

THE JACOB ELLER FAMILY OF ROANOKE COUNTY, VIRGINIA

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This essay will explore the origins and identify the first generation descendants of Jacob ELLER, wife Magdalene, who settled in what is now Roanoke County, Virginia, in the last decade of the eighteenth century. By doing so it will address two questions of concern to Jacob Eller descendants. The first is that of his ancestry. What is known of him, his wife, and their family backgrounds? How is Jacob Eller related to other ELLER families? Secondly, the paper will explore early connections of the Jacob Eller family with the Church of the Brethren, known popularly in the nineteenth century as "Dunkers" but more formally as German Baptists. At question is when the family became associated with the Brethren. As will be noted later, the problem of Jacob Eller's origins and the family's Brethren identity are not unrelated. These are questions which should be addressed before a definitive Jacob Eller family history can be compiled.

Defining Jacob and Magdalene Eller in historical terms presents problems typical of research in early German-American family history. There are few existing church records or family papers. Legal documents which might be helpful are often vague or nonexistent. Spelling was not standardized in the early nineteenth century and diminutive forms of names ("Rebecca" and "Becky" to cite a clear example) were used interchangeably. Family tradition about certain ancestors is unclear, inconsistent, and in many cases lost.

It seems clear that the name ELLER is of German origin and means literally "one who lives near an alder tree" (German: Erle), or it may have some connection with the noun Ell-e which means a yard, as in a unit of measurement. The E-1-1-e-r spelling has remained remarkably standard, although variations including E-1-e-r, A-1-1-e-r, and E-1-1-o-r- have been found in records referring to a Jacob Eller descendant. There are literally scores of persons (and a few place names) with E-1-1-e-r spelling in West Germany today. Eller immigrants continued to come to the United States well into the nineteenth century so that there are numerous ELLER families in various sections of the country who appear to have no connection with the Roanoke County, Virginia, family.

The problem of identification for Jacob Eller begins in America as early as the mid-eighteenth century. Between the 1740s and 1810s no fewer than twenty adult E-1-1-e-r males (this spelling) immigrated to the colonies and the newly formed United States. Three of these had the Christian or given name of Jacob. These are: Johann Jacob Eller, ship "Sally," December 31, 1772 and Jacob Eller, ship "Favourite." September 5, 1785--both of whom took the oath of allegiance in Pennsylvania; and a Jacob Eller who arrived in North Carolina in 1765 and took the oath, there. Presumably many of these families were related, Although there is no definitive ELLER family study. Interesting too is the fact that although many of these families came into the country through Philadelphia, few remained in Pennsylvania. There are only scattered references to Ellers in Pennsylvania records before 1800. The 1790 census reveals that only one Eller family lived in the state (Germantown, Philadelphia). Apparently most moved south. There are three E-1-1-e-r households in Maryland (two in Washington County) and eleven in Rowan County, North Carolina. Unfortunately, there are no existing 1790 or 1800 census returns for Virginia.²

Back to Jacob and Magdalene Eller. Family tradition is rather strong that three brothers arrived in Philadelphia, presumably from the Rhine Valley of Germany (Rhineland or Palatinate) before 1800. With other German immigrants they made their way south down the Blue Ridge mountains into Virginia. Jacob settled in what was then Botetourt County (created from Augusta in 1769-1770) while the two unnamed brothers continued south and settled in North Carolina. This tradition, while never thoroughly studied, is plausible in that there clearly was a major migration of Germans from Pennsylvania into Maryland and down the Blue Ridge into the Carolinas, beginning in the early decades of the eighteenth century.³ According to an Eller genealogy published in 1925, three ELLER brothers-- Jacob, Christian, and Melchior--do appear to have settled in Rowan County, North Carolina in the 1760's. Details concerning their travel route and point(s) of departure, however, are lacking. This Jacob Eller died in Rowan County in 1782. Another, younger Jacob Eller is picked up in the 1790 census who continued to live in western North Carolina well into the nineteenth century.⁴

In addition, there were two Jacob Ellers who, assuming them to have been young men when they landed in Philadelphia, would have been of the approximate age of the Virginia Jacob. Our Jacob is enumerated in the 1810 census for Botetourt County. Both he and wife are shown as over age 45, meaning that they were born sometime before 1765. The household at that time consisted of six children: a female between 16 and 26, a male and female between 10 and 26, and two males and one female under age 10.⁵

The "three brothers" tradition was briefly presented in JACOB ELLER FAMILY TREE (Salem, Va., mimeograph, 1948) by Henry C. Eller, now of Bridgewater,

Virginia. This brief but important study was put together from information collected and preserved by his father, Christian E. Eller, and others. This family tree has been used by genealogists of related families such as BRUBAKER, BARNHART, AND FLORA. While THE JACOB ELLER FAMILY TREE is incomplete and contains some minor errors, it still provides the core of what is known about early Jacob Eller descendants.

One of the genealogists who used Henry Eller's 1948 compilation was James W. Hook. Hook was a descendant of a North Carolina ELLER family (Virginia Eller and James Hook, married in 1867) and in several publications endeavored to trace various branches of these two families. The last of his books, GEORGE MICHAEL ELLER AND DESCENDANTS OF HIS IN AMERICA (New Haven, Conn.: for the Author, 1957) is a thorough updating of the earlier publications and is based on considerable research. By including Henry Eller's material, however, Hook created a past for Jacob Eller totally outside the Virginia family's tradition.

