

## Chapter 9

### Jacob Landeis in the Rhineland Pfalz

Jacob Landeis (**N1274**) is the next pivotal person in the family chronicle. Two major transitions occurred in his lifetime that were of fundamental importance in determining the life-course of the following generations: his move away from Neckarburken, and his later emigration to Tsarist Russia.

In 1789, nine years after the death of his father Nicolaus, Jacob appeared in the church records of the village of Leimersheim, on the west bank of the Rhine in the Palatinate. His decision to leave Neckarburken is understandable since the economic circumstances of his branch of the family seem to have been abysmal. Nicolaus had attempted unsuccessfully to emigrate to the French colony of "Cayenne," and as a consequence he and his family may have been reduced to the indentured status of *Leibeigenschaft*. When Jacob came of age, he faced the same situation as his father. He was a younger son in a junior collateral line within the Landeis family, removed from ownership of the grain mill. Others before him in the family had also left Neckarburken -- young men whose baptismal entries appeared in the church book, but who then disappeared from the records, with no death entries to indicate their fate.

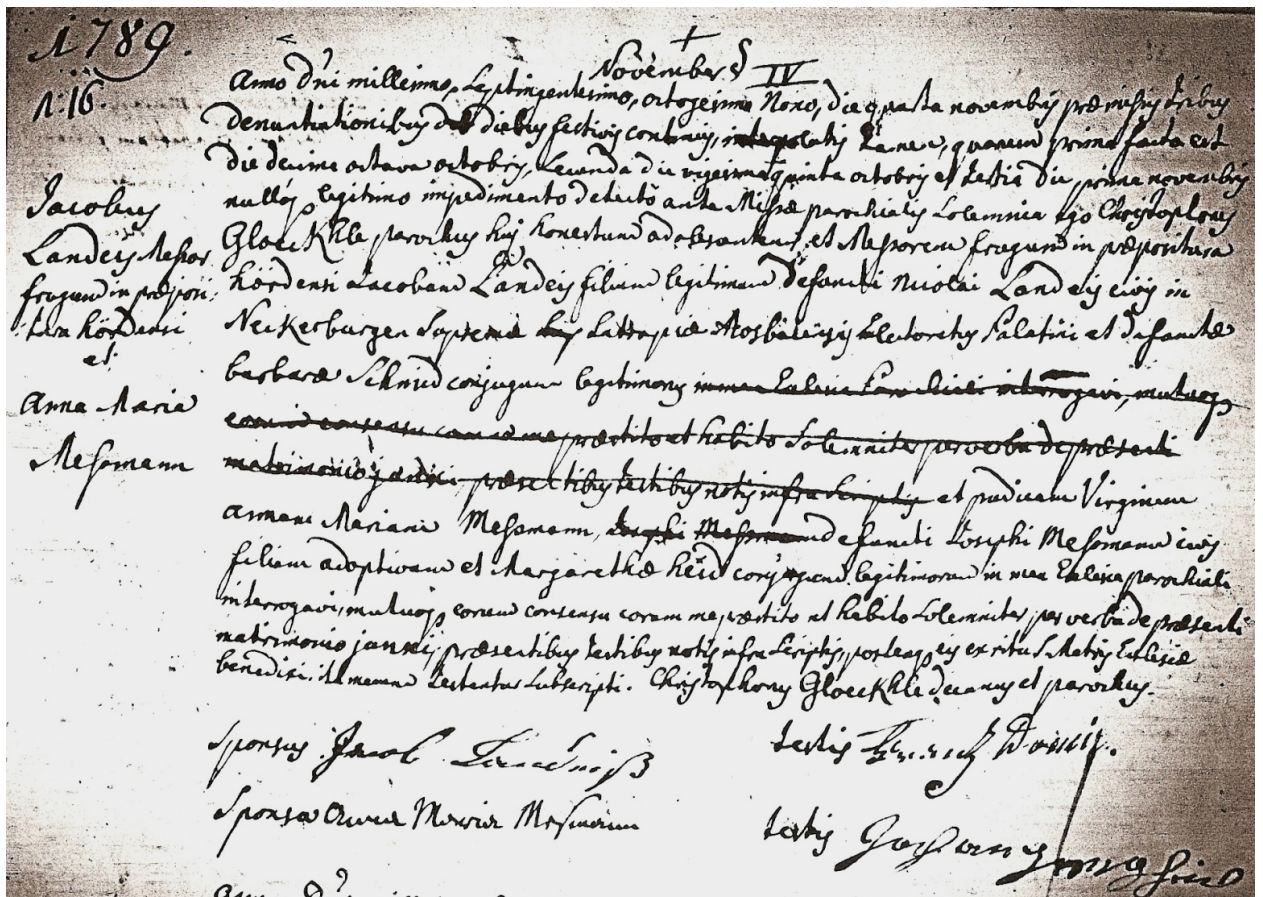
As we have seen in the previous chapter, members of the Landeis family left Neckarburken and settled in Mannheim, the royal residence city of *Kurfürst* Karl Theodor on the east bank of the Rhine. Johann Peter Landeis was married in Mannheim to Johanna Maria Zipff on April 23, 1749. They had several children and Johann Peter died there in January 1764. His identity is tentative. He was probably **LN129** the son of Nicolaus Landeis and Anna Barbara Bacher; however his marriage record shows him as the son of Johann Georg Landeis. If his identity in Neckarburken is correct, Johann Peter was the ninth child of Nicolaus, the mill-master, and he did not inherit the grainmill. Like other siblings in the family, he had to seek his fortune elsewhere. As we have seen, his brother Johann Nicolaus (**LN127**), the seventh child, also did not inherit the mill and he too left Neckarburken and made an unsuccessful attempt to emigrate to Cayenne, but had to return to his home village where he passed his remaining days in *Leibeigenschaft*. Johann Peter (**LN129**) had a twin brother Johann Georg (**LN128**), and both of them apparently left Neckarburken in adulthood.

