

6 Abstract

This study tells the story of how the family name of the Luxembourgian emigrant Jacob CLESEN (1708–1782) became so widespread in the Saarland. The study includes material on his ancestors and descendants. Jacob lived in the Luxembourgian rural village of Binsfeld in the Ösling (*Osling*) region, which is in the north of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. In the middle of the 18th century, he settled in Scheuern (Saarland, district St. Wendel), thus becoming the first documented member of this family in the Saarland. Jacob's trade was that of specialty carpenter. He presumably was a skilled joiner, wood sculptor and wood turner and, in particular, he crafted the Baroque altars of the Benedictine Abbey in Tholey in the 18th century.

A separate study on Jacob's professional career with a focus on his work as a specialty carpenter and creator of Baroque altars in the Saarland, Lorraine and possibly the Mosel and Rheinhessen areas is in preparation. Jacob's parents Adam KLESEN and Anna Margaretha lived in Binsfeld at the end of the 17th century, and were listed in the parish register of the church in Holler. Adam and his brother Heinrich worked as shepherds in Binsfeld in the north of Luxembourg. Jacob CLESEN's son Johannes did not work as a carpenter like his father, but as a farmer and blacksmith in Tholey-Scheuern, Saarland. In the following generations, the descendants were mostly farmers; but many of them also earned their living with various craft professions like cooper, tailor, weaver, shoemaker, forger and locksmith. In the 20th century, members of this family were very musical and engaged in music clubs or founded music groups. In the middle of the 19th century, after bad harvests, many people left the Saarland and the Tholey region. There were waves of KLESEN family emigrations to North America to Chicago/Illinois, Pittsburgh/Pennsylvania, and Potosi/Wisconsin (USA) as well as to South America to Picada Café in Brazil.

Most German family names originated between the 14th and the 16th century and they usually derived from first names. At that time, Nicolas was the second most frequent first name after John. The surname *Klesen* derives from the forename *Nikolaus* or its short form *Klaus* or *Kles(en)*. The name *Klesen/Clesen* has been written in many variations over the years, for example *Clesen*, *Klessen*, *Kleesen*, *Kläesen*, *Gleßen* and in the English-speaking countries especially in the variation of *Kleasen*. The spelling of *Klesen* was adopted for this book because it has mostly been used since the period of the Duchy Palatine Zweibrücken in 1786 until today.

However, just having dates about someone's marital status does not provide any insight into how our ancestors lived. Therefore, the authors have researched transnationally in the State Archive in Saarbrücken and in the National Archive in Luxembourg to learn more about the 10-generation history of the name and the family KLESEN. The information retained in notarial files from the 18th and 19th century has been analyzed in detail in order to compose this family story.

Since not only members of the family KLESEN were named in the notarial files, but also a lot of buyers, auctioneers or witnesses, this study represents a rich source for other family names. Family researchers are encouraged to do further research on their own. In addition, this study contributes to the local history because it presents historical events in the villages of the Schaumburg region in the Saarland and of the Osling region in Luxembourg.

7 Directories and Registers

Abbreviations

a.	=	<i>anno</i> (Lat. = year)	Jul	=	July
abt.	=	about	Jun	=	June
acc.	=	according	kr, xr	=	<i>kreuzer</i> (type of currency of the period)
Apr	=	April	Lat.	=	Latin
Aug	=	August	Luth.	=	Lutheran
b.	=	born (date of birth)	Mar	=	March
ca.	=	circa	mp	=	personal (Lat. <i>manu propria</i>)
cal.	=	circa	Mr.	=	Mister
Cath.	=	Catholic	Mrs.	=	Missus
col.	=	column	no. (nos.)	=	number(s) (Lat. <i>numero</i>)
d.	=	died (date of death)	p., pp.	=	page(s)
Dec	=	December	Rep.	=	<i>Repetitorium</i> (Lat.)
Dör	=	Dörsdorf	StA Ko.	=	State Archive Koblenz
e.g.	=	<i>exempli gratia</i> (Lat. for instance)	StA Sbr.	=	State Archive Saarbrücken
Feb	=	February	StA Sp.	=	State Archive Speyer
fig.	=	figure(s)	Saarbr.	=	Saarbrücken
fol.	=	folio, page	Steinb.	=	Steinbach
Fr.	=	French			
i.e.	=	<i>id est</i> (Lat. that is to say)			
Jan	=	January			
Jr.	=	Junior			