Briefly, Hook theorized that our Jacob was a younger son of George Michael Eller, a German immigrant who died in Frederick County, Maryland, in 1778, but who had earlier lived in western North Carolina where the other ELLER families had settled. His will names several children, including his "youngest son Jacob" who was given the family Bible. Three of his known sons, Peter, Leonard, and George, all lived in North Carolina.⁶

The evidence for Jacob Eller of Virginia being the son named in George Michael's will is circumstantial, but hardly conclusive. Jacob would have been of the approximate age to have been a younger son, that is, born in the 1760s. And, Frederick County, Maryland records do indicate that a Jacob Eller was active there in the 1790s. He married Mary Willjard in 1792, voted "Federalist" in the presidential election of 1796, and is enumerated there in the census of 1800. By the 1790s, however, our Jacob was well established in Botetourt County, Virginia. Hook believed the Frederick County Jacob to have been a son of Henry Eller (d. 1788 in Frederick County) whom he suggested was a brother of George Michael.⁷

In support of his theory that the Virginia Jacob was a son of George Michael Eller, Hook cites the westward movement of David Eller, an older son of Jacob to infer a relationship between the two families. Unfortunately, David Eller has been completely lost from the Virginia family tradition and was therefore not recorded in THE JACOB ELLER FAMILY TREE. Extensive but unpublished research by Charles E. Martin between 1978 and 1980 demonstrates that David moved from Virginia to Montgomery County, Ohio in the mid 1820s, to Preble County, same state in the mid 1830s, and from there to Hamilton County, Indiana, sometime in the late 1840s.⁸ Hook learned of the existence of David Eller through a reading of Jacob

Eller's probate records, census returns, and from a brief reference to him in a Hamilton County, Indiana, history published in 1915. David's move west did parallel somewhat that of Leonard Eller, a known son of George Michael. He moved from North Carolina to Miami County, Ohio in 1801, and from there to Hamilton County, Indiana in 1834. Hook's inference is that David followed his "uncle" Leonard both to Ohio and Indiana. Such conjecture is not without merit, except that there is nothing in deed, probate, census, or other records which prove that the two men had any financial ties, or that they even knew each other.⁹

There are other problems with Hook's theory concerning the origins of Jacob Eller. For example, three of Jacob Eller's daughters still living in 1880 and enumerated in the Federal census that year indicate a belief that both parents were born in Virginia,¹⁰ If Jacob were a son of George Michael, he would more likely have been born in Maryland or North Carolina. Furthermore, Jacob's son David was born c1782 (according to a now lost grave marker), and David's children believed that he too was born in Virginia. This means that there is a rather strong family tradition which places Jacob in Virginia far earlier than Hook's theory would allow.

Finally, there is a weak argument from silence. George Michael's Bible, important enough to be mentioned in the 1778 will, is not in the possession of any known Jacob Eller descendant, nor is there any known family tradition about such an important book. Given the family's strong ties to the German Baptist Brethern in the following generations, surely it would have been preserved. A Bible is not mentioned in the Jacob Eller's will or in an inventory of articles in his estate which were sold in 1830.

Unfortunately, for the present, Jacob Eller's background remains unclear. There simply is no hard evidence to support Hook's belief that he was the son of George Michael Eller. It does seem probable, however, that he was related in some way to one or more of the Carolina ELLER families.

The background of his wife Magdalene does not help resolve the matter. That her name was Magdalene (or Magdalena/Magdalen/Magalein) is without question since it appears with Jacob on an early deed record in Botetourt County. Some family researchers have suggested that her maiden name was PETERS, and indeed, this is the name recorded on the family record in the Latter Day Saints church archives.¹¹ Documentation of her family name is circumstantial at best. There is no known recorded marriage of Jacob Eller to a Magdalene of any name before 1800 in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia or North Carolina. Obviously more research on her background needs to be undertaken before the full Jacob Eller family history can be completed.

The land records of Jacob Eller in what is now Roanoke County (created from Botetourt in 1838) are helpful in locating him. As mentioned previously, the earliest first known reference dates Eller in Roanoke County in the 1790s. On July 19, 1790, the Commonwealth of Virginia conveyed to him 150 acres on "Wolf Run, a Branch of Back Creek." This tract was apparently part of a land warrant originally issued to one John Minter (or Minten?) in 1788. Minter assigned a portion of the warrent to Humphrey Smith, who in turn assigned it to Eller. A few years, in 1804, Eller sold this same property to his in-law, John Brubaker for \$500.¹² Research to date has not been able to locate "Wolf Run" or the 150 acre tract. It may well have been located in Franklin County (created in 1787).

The farm which until a few years ago was known as the "Eller homeplace" was conveyed to Jacob Eller from Jacob Yest in 1799. Located approximately seven miles southwest from the county seat at Salem, "on the headwaters of Craven Creek," this property of 470 acres was part of survey originally granted by the Commonwealth of Virginia to Thomas Harrison in 1790. Harrison sold a portion of this grant to John Harris, who in turn sold it to Yest. Yest had it resurveyed, then sold 470 acres of it to Eller for \$1165.67. His title was not recorded until 1802.¹³ The "sheepskin deed" (land grant) which contains a survey description of the property patented to Harrison has remained in the Eller family until the present.

Jacob Eller also acquired an additional 49 acres next to the Craven Creek land on "Mudlick, a Branch of the Roanoke." This was obtained from the estate of Abraham Statler, deceased, in 1819, although Eller was not a Statler heir.¹⁴ This brought his real property to approximately 519 acres.