Jacob would likely have been drawn to Mannheim by the earlier presence of Johann Peter. The territories of the Palatinate (*Kurpfalz*) encompassed large areas on both sides of the river, not only the Rhine Pfalz proper, but also the Neckar valley, including the district (*Oberamt*) of Mosbach in which Neckarburken was located. This meant that an avenue was open for Jacob to travel across the Rhine without leaving the royal jurisdiction in which he had been born.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The *Kurfürst* at that time was Karl Theodor (1724-1799), head of the Pfalz-Neuburg branch of the Wittelsbach family, who maintained his royal residence at Mannheim on the east bank of the Rhine. During his reign the Wittelsbach holdings had indeed grown quite large, and in 1777 they included not only the *Kurpfalz* on both sides of the Rhine, but Bavaria as well. Bavaria was owned by Maximilian III, titular head of a separate branch of the Wittelsbach family. After his death in 1777, Bavarian territories were inherited by Karl Theodor. After unification, the territories along the Rhine were referred to as the "Lower Pfalz" (*Unteren Pfalz*) to distinguish it

Another factor which may have played some role in Jacob's departure from Neckarburken is that the Neckar and Rhine valleys had been afflicted by periodic bad weather, which may have affected their livelihoods. The archives report that the winters of 1788 and 1789 were especially harsh, so bad in fact that the streams froze and the mills were without water, resulting in a shortage of flour.<sup>2</sup> The fact that the mills couldn't operate during those winters must have had an especially hard impact on the Landeis family. The governments in the Pfalz had begun stockpiling grain reserves already in 1771 to prepare for such eventualities. In 1789 state granaries were established in the wheat growing area of the Pfalz to address the critical shortages that had resulted from bad harvests.<sup>3</sup>



Marriage of Jacob Landeis and Anna Maria Messmann, Nov. 4, 1789<sup>4</sup>

from territories in the northern part of Bavaria, which were referred to as the "Upper Pfalz" (Oberpfalz). Karl Theodor strongly championed the Catholic faith. He died in 1799.

<sup>2</sup> Hacker 1987.

<sup>3</sup> Blanning 1983.

<sup>4</sup> The line in the marriage entry that was crossed out by the priest is repeated after he added the information on Joseph Messmann and Margaret Heid. Source: LDS microfilm #0367703.

