

Johann Adam Sundheimer, 1814

Background: Sundheimers are in Ransweiler, Pfalz, Bayern Germany since at least 1620. They live elsewhere, too, but the Sundheimers in Tuscarawas, Holmes, and Coshocton counties, Ohio, United States starting around 1840-50 are from Ransweiler. Nearby villages include Bisterschied, Meisenheim, Waldgrehweiler, and several others, but the church in Ransweiler is where most of them are christened and married, so I use Ransweiler generically for the area. Other family names intermarrying in the area in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries include Scheu, Conrad, Lahm, Bernhard, Mueller, and Bayer, among others.

Johann Adam Sundheimer was born 17 Jun 1814 in Ransweiler to Johann Friedrich Sundheimer and Maria Catharina Conrad.

Catherine Scheu (also Schey) was born 5 Nov 1815 to Frederick Scheu and Elisabetha Scheu (maiden name is specifically Scheu in several records).

I can find no marriage record for this couple, which means they probably did not marry in Germany. However, they did have a son, Adam, who lived for only a couple of months in the summer of 1835 in Ransweiler. His birth is specifically noted as unehelich, or out of wedlock. Adam and Catherine emigrated shortly thereafter. Son Friedrich (Fred) was born in Wheeling, Virginia, in November, 1836. Daughter Catherine and son William were born in 1837 and 1838. Death records for Fred and Catherine list Adam Suntheimer and Sundheimer and Catherine Shy and Schew, respectively, as father and mother. Catherine Scheu is probably also the mother of William, given the timing.

After that, the situation is less clear. The family with an Adam and a Catherine are in Ohio in the 1850 and 1860 censuses, though Catherine's birth year varies; it's listed once as 1814 and once as 1817. Henry is born in 1843 and Caroline in 1845, but Adam, born 1847, is the real mystery.

Adam Sundheimer, 1847-1923, is pretty well documented, but at his death his obituary refers to a full sister, Barbara (1850-1923), and two half-sisters, who turn out to be Anna Sundheimer (1867-1942) and Mary Sundheimer (1875-1952). Further, his death certificate lists his parents as **Fred** Sundheimer and Mary Hostetler. Inconsistencies abound. The two half-sisters match Adam to an Adam Sundheimer in the 1870 census with Bina (Philippina) Sundheimer and daughters, which could be the Adam Sundheimer born in 1815—but the census says 1806. Any Adam from 1806 would be having a daughter at age 64, so maybe the age is off by ten years.

Adam's full sister, Barbara doesn't show up with the family in the 1850 census; she's born in October, so probably that's OK. But if she's Adam's full sister and Adam's mother is Mary Hostetler, then the mother in 1850 census about to give birth to Barbara ought to be Mary, but it's Catherine. On top of that, she doesn't show up with Adam's family in 1860, either.

The only self-consistent solution to the facts I have would seem to be another Adam, born 1847, with father Frederick Adam, born 1806, who had Adam and Barbara with Mary Hostetler and four daughters later with Philippina Lambright (Lembrich, from Ransweiler, but that's another story). I can't find any trace of that alternate set of people. I need help from someone closer to this family or with better research skills to lay out the real story.

In any case, something bad seems to happen to Adam's (1815) family after 1860. There are younger children Philippina, Louisa, Eva, and Andrew. Andrew is born in 1860, and by 1870, he is with the Hacar family as A. Sundimer. The Hacars are really the Haagers, and the wife, Charlotte, is a relation from Ransweiler, Charlotte Sundheimer. I see no further record of the younger girls, the older children are out on their own, and Adam the father has started his new family with Philippina Lembrich (Bina Lambright) by 1865.

If I've followed the correct Adam throughout, he dies between 1875 and 1880, or at least has left the family of four daughters by the time of the 1880 census.