The only other land transaction known to involve Jacob Eller is intriguing, but vague. In 1814 the Commonwealth of Virginia, under a newly enacted law, moved to collect back taxes of \$3.25 on 400 acres which Jacob Eller owed for the years 1797 and 1798. The location of this property is unknown, as are the details as to when and how Eller acquired it. The tax could have been on the Craven Creek farm. Eller may have rented here prior to purchase in 1799 and part of the now lost purchase agreement was to pay taxes owed by Yest. The Back Creek property to which he then did have title, consisted of only 150 acres, and it was transferred in total to John Brubaker in 1804. In any event, the county Deputy Sheriff certified to the Commonwealth "that no property could be found," and declared the 400 acres legally for sale in a Richmond newspaper. Fifty acres was sold in August, 1814 for \$3.45 to Frederick Barst, who was subsequently given a Sheriff's deed, recorded May 21, 1817¹⁵. What makes this transaction even more unusual is that Garst was Eller's son-in-law, he having married Susan Eller in 1809.

There are few family traditions about Jacob Eller. It is assumed that he farmed but he may also have liked to hunt, and if so was probably absent from the family and farm for long periods. It is entirely possible that he spoke both German and English and he could apparently sign his name in English script. Local records have him being appointed overseer of the road" in 1799. According to a C. E. Eller statement, Jacob's two story house (cabin?) stood on the homeplace close to where his son Abraham and later his son J.W. Eller built homes.¹⁶ Interestingly enough, in 1805 Jacob Eller sold to Michael Danner various household and kitchen furniture, "shop tools used for making wagons." as well as a stud horse and cow, apparently in an attempt to settle a debt.¹⁷

When Jacob Eller prepared his will in May of 1830 he had sufficient real property to make a detailed bequest to his wife and children. Since the will and the settlement of the estate provides the clearest identification of his children, it merits careful attention. His wife (unnamed) was allowed to remain in the house where they lived "throughout her natural life." half the garden, a clock, two beds, a cupboard, table and other furniture and household items, a mare, saddle and bridle, and \$200 in cash. Two sons, John and Abraham, were to equally divide his plantation of "about five hundred acres" after it was surveyed, each son posting an appropriate bond. John, also an executor of the estate, was to receive that portion of the division on which he then lived. Abraham received various farming implements. An unmarried daughter Rebecca received various household items, including a spinning wheel, a saddle and bridle, a cow and a calf, as well as \$50 in cash. Further, it was Jacob's desire that she live with her mother during her lifetime "and if she thinks proper to remain after the death of her mother in the house where they both occupy and is to have the use of the upper room in the said house so long as she conducts herself decently." Finally, Eller directed that his remaining personal property be sold at public auction and that the proceeds be distributed equally among his children and wife. To be included in this distribution were the heirs of Susan Garst, deceased, wife of Frederick Garst.¹⁸

The sale was held November 12, 1830, which meant that Jacob probably died sometime in early fall. The location of his grave and that of Magdalene, death date unknown, has not been preserved. Both are probably buried on the family farm.¹⁹ According to estate administration papers filed in January, 1840, his real property was valued at \$2,538.17 and a division of \$239.99 paid to nine heirs, including Magdalene. These heirs were: Henry Brubaker, wife Sarah; Frederick Garst; Peter Himley, wife Nancy; Isaac Wertz, wife Rebecca; David Eller; Daniel Peters, wife Elizabeth; Abraham Eller; and John Eller.²⁰ These then are the known children and grandchildren of Jacob Eller. They are arranged in order of marriage, not in order of birth:

1. DAVID ELLER, c1782-1858; m. 1)Anna Brubaker, 1785-1825 on December 21, 1802 in Franklin County, VA; 2) Elizabeth Foutz (1825), and 3) Mary Martin (1827),

the latter two in Montgomery County, OH. Anna Brubaker was a daughter of John and Anna Myers Brubaker who moved to Franklin County in 1781 and to whom Jacob Eller sold land in 1804. David Eller moved to Ohio in the mid 1820s, then to Hamilton County, IN in the late 1840s. He is not in the 1850 census and died without a will or property (intestate).-Several children in the 1850 census are enumerated in other households, Preble County, OH.

Children by Anna Brubaker:

Catherine Eller, 1806-?; m. William R. Bowles
Mary Eller, 1808-1882; m. (as the 2nd wife) William
Bowser, ?-1842; 2) George Miller, ?-1856
Daniel Eller, 1810-? (unmarried)
Abraham Eller, c1815-? (unmarried)
Andrew Eller, 1819-1896; m. 1) Elizabeth Auchenback,
1816-1868; 2) Hannah M. Smeltzer; 3) Elizabeth Bright
Samuel Eller, c1825-? (unmarried)

Children of Elizabeth Foutz:

Joseph Eller, 1826-?

Children of Mary Martin:

Nancy Eller, 1828-?; m. Zachariah Clark
Benjamin Eller, 1830-1870; m. Diana Dacus
Henry Eller, 1834-?

2. SARAH ("SALOMA") ELLER²¹, c. 1787-1882; m. (2nd wife to) HENRY BRUBAKER, 1775-184B, on January 24, 1810 in Franklin County. Brubaker was a brother to Anna Brubaker (above). He owned land on Peters Creek, Roanoke County, where he bequeathed the land for the Peter Creek Brethern meetinghouse. He fathered nine children by his first wife, Elizabeth Flory.

