known to the Romans as the Marcomanni. Considered the most important of the southern Suevic tribes, they were led by a brave noble, Marbod, who took his people to the east settling into the region of present-day Prague, Czechoslovakia. It is believed that the Marcomanni stayed in Bohemia for about 500 years emerging as the Bajuwaren tribe.

In November 2001, I received a nice email from a Mr. Peter Ertel, webmaster of www.bairische-sprache.org. He has supplied some very interesting material on our history. This is what he had to share:

In the beginning of the first millennium (1000 AD) settlers came to the Fichtelgebirge from two directions: There were true Bavarians from the south and Franconians from the west. Regensburg and Bamberg were the seats of the bishops. Die markgrafen auf dem Nordgau, die Diepoldinger, leiteten aus dem bayerischen Raum von Süden her mit ihren Ministerialen im 11. und 12. Jahrhundert die kolonialisatorischen Arbeiten. You can still distinguish the two parts of the region by the local dialects. The following Franconian places on the language border to the Bavarian places southeast of them; Ortschaften, Heinersberg, Pilgramsreuth, Niederlamitz, Hohenbuch, Raumentengrün, Reicholdsgrün, Weißenstadt Franken, Meierhof, Bischofsgrün, Warmensteinach, Weidenberg.

In the medieval history of the Fichtelgebirge the Sechsamterland (six communities) consisted of the towns of Selb, Wunsiedel, Hohenberg and Thierstein and the Franconian towns of Weißenstadt and Kirchlenlamitz. The Sechsamterland Dialect, which belongs to the North Bavarian Dialect, is still spoken in most parts of the Landkreis of Wunsiedel today. The Sechsamterland belonged to the Egerland (first mentioned as 'Regio Egere in 1135 AD). The Egerlanders were North Bavarian settlers. Later the counts (Burggrafen) of Nuremberg bought more and more parts of the west of the Egerland. Until 1415 the western part, the Sechsamterland (including Wunsiedel from 1285 on) belonged to the Nurembergers. Wunsiedel and the Sechsamterland became a part of Franconia politically but there was no change in the population, and the people kept their Bavarian dialect.



It is kind of strange that Wunsiedel and the Sechsamterland only “returned” to Bavaria when Franconia became a part of Bavaria in 1806, after the