The first evidence for Jacob's presence in the Pfalz is his marriage in 1789, recorded in the Catholic church book of Leimersheim, a small village below Germersheim near the Rhine. This is my translation of the Latin record:

1789 Record 16 -- Jacob Landeis crop measurer in the administrative center of Hördt, and Anna Maria Messmann.

In the year of our Lord one thousand seventeen hundred eighty-nine, the 4<sup>th</sup> day of November, after the banns [of marriage] were announced at Leimersheim on these days, the first on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, the second on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October, and the third on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, with no legitimate impediment detected, before a solemn Mass of the parish, I Christopher Gloeckhle pastor [united in marriage] this honorable young man and Crop Measurer in Hördt, Jacob Landeis, the legitimate son of the deceased Nicolas Landeis, citizen of Neckarburgen above [north of] Mosbach, the Satropy of the Elector of the Palatinate, with the chaste virgin Anna Maria Messmann, the adopted daughter of the deceased citizen Joseph Messmann and Margaretha Heid, a legally married couple in my parish church, when publicly asked [they] gave public consent in my presence, and I solemnly pronounced the words of matrimonial union, in the presence of the notable witnesses signed below, in accordance with the rites of the Blessed Holy Mother Church.

Thus testified by my hand below.

Spouse: Jacob Landeiss

Spouse: Anna Maria Messmann

Christopher Gloeckhle, Deacon and Pastor

Witness: Friedrich Domis

Witness: Johan Konigs

Anna Maria Messmann was referred to as a chaste virgin (*pudicam virginam*), which means that she had not been married before. We also note that she was the "adopted" daughter of the deceased citizen Joseph Messmann and his wife Margaret Heid. There is a gap in the church book for Leimersheim between 1729 and 1785, so there was no direct way to determine Anna Maria's full parentage. However, the mystery of why Annia Maria was "adopted" was solved by correspondence with a modern resident in Leimersheim. He reported that the proper spelling for the surname of her adopted father was "Messmang," which appears in the archives for Leimersheim.<sup>5</sup> Anna Maria was an illegitimate child of Margaret Heid, born Sept. 19, 1758 in Leimersheim. Joseph Messmang's first wife died, after which he remarried to Margaret Heid on May 7, 1764 and adopted her daughter Anna. Her biological father is unknown.<sup>6</sup> The Heid family had deep roots in Leimersheim and Margaret Heid's ancestors can be traced in the church book back into the 1600s.

As was customary, Jacob Landeis and Anna Maria Heid-Messman were married in her home village, but they settled in nearby Hördt where Jacob was a citizen in residence pursuing his profession. Hördt is set back slightly from the west bank of the Rhine river to avoid the periodic flooding of the river. Germersheim on the Rhine was the major administrative center for

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<sup>5</sup> The surname Messmann denoted someone who transported or sold dung, it was a variant of Mistmann, from Middle High German *Mist*, Middle Low German, Dutch *Mest* 'dung', 'cesspool'.

<sup>6</sup> The person I corresponded with in Dec., 2000, was Franz Pfadt, who provided the background for the Messman(g) family and Anna Maria Heid.

that area. It was also a fortified site because it was a strategic ferry crossing point on the Rhine. The lowland area, stretching from Germersheim toward Landau, was a major wheat growing region at that time, and it remains so today. These villages were just below the southern border of the territory owned by the Archbishopric of Speyer -- an extremely large diocese stretching from the *Pfälzerwald* on the west to the Neckar valley on the east, encompassing over 300 parishes, 80 villages, and about 30,000 people. These villages, extending south into Alsace, were strongly Catholic, and they remain so today.



### Jacob Landeis' Profession in Historical Context

The Latin marriage entry states that Jacob Landeis was a *Messor Frugum in Praepositura Hördensi*. The latter part of the phrase refers to Hördt as an administrative center of the tax district, and there was a warehouse there where Jacob was probably employed. *Messor frugum* is ambiguous. In the opinion of the staff with whom I spoke at the Institute for History and Ethnic Research of the Pfalz in Kaiserslautern, the Latin phrase *messor frugum* is a Latin rendering of the German *Frucht Messer*, which means "crop measurer" or "crop tester."