Children by Sarah Eller:

John Brubaker,* 1811-1887; m. Susannah Flory, 1816-1886
Nancy Brubaker, 1813-?; m. Christian Wertz
Tobias Brubaker, 1814 (d. infant)
Benjamin Brubaker, 1816-1891; m. 1) Mary Garst, 1822- 184B; 2) Susan (nah) Wolfe
1820-1903
Magdalene Brubaker, 1820-1892; m. 1) Samuel Franz; 2) David Blocker, 1812-1886

Abraham Brubaker, 1820-1898; m. Elizabeth Rivercomb
Isaac Brubacker, 1825-1897(8?); m. Christine Beckner 1828?-1910
Elias Brubaker,* 1828-1899; m. Susan Beckner
Elizabeth Brubaker, 1829-1899; m. John Beckner
Moses E. Brubaker, 1831-1904; m. Susannah Grisso

3. SUSAN ("Susanna") ELLER,²² c1778-1827; m. FREDERICK GARST (Jr.), 1784-1850, on December 28, 1809. This is undoubtedly the same Garst that purchased 50 acres from Virginia in 1814 to settle Jacob Eller's back taxes. He and his wife lived in Botetourt County until c1826 when the family relocated to near Jonesboro, Tennessee. Children:

Samuel Garst, 1810-1876; m. Susannah Peffley
Jacob Garst, 1812-1893; m. 1) -Wrightsman; 2) Fanny Sherfy, 1817-1898
David Gart, 1814-1886; m.1) m. 2)Anna Bashor, 1808-1895
Magdalena Garst, 1816-1906; m. Abraham Sherfy, 1818-1866
Nancy Garst, 1817-1860; m. Samuel Sherfy,* 1817-1896
Henry Garst, 1818-1898; m. Mary Bowman, 1820-1890
Catherine Garst, 1820-1911; m. Richard Deakins, 1798-1873
Sarah Garst, 1822-1917; m. Michael Bashor, 1811-?
Elizabeth Garst, 1824-1892; m. David Bowman, 1828-1896
Joel Garst, 1824-1892; m. Catherine Sherfy, 1822-?

Frederick Garst married 2) Sarah Franz and ten more children were added to his family. Many of the Eller-Garst children resided in the Jonesboro area.

4. ELIZABETH ELLER, c1793-aft.1880; M. DANIEL PETERS, c1782-aft.1850. The family resided in Franklin County at the census of 1850. Known children:
(a first cousin, see JOHN ELLER family below)

Rebecca Peters, c1816-?; m. Henry Donahue
Moses Peters, c1819-?; m. Rebecca Barnhart 1626-1903
Jonathan Peters, c1823-?
Magdalene Peters, c1829-?; m. Jacob Eller 1823-1907
Aaron Peters, c1831-?; m. Frances Flora
Samuel Peters, c1833-?; m. Hannah Flora, 1830-?

5. JOHN ("Johnny") ELLER,* c1795-1871; M. CATHERINE BRUBAKER, 1794-?1880 on February 19, 1818. Catherine was a sister of Anna Brubaker and Henry Brubaker (above) --all children of John and Anna Myers Brubaker. John Eller lived on part of Jacob Eller's Craven Creek property, seven miles southwest of Salem. He was a Brethern minister.

Lavina Eller, 1826-?; m. John Deaton; 2) Samuel Danner
George Eller, 1821-?; m. Nancy Sloan
Jacob Eller, 1823-1907; m. ?I)Susan Fisher 2)Magdalene Peters, c1829-?
Joel W. Eller, 1825-1902; m. Martha Reynolds
Abraham J. Eller.* 1828-1923; m. Saloma Flora, 1834-1919
John B. Eller, 1831-1912; m. D)Marly Flora, 1829-?; 2) Sarah Weddle Flora
Henry Eller, 1837-1912; m. Harriet Reynolds
Ann(a) Eller, 1835-1919; m. James Parker
Catherine Eller, 1841-?; m. 1) Carey F.Johns; 2) John B. Peters

6. NANCY ELLER, c 1800-?; m. PETER HIMLEY on February 24, 1820. His name is also spelled HIMLECK and HIMLICK. This family is not in the 1850 census for Virginia.. Himley was present at the sale of personal property for Jacob Eller's estate in 1830, and he received a share of the estate for his wife in 1840. Himleck bought land in 1819 from John and Daniel Barnhart, and in 1825 from John Stoner. No other information.

7. ABRAHAM ("Abram") ELLER, 1801-?1870; m. Mary (Polly) WERTZ (WIRTZ), on March 31, 1831. They lived on a portion of Jacob Eller's Craven Creek land, seven miles southwest from Salem in Roanoke County on what became known as the "Eller homeplace." Children:

Anna F. Eller, 1832-1906; m. 1) Frances Asberry Deaton, 1827-1865; 2) John W. Deaton 1838-1911
Magdalene Eller, 1833-1894; m. Joseph W. Barnhart 1832-1900
John W. Eller,* 1836-1899; m. 1) Leah Barnhart 1836-1865; 2) Hannah Brubaker, 1842-1902
Eliza Eller, 1838-1926; m. John B. Naff,* 1836-1905
Sarah Eller, c1838-1921; m. James Neff
David Eller, c1840-?; m. Julia Neff
Christian Eller, 1846-1866 (unmarried)
Abraham C. Eller, 1848-1924; m. Salome Brubaker, 1850-1921
Amanda Eller, c1848-c1869 (unmarried)
Francis Asberry Eller,* 1851-1938; m. Elizabeth (Bettie) Brubaker, 1855-1941

Nannie Eller, c1854-1945; m. Daniel R. Brubaker, 16501928

8. REBECCA ELLER, c1810-?; m. ISAAC WERTZ (WIRTZ) c1813-1891 on June 9, 1832. The family lived in Franklin County at the census of 1850. Known children:

Magdaline Wertz, 1832-1911; m. Henry Laprad

Ann(a) Wertz, c1835-?; m. Abraham Barnhart

Catherine Wertz, c1836-?