This interpretation is supported by the later baptismal entry for Jacob's fourth child, Anton, in 1794 which describes his profession in slightly different terms, this time in German: *Jacob Landeiss Administrations Mültterer in der Schatsserei Hördt*. The reference to the "treasury" (*Schatsserei*) of Hördt reinforces the previous Latin reference to it as an administrative center in the tax district. The word *Mültterer* is also ambiguous, but in the context of the marriage record in which Jacob was referred to as a "crop measurer" its meaning can be determined with some reliability. One simple translation is that *Mültterer* is an alternate term for "miller," but that can be misleading because Jacob's responsibility does not seem to have been restricted to the traditional grinding of grain.<sup>7</sup>

Another administrative title, which may be closer to Jacob's actual role, is *Mittlerer*, which could be loosely translated as "middleman." In the 18th century the ministry in charge of the royal treasury for the *Kurpfalz* had responsibility for the collection of taxes (both in money and in produce). Each local tax district (*Kellerei*) was headed by the *Keller*, who oversaw the collection of produce and issued payments to all workers in money, wine, grain, wood, etc. After state expenses were met, any remaining produce was auctioned off and the proceeds were turned over to the state ministry. The *Mittlerer* was the special assistant who supervised the delivery of produce by the farmers, certified the quality and amounts that were placed in storage in the warehouse, and likely also conducted the auctions of surplus.<sup>8</sup>

In my opinion, then, Jacob Landeis was the official middleman at the state warehouse in Hördt, with the responsibility of measuring, certifying, and recording the amounts of produce delivered by the local farmers. All these possible interpretations (*Mülterer*, *Müller*, *Mittlerer*) obviously have closely related meanings. Jacob seems to have found employment at one of the new state granaries established in 1789 in the Pfalz, the same year when he became married. It is reasonable to assume that he had some familiarity with mill operations while working for his uncle, Johann Jacob (N124) in Neckarburken, and he may have been able to parlay these skills in the Pfalz. His connection with the state treasury facility in Hördt also seems to have carried some prestige, as shown by the baptismal sponsors for some of his children.

#### The Family of Jacob and Anna Maria Landeis

Jacob and Anna Maria had eight children, all born in Hördt between 1790 and 1804. The baptismal entries in the Catholic churchbook are signed by the fathers and the godparents, and their various titles are stated. It is notable that many of the signatures are crude, as we might expect, but Jacob's signature is quite calligraphic, which indicates that he had received some education.

Their first child, Maria Elisabeth Petronilla, was born on April 15, 1790.<sup>9</sup> Her rather extravagant name was derived from her baptismal sponsor, "the noble young lady, Maria Elisabeth Petronilla Breunig, [daughter?] of the legate in charge of the domestic economy." The use of three names in baptismal entries was an unusual practice, two names were more typical.

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<sup>7</sup> Linnartz 1958 states that the term for "miller" has several alternate forms in old records -- *Mülterer*, *Müller*, *Müldner*, *Miltner*, and so on.

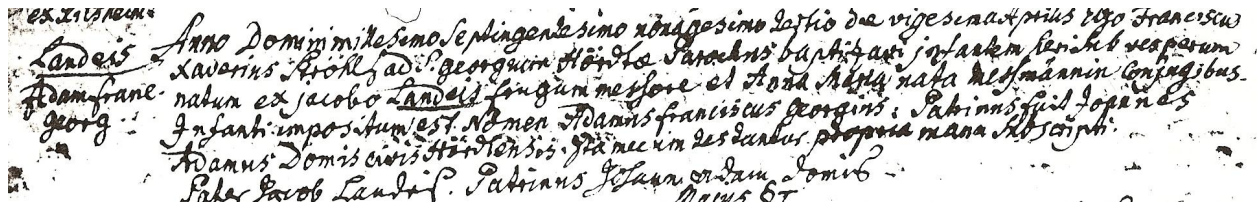
<sup>8</sup> Mörz 1986, p. 461.

<sup>9</sup> LDS microfilm #0247717.

Noble families tended to use three, or even more names, as a mark of prestige and the priest was usually careful to include all their titles. In this case, since a woman of status consented to be the godmother, it may be indicative of Jacob's rank with the regional authorities in the *Kellerei* at Hördt.

Their second child, Maria Appollonia, was born on July 12, 1791. The godmother was Maria Appollonia Klein, wife of Anton Klein, "tax collector" and citizen of Hördt. This again indicates Jacob's tie with the local civic administration.

The third child (who is the next lineal ancestor in this chronicle), was Adam Franz (Francis) Georg, born on April 19, 1793. The godfather was Johann Adam Domis, a citizen of Hördt. The baby's second name, Francis, was probably given in honor of the priest, Fr. Francis Kröhl. The third name, Georg, was perhaps given in honor of the patron saint of the parish. The later census records in Russia refer to him simply as Adam, which was the main name he used.



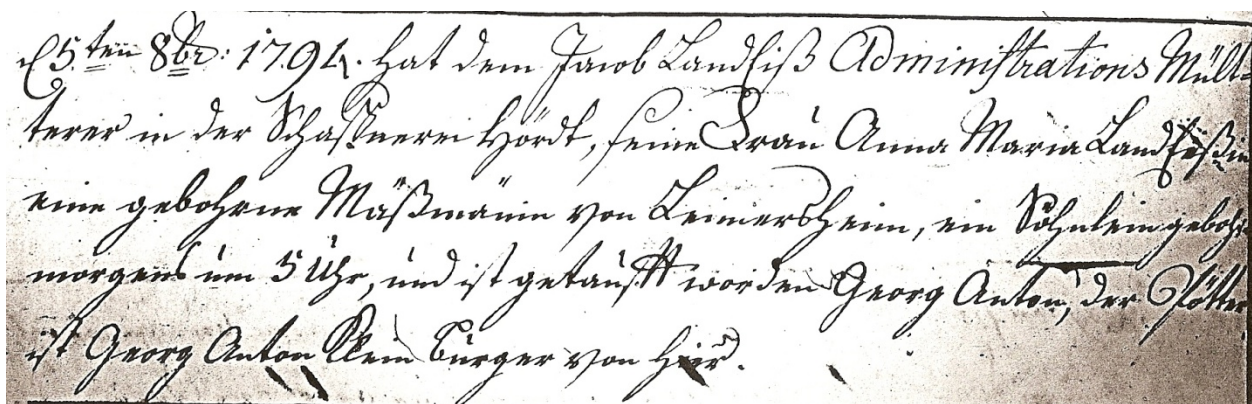
Handwritten Latin church record of the birth of Adam Franz Georg Landeis on April 19, 1793. The text is written in a dense, cursive Gothic script. It begins with "Anno Domini millesimo septingentesimo nonagesimo tertio die vigesima quarta mensis Aprilis" and describes the baptism of an infant by Father Jacob Landeis and godfather Johann Adam Domis. The names of the parents, Jacob Landeis and Anna Maria Messmann, are clearly visible. The record concludes with the names of the priest, Francis Xavier Kröhl, and the godfather, Johann Adam Domis.

#### Birth of Adam Franz Georg Landeis, April 19, 1793<sup>10</sup>

"In the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred ninety three, day twenty of April, I Francis Xavier Kröhl at Saint George Hördt parish, have baptized an infant, born yesterday just before evening, to Jacob Landeis, crop measurer, and Anna Maria, born Messmann, a married couple. The infant was given the name Adam Francis Georg. The godfather was Johann Adam Domis, citizen of the city of Hördt. This is attested by my hand, written below. Father Jacob Landeis. Godfather Johann Adam Domis."

The fourth child, Anton was born on Oct. 5, 1794. The parish priest who wrote all previous entries, Fr. Francis Xavier Kröhl, disappeared in 1794 and a new pastor took over at Hördt. This was likely due to the law that had been passed in 1793, which made all priests who refused to swear an oath of allegiance to the French Constitution subject to the death penalty. Many priests fled across the Rhine, and as a result there are gaps in the church book records around that time. In the interim, Anton's birth was recorded by a priest who wrote in an extremely florid German Gothic script. This entry describes Jacob's profession as the *Administrations Mültterer*, which has been discussed above. Although the title of Georg Anton Klein is not stated, he was the local "tax collector" and husband to Maria Appollonia Klein, who had served as godmother to Jacob Landeis' daughter in 1791:

<sup>10</sup> LDS microfilm 0247613.



Am 5ten 8ber 1794. hat dem Jacob Landeiß Administrations Müllter  
terer in der Hofmannshardt, sein Weib Anna Maria Landeiß  
ein gebornes Mässmann von Leimersheim, ein Pöhlungsbab  
morgen um 5 Uhr, und ist getauft. A worden Georg Anton, der Pöhl  
ist Georg Anton Klein Bürger von hier.