Noah Wertz, c1839-?

Samuel E. Wertz, 1841-1928; m. Barbara 1841-1931

*indicates a Brethern minister),

James Hook also suggests another son, Jacob, based on the fact that a second Jacob Eller, age 26-45, appears in the 1820 census for Botetourt County. His household consisted of female over 45, a female 26-45, three males under 26, and a female under 16.²³ Our Jacob in 1810 had a male "under 10" that cannot be explained in terms of known sons. However, this child is clearly not old enough to be the second 1820 Jacob. The 1810 male could have a son that did not survive or the child of a relative. In any event, the second 1820 Jacob is not in the 1830 census for Botetourt County and is otherwise unknown. Hook and Henry Eller also list a daughter Magdalene based on the fact that she received an equal share of Jacob Eller's estate. As noted earlier,, however, this is Eller's wife, not daughter.

The ELLERS and the BRETHERN

Having thus identified the children of Jacob Eller a second task is to explore the early relationship of this family to the Church of the Brethern. Between 1800 and 1980 many descendants in the next four or so generations have had close ties to the Brethern, not only in Virginia, but in the Midwest, Kansas and Pacific Coast states as well. For example, among Jacob's direct male descendants (sons David, John, Abraham) there are 20 ordained ministers.²⁴ (See Appendix I for names and biographical information) This list is easily doubled when the female lines of BRUBAKER, GARST, and WERTZ are added. Literally hundreds of Eller descendants have served the Brethern in other ways: local church offices (deacon, moderator and clerk), church school teachers, national and district committees and

staff, volunteer service workers, missionaries, even college faculty. How did this relationship of the family to the Brethern begin?

The origins of the German Baptist movement may be traced back to eighteenth century Germany. Early Brethern were Protestant dissenters who for good conscience believed they could not remain within the state churches of Europe (Lutheran, Reformed). They developed out of the Radical Pietism, a reform effort that sought to strengthen the evangelical fervor and spiritual life of the state churches. Brethern were also strongly influenced by the Mennonites (Anabaptists) whose emphasis on nonresistance (biblical pacifism), separation of church and state, living simply, community life, and nonconformity reflect the sixteenth century Radical Reformation.²⁵ In America the Brethern became known for their unique form of trine immersion baptism, love feast (communion) with footwashing, plain dress, and refusal to participate in military service.

The ELLER name is not found in existing lists of Anabaptist martyrs or in extensive compilations of early Mennonite families which have been made for Switzerland, Germany, and Holland. There were ELLERS in eighteenth century Pietism. Perhaps the most well known of these was Elias Eller of Elberfeld. In 1727 he and his wife founded the mystical, millennialist sect, but because of persecution this group was forced to an estate some thirty miles distant. Here the group founded what became the city of Ronsdorf, a name by which Eller's sect was widely known. While Elias Eller's views were somewhat extreme, dissention among the sect's leaders following his death in 1750 forced the congregation back into the conformity of the state Reformed Church.²⁶

It is possible that many of the colonial ELLER immigrants to America were Pietists, perhaps without affiliating with either Lutheran or Reformed Churches. Few ELLERS may be found in the baptismal or marriage records of these groups. James Hook was the first non-Brethern family researcher to associate the family with the German Baptists, the first group of whom arrived in America In 1719. Still there are no ELLERS mentioned among the scant records of the Brethern in either Europe or Colonial America. A Henry E-1-e-r was baptized in the Conestoga congregation, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1747.²⁷ Hook believed this same Henry Eller later lived in Frederick County, Maryland, and was a brother of George Michael Eller. Some of the early western North Carolina ELLERS do appear to have been associated with Carolina Brethern, although the history of the congregations which existed there is extremely sketchy.²⁸

In Southwest Virginia the picture is brighter. As sectarians, Brethern generally settled in family groupings. By the late eighteenth century, a few such clusters had developed, the earliest on the Blackwater River in Franklin County (1760's) and a

second in the Amsterdam/Daleville area of Botetourt County (1780's). Jacob Eller, along with clearly Identifiable Brethern related families such as the Brubakers were located between these two in what later became Roanoke County. The dates when these settlements developed into congregations is not known, but meetinghouses were built at Peters Creek (Roanoke County, 1845), Germantown Brick (Franklin County, 1848) and Botetourt Valley (Daleville, Botetourt County, 1851). Prior to this the Brethern met in homes for worship, generally once a months.²⁹

Whether Jacob and Magdalene Eller were actually Dunkers will probably never be known. If not baptized members, they were certainly in close contact with the Brethern in that several of their children married into Brethern families. Their son John and five grandsons became preachers; two granddaughters also married men who were placed in the ministry. The frequent marriages of Jacob Eller children and grandchildren into Brethern families, and the leadership which these families provided the church, strongly suggests that the Ellers affiliated with the Brethern in Roanoke County at an early date. Indeed, local tradition is clear that the Brubaker, Wirtz, and Eller families were among the early members of the Peters Creek Church. John Eller, whose ordination probably dates from the late 1840s, would have been among the congregation's first ministers.³⁰ Whether Jacob and Magdalene themselves came from Brethern homes before settling in Roanoke County is pure speculation.

The Oak Grove community in which sons John and Abraham resided is several miles to the south of the Peters Creek area. While the story of a Brethern church in this community more properly belongs to the twentieth century, it should be noted that a Brethern meetinghouse was built at Cave Spring, a few miles to the east, which dates from the Civil War.³¹ It is reasonable to assume that Dunker services were held in the Oak Grove area, perhaps as early as the 1840's.