### Birth of Anton Landeis, Oct. 5, 1794 in Hördt

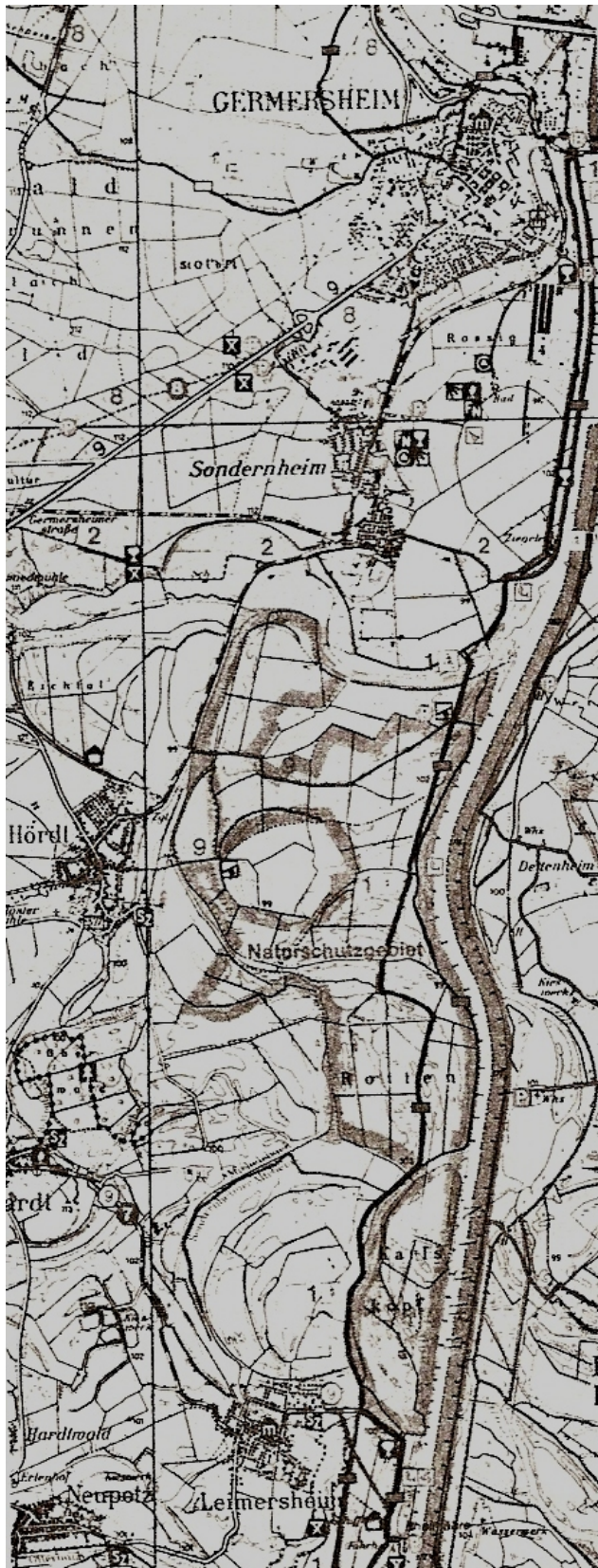
"On the 5<sup>th</sup> of October ["8ber"] 1794 at 5 A.M. a little son was born to Jacob Landeiss, Administrations Mültterer in the Treasury Hördt, and his wife Anna Maria Landeiss, born Mässmann of Leimersheim, and was baptized. Georg Anton Klein, a citizen here, is the godfather."

Jacob and Anna had eight children in total. Their fifth child, Maria Catherina, was born on April 14, 1796. She died the following year on May 26, 1797, scarcely one year old. On October 11, 1798 their next daughter Francisca was born. Another son Daniel was born in 1800, although he doesn't appear in the Hördt church book (he is listed among their children later in the Russian census records, after the family emigrated in 1809). Their eighth and final child Margaret was born on August 2, 1804. Her godmother was listed as Margaret Messmann, "a married woman from Leimersheim." This probably was Anna Maria's married sister. The church book of Hördt also reports that on July 9, 1804 the four oldest children (Adam, Anton, Elisabeth, and Appollonia) were confirmed, along with 36 other boys and 35 girls in the parish

Jacob's position as crop measurer for the Administration at Hördt is not mentioned after the 1794 baptismal record, so it unknown if he managed to retain this position after this date.



Jacob Landeis



Germersheim and Hördt  
on the West Bank of the Rhine