ENDNOTES

1. THE PASSENGER AND IMMIGRATION LISTS INDEX, ed. P. William Filby with Mary K. Meyer (Detroit: Gale Research Co.,- 1981). Vol. I A-G, and Supplements (through 1984) contains the most thorough list of published listing of Eller immigrants. Excellent resources for Pennsylvania German immigrants are 1. Daniel Rupp, A COLLECTION OF THIRTY THOUSAND NAMES, 2nd. ed. rev. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1965) and R. B. Strassburger, PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN PIONEERS, 3 vols. (Norristown, PA: Pennsylvania German Society, 1934).
2. HEADS OF FAMILIES, AT THE FIRST CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES TAKEN IN 1790 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907); see listing for each

state. Unfortunately the Virginia returns were destroyed when the British burned Washington during the war of 1812.

3. An excellent study of this migration is Klaus Wurst, *THE VIRGINIA GERMANS* (Charlottesville, VA: Univ. of VA Press, 1969).
4. James W. Hook, *JAMES HOOK AND VIRGINIA ELLER* (New Haven, CN: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, 1925), pp. 103-106. See also Robert W. Ramsey, *CAROLINA CRADLE; SETTLEMENT OF THE NORTHWEST CAROLINA FRONTIER, 1747-1762* (Chapel Hill, NC: Univ. of N.C. Press, 1964), pp. 90-91.
5. Virginia 1810, microfilm #66, P. 620. Listed next Jacob is the household of David Eller, presumably the eldest son.
6. James W. Hook, *GEORGE MICHAEL ELLER AND DESCENDANTS OF HIS IN AMERICA* (New Haven, CN: for the Author, 1957), pp.53-68, 6-9. George Michael Eller's will may be found in Frederick Co. (MD) Wills, G.M. 1, P. 76.
7. Gaius M. Brumbaugh, *MARYLAND RECORDS, COLONIAL, REVOLUTIONARY, AND CHURCH*, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1915; reprint 1975), 1: 291, 292, 11:509; Charlotte A. Vokel, et. al. , *AN INDEX TO THE 1800 FEDERAL CENSUS OF CAROLINA, CECIL, CHARLES, FREDERICK, AND KENT COUNTIES, STATE OF MARYLAND* (n.p.:privately printed, 1968); Hook, *GEORGE MICHAEL ELLER*, P. 13.
8. Hook, *GEORGE MICHAEL ELLER*, PP. 32-35, 53-54; Charles E. Martin, "The Search and Identification of the Lost Lines of David Eller" (1979 MS, photocopy in possession of the writer). Martin is a descendant of David Eller and a retired attorney who lives in Dayton, Ohio.
9. John F. Haines, *HISTORY OF HAMILTON COUNTY, INDIANA* (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Co., 1915), pp. 851-853. Actually, Hook cited with reference to David, *PORTRAIT AND BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD OF MADISON AND HAMILTON COUNTIES, INDIANA* (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1893) pp. 624-625, which in actuality is a citation for Leonard Eller. It is quite possible that both men were Brethern, and if so, they would have had numerous opportunities to meet in Ohio.
10. The daughters are Saloma Flora Brubaker (Roanoke County), Rebecca Wertz, and Elizabeth Peters (both in Franklin County). David Eller is not in the 1850 census for either Ohio or Indiana and it is likely that he died while living with son Andrew. Several of David's younger children had been placed in the homes of guardians in Preble County, thus indicating he was unable to care for them. He is buried in the Mount Pleasant cemetery near Arcadia, Indiana, although the marker is missing. The only evidence that he lived until 1858 is a transcript of the cemetery made in 1963. His notation reads: "David Eller, d. 1858 age 76y-9m-5d." This notation comes from the letters, Charles Martin to

this writer, August 13, 1980; October 3, 1979; and "The Search and Identification of the Lost Lines of David Eller."

11. Letters, Chester Peters to this writer, July is, 1973; July 31, 1973; with family charts.
12. Land Office Grants (Virginia State Library), 22 (1789-1791), reel 88, pp. 430-431. Eller is not named in published Virginia tax lists for 1782 or 1787, which means that his first property was probably the Back Creek tract. See Botetourt County Deeds, 8:421.
13. Botetourt County Deeds, 7:655.
14. Ibid., 13:356; 22:1.90.
15. Ibid., 13:27.
16. Christian E. Eller statement (shorthand MS, 1947) in possession of John C. Eller. See also Lewis Preston Summers, ANNALS OF SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA, 1769-1800 (Abington, VA: for the Author, 1929), P. 479. Eller's transfer of land to Brubaker (1804) is not marked with "X" seal.
17. Botetourt County Deeds, 9:1. The Deed Book is faded: the name could be ETTER. This transaction is not Jointly signed by a wife. The two witnesses named, Robert Preston and John McAly?, are not associated with Jacob Eller In other land or probate records.
18. Botetourt County (VA) Wills, E:124.
19. In 1874 a cemetery on Abraham's division of Jacob Eller's farm was platted, although it was not recorded until Abraham's estate administration papers were filed in probate court, August 30., 1878; See Roanoke County Deed Book 20: 137. The cemetery certainly could have contained burials before it was platted. It was removed in the 1960s and, unfortunately, there is no known list the persons interred there.
20. Ibid., F:237. The division between John and Abraham Eller is recorded in Botetourt County Deeds, 22: 190-192. John Eller received 240 acres, Abraham 237 acres; see also Botetourt County Survey Book 4:187.
21. This family is traced in Ethel H. Weddle and Ralph Smeltzer, comps., A BRUBAKER GENEALOGY (Elgin, IL: for the Compilers by the Brethern Press, 1970), pp. 11, 153ff.
22. This family is traced in William Tell Garst, OUR GARST FAMILY IN AMERICA (Kansas City, MO: for the Author, 1950, pp. 35-103.
23. Virginia, Botetourt County, 1820, roll #130, Vo. 1, P. S35, 536. The second Jacob Eller listing could be ETTER. In 1820 Jacob Eller's household consisted of a male and female over age 45, a female 10 to 16, one male 26 to 45, one male 18 to 26, one male 16 to 18, and one male 10 to 16. The household of

John Eller is listed separately. Since Jacob had only three known sons, the identity of the younger male children in his 1820 home is unknown.

24. See THE BRETHERN ENCYCLOPEDIA, 3 vols. (Philadelphia and Oak Brook, IL: The Brethern Encyclopedia, Inc. 1983-1985), III: 1608-1609 for a list of ordained Eller ministers. The list is presented in the appendix below.

a name="25">

25. THE BRETHRN ENCYCLOPEDIA has excellent introductory articles on Pietism, Anabaptism and articles of related interest.
26. C. David Ensign, 11 Radical German Pietism (e. 1675c.1760)" (unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, Boston Univ.' School of Theology, 1955), pp. 387-398.
27. Martin G. Brumbaugh, A HISTORY OF THE GERMAN BAPTIST BRETHERN IN EUROPE AND AMERICA (Mt. Morris, IL: Brethern Publishing House. 1899), P. 312. Brumbaugh includes a list of persons thought to have joined the Brethern in Europe that includes such names as ELEY and ILLER (Eller). The Eller name is not found in a census of Brethern congregations compiled in 1770-1772 by a Baptist historian, Morgan Edwards.
28. Roger E. Sappington has reconstructed these early Dunker settlements in his THE BRETHERN IN THE CAROLINAS: THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHERN IN THE DISTRICT OF NORTH AND SOUTH CAROLINA (n.p., n.d.(Kingsport, TN: District of North and South Carolina, 1972)), pp.4-93. See also, Hook, GEORGE MICHAEL ELLER, pp. 4, 10-11.
29. The best study of the Brethern of Virginia is Roger E. Sappington, THE BRETHERN OF VIRGINIA: THIS HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHERN IN VIRGINIA (Harrisonburg, VA: Committee for Brethern History of Virginia, 1973), see esp. pp. 28-29, 30, 44-46.
30. "Peters Creek Church of the Brethern," BRETHERN ENCYCLOPEDIA, 11: 1011; "Quasquicentennial Services, Peters Creek Church of the Brethern," (pamphlet, 1970).
31. A Dunker meetinghouse is shown at Cave Spring on a "map of Roanoke County (VA) 1865, "National Archives, Washington, D.C. Oddity, the brick, Peters Creek house is missing.

APPENDIX

From THE BRETHERN ENCYCLOPEDIA, (Philadelphia and Oak Brook, IL: The Brethern Encyclopedia, Inc. 1993-1984), III: 1608-1609.

- Eller, Anna Belle (CB); 12-30-1916 /; ord. 4-13-1980 at Akron, OH, 1st; CBMF.

Eller, Christian Emory, (Emery) (CB); 1-10-1870 / 5-13-1948; eld. 1902 at Peters Creek, VA (pres. eld.): Copper Hill, VA (eld. 1905-45); Roanoke, VA, Oak Grove (eld. 1923-48); Lynchburg, VA (eld.); Christiansburg, VA (eld.); Spruce Run, VA; Hopewell, VA (eld.); Nweport News, VA (eld. 1946-48); Poages Mill, VA; Green Hill, VA; Yearbook (1920) 55; Virgiriia (1914) 161, (1973) index; GM (Aug 21, 1948) 28; BHLA, MIS.
- Eller, David Barry (CB); 4-30-1945 /; ord. 1978 at Pleasant View, OH; Long Beach, CA (asst. p. 1965-66). San Dimas, CA Methodist (youth min. 1966-67); Bluffton College, OH (1976-); Deshler, OH (pt. time p. 1977-82); CBMF.
- *Eller, David Newton (CB); 11-16-1862 / 10-19-1914: eld. 1904 at Peters Creek, VA: Bridgewater, VA (1888); Warrensburg, MO (1890); Daleville College, VA (pres. 1893,-96, 1902-11); Virginia (1914) 156, 269, 299-300, (1973) index; blue book (1923) 69, 511, 513; S. Z. Sharp, Ed. Histor (1923) 170-73, 323-24; GM (1914) 741.
- Eller, Francis Asbury (OGBB); 8-7-1851 / 7-6-1938; eld.1896; Peters Creck, VA;
- Eller, John; fl. before 1860; Botetourt, VA; Antioch, VA; Peters Creek, VA (pres. eld.); Virginia (1914) 53, 159, 161, (1973) 140.
- Eller, John Clinton (CB); 9-25-1916 /; eld. 1943; Crab Orchard, VA (1942-44); Bethany Brethren Hospital, IL (chpl. 1945-50, asst. adm. 1950-52, adm. 1952-64, exec. dir. 1964-66); Chicago, IL, 1st (asst. p. 1949-50); American Protestant Hospital Assoc. (exec. dir. 1966-72); Brethren Health & Welfare Assoc. (exec. secy. 1967-83); Bd. of Benevolence, Evangelical Covenant Church of America (dir. of planned giving 1973-); Yearbook (1938-78); Virginia (1973) 367, 392; CBMF.
- Eller, John Flory (CB); 2-17-1875 / 9-18-1956; min. 1914; Empire, CA; Almanac (1914-17); Yearbook (1918-44); GM (Nov. 17, 1956) 24.
- Eller, John Wirtz (CB); 5-19-1836 / 3-7-1899; eld.; Peters Creek, IL (pres. eld.); almanac (1881-98); Virginia (1914) 161, 241; GM (1899) 181.
- Eller, Orien Denton (CB); 11-8.1898 / eld. 1946; Copper Hill, VA (mod., eld. & P. 1949-51); Olean, VA; Hopewell & Henry Fork, VA; Poages Mill, VA (p. 1951-55); Yearbook (1978) 181; Virginia (1973) 280, 283, 370; CBI\IF.
- Eller, Paul Christian (CB); 3.31-1914 /; ord. 1960 at Fruitland, ID (p. 1960-63);

- Lower Twin, OH; Vindicator (1913) 350, (1938) 285.
- Eller, George Riley (CB); 5-4-1870 / 7-1,4-1949; eld. 1903 at Grenola, KS; E.Maple Grove CO (1869-98) Washington Creek, KS (1898-1900); Grenola, KS (1900-1909/10?); Fredonia, KS (eld. 1905); Independence, KS (eld.); Chanute, KS (eld. 1907-08); Quinter, KS (1909-17); Maple Grove, KS (1917-20); Bethel, CO (p. 1920-25); Calvery, KS (1925-29); Washita, KS (p. 1929-36); Pleasant Plains, OK (1936-37); Bartlettsville, OK, 1st (p. 1938-40); Almanac (1898-1917); Yearbook (1918-48); "Colorado: (1936) 213-14; Kansas (1922) 121,m 136, 148, 154; S. Plains (1976) 29, 38, 44; GM (Sept. 17, 1949) 27; BHLA. MIS
 - Eller, Henry Cline (CB); 4-12-1900 / eld. 1928 at Lynchburg, VA (p. 1924-29); Bethlehem, VA (pt. time p. 1929-35); S. VA (pt. time dist. exec. 1929-35); Mt. Zion, Luray, Rileyville & Browntown, VA (p. 1939-44); Buena Vista, VA (p. 1944-46); Concord, VA (p. 1944-46); Pocahontas, WV (p. 1947-49); 1st VA (dist. exec. 1952-57); Mt. Hermon, VA (p. 1957-60); Peters Creek, VA; Selma, Terrace View, Crab Orchard, Mt. Horeb, Smith Chapel & Olean, VA & Oakvale, WV (mod.); Oakton, VA (int. p. 1961); Tiffin, OH (p. 1961-63); Rossville, IN (p. 1963-65); Yearbook (1920-78); Sacramento, CA, Meadowview (p. 1963-66); Modesto, CA (assoc. p. 1966-68); Long Beach, CA, Brethren Manor (1968-72); Boones Chapel & Henry Fork, VA (p. 1972-73); Rocky Mount, VA (p. 1973-78); Red Hill, VA (int. p. 1978-80); Yearbook (1978) 181; Virginia (1973) 282; Snake River (1976) 124; CBMF.
 - Eller, Ralph C. (OGBB); 12-22-1896 eld. 1955; Big Creek, KS; W. Modesto, CA; N. Fork, IN; Middle Fork, IN; Vindicator (1978) 347.
 - Eller, Raymon Ernest (CB); 3-31-1910 eld. 1942 at Bassett, VA (p. 1940-44); Eden, NC & Danville, VA (p. 1938-40); Dundalk, MD (p. 1944-55); W. Richmond, VA (p. 1955/56?-59); York, PA, Madison Ave. (p. 1959-63); Oakland, OH (p. 1962-68 or 1963-69?); Wichita, KS, 1st (p. 1968/69?-71); Akron, OH, 1st (p. 1971-80); Yearbook (1936-78); Virginia (1973) 337, 341, 391; S. Pennsylvania (1973) 310; CBMF.
 - Eller, Russell (OGBB); 10-4-1921 / ; eld. 1958; Lower Twin, OH; Vindicator (1978) 347.
 - Eller, Vernard Marion (CB); 7-11-1927 / ; eld. 1958 at Oakland, CA; Gen. Bd. staff (youth ed. 1950-56); U. of La Verne, CA (1958-); La Verne, CA, Fellowship (1968-81); CBMF.
 - Eller, Wendell C. (CB); 4-22-1926 / ; ord. 1955; NCC (dir. audio-visual ed. 1953-55);

- Maryland (1936) 169;
Virginia (1973) index; CBMF.
- *Eller, Jay Vernard (CB); 7-23-1899 / 7-1978; eld. 1928 at Wenatchee, WA; Seattle, WA (1930-31); Sunnyslope, WA (int. p. 1954-55); Yearbook (1926-44); Messenger (June, 1975) 2-3.
- Gen. Bd. staff (dir. of audiovisual ed. 1955-62); Wawaka, IN (p. 1962-68); Union Center, IN (p. 1968-70); Oakton, VA (p. 1970-81); Yearbook (1978) 1818; Virginia (1973) 385, CBMF.
- Eller, Willie Elias (OGBB); 10-4-1881 / 1-31-1962; eld. 1936; Lower Twin, OH; Vindicator (1962) 94-95.

CB = Church of the Brethern

OGBB = Old German Baptist Brethern

Given are dates if known, Places of service.

eld = Elder, the highest office of ministry (abolished by CB in 1967).

The first listed, Anna Belle, is the wife of Raymond E. All others are directly traceable to either John or Abraham Eller, sons of Jacob.

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