

# The History of the Morsches Family<sup>1</sup>

by Max Morsches

## I) The origin of the name *Morsches*

It probably goes back to a moor. The area in question is situated where the cities Mönchengladbach, Wegberg and Erkelenz meet - not far from the B57 - and it is still an area determined by marshy meadows and fields.

### a) Moorshoven near Wegberg

One district of Wegberg is named Morshoven and in its centre there is the big *Moorhof* a building that was formerly surrounded by a moat that can still be seen today.

Here there was once the castle and home of a noble family known as the *von Morshoven*<sup>2</sup>. First known knight of this family was Adam I von Morshoven. His grandson Adam II von Morshoven was probably born around 1290. There are about 40 documents in the Cologne archives concerning Adam II from 1316 to 1362 as well as further documents in other archives. Most of them deal with applying or receiving wages he earned for keeping order in the area between Erkelenz and Kempen.

So much is certain. Those Adams were no ancestors of the present Morsches family. But Adam II took the name *Morshoven* to the Kempen area where later on two farms had this name. Because of these two farms people who rented it –*Pächter and Halfmänner* – were called Morsches 300 years later.

### b) Morshoven near Vorst<sup>3</sup>

1325 Adam von Morshoven was mentioned in connection with some property in the Kempen area. A manor between Oedt (part of Grefrath today) and Vorst (part of Tönisvorst today) in the so-called Hahnenweide was named Morshoven because of him. 1372 Elias Schaffrath is mentioned as the owner of Morshoven Manor. After 1400 his successor Johann calls himself Johann Schaffrath von Morshoven to be distinguished from a clerical person Johann Schaffrath from Kempen. The Morshovens died out around 1500. Then different noble families succeeded in the feudal system (von Lintzenich 1511-1674, von Efferen called Hall, Sybertz (from 1701), von Cloet (from 1726) and von Francken (1729-1766).

None of these noble proprietors had anything to do with the ancestors of the Morsches today. These proprietors didn't live on their property. They employed tenants called *Halfmänner*. When the name Morsches appears in the baptism register of the rectory in Vorst<sup>4</sup> you can be certain that you come across somebody who was connected with the property. But just the same they have nothing to do with the present Morsches. Their descendants probably called themselves differently, for example, Morsch, Moersch or

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<sup>1</sup> These informations have been sent to the German Morsches in four parts at Christmas 1982 to 1985. It was translated by my wife Marita Morsches-Maaßen.

<sup>2</sup> The late chairman of the Kreisarchiv Kempen (KrAK), Walther Föhl, collected in „Die Herren von Morshoven“ (Heimatkalender Erkelenz 1966, p. 39-51) a lot of interesting things about this family. Here you can see six of the nine different seal known from Adam II von Morshoven.

<sup>3</sup> About that manor and his owners: W. Föhl, „Rittersitz Morshoven – der Hof Morsches im Kempener Land“ (Niederrhein. Jahrbuch 4, 1959, p. 38-72).

<sup>4</sup> Personenstandsarchiv NRW, Brühl; copies in KrAK.

Moerschen which is still a common name in the area. The site of the manor is registered as *Morsches* on maps.<sup>5</sup>

### c) Morshoven near Kempen

The above mentioned Elias Schaffrath was awarded tenancy of Schmalbroich Manor in 1371 when he got married to Mettildis von Schmalbroich. The Manor was about 1km west of the town wall of Kempen and first called Schmalbroich.<sup>6</sup> Its owners were a family called von Wyenhorst (Karl, around 1420; Heinrich, till 1453; Diederich Loiff, till 1456 who was succeeded by his son-in-law Johann von Kaldenhoven (1456-75 and 1481-87), in between Wilhelm von Broichhausen whose son Loiff von Kaldenhoven (from 1487) followed by his son-in-law Niklas von Honselar (from 1519).

Since 1520 the manor was called *Morshoven* to set it apart from the neighbouring manor of *Meves Schmabers* (dialect for Schmalbroich). Niklas von Honselar became tenant to Kaldenhoven Manor in Crefeld in 1550. He also called himself *von Kaldenhoven*. A document from 1552<sup>7</sup> mentions a son-in-law Class Morshoven which is the only document I know of where the proprietor of Morshoven Manor has adopted its name. It is very unlikely that Class von Honselar an ancestor of the present Morsches family was.

We can suppose that tenants adopted the name of the manor which is named *Morsch* today as it was already in 1659 and *Morsches* in 1827.<sup>8</sup> The first of these documented tenants was Korst (Christian) Morßhoven or Morßes which we will deal with later on.

Here a list of tenants who owned Schmalbroich Manor Morshoven: Haes, von Merode zu Schloßberg, Quad, von der Hall, Pelden, called Cloudt, und Schall von Bell. The manor was sold to the Baron of Geyr.

### d) Size and layout of Schmalbroich farm Morshoven

1371 the farm had about 10.000 square meters of farmland and in 1659/60 it had grown to 12.250 sqm as I found in 3 deeds.<sup>9</sup>

The first deed from March, 6<sup>th</sup> 1669 proves this: „*When in 1659 Kempen county was described, the Morßhoven Farm in the Honschaft Schmalbroich was measured:*

living house	65 Ruten <sup>10</sup>
garden and treegarden	87 Ruten
bush	17 Morgen
meadows	4 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> Morgen
fields	44 Morgen 107 Ruten.

*Kempen, March 6<sup>th</sup> 1669  
Court*

*Jo. Scheutt, Secretary of the*

<sup>5</sup> *Topographische Karte (1 : 25000), Nr. 4604 „Kempen“.*

<sup>6</sup> *About the owners of that manor: Walther Föhl, „Hof Schmalbroich der Herren von Schmalbroich in der Honschaft Schmalbroich“ (Heimatbuch 1966 des Landkreises Kempen-Krefeld, p. 252-260, und „Hof Schmalbroich II.“ (Heimatbuch 1967 des Landkreises Kempen-Krefeld, p. 218-228).*

<sup>7</sup> *Stadtarchiv Kempen (StAK), Urk. Nr. 661 a.*

<sup>8</sup> *Vgl. Anm. 5; s. auch: StAK, Delineatio des Ambtes Kempen 1659; s. auch: StAK, Kopie (zur Karte von 1659) des Geometers Hild von 1827.*

<sup>9</sup> *KrAK, Archiv Pelden-Cloudt, temporary stored as: Akten 26.*

<sup>10</sup> *1 Rute = nearly 14 square meters; 1 Morgen = 2500 square meters. 1 Morgen = 180 Ruten.*

The second deed is from March, 9<sup>th</sup> same year and describes in some details:

house and barn	700 crowns
fieldgate with wall to the house	75 crowns
cottage on top of a cellar, wall to fieldgate	25 crowns
a small cottage next to a bigger one called old oil mill	100 crowns
gate to forest and baking house small barn for cart, wall to the barn	<u>100 crowns</u>
	1000 crowns

„The tenant Coerst had to pay 125 crowns of Kempen a year for a forth part of the farm.”

The third deed from October, 23<sup>rd</sup> 1670 said:

„The tenant Cörst of the Schmalbroich farm Morßhofen in Kempen area. The family Quad zu Büllesheim possessed one half of the farm, lord von der Hell and the lords of Merode forth parts. 38 Morgen fields first class tax, 5 Morgen 130 Ruten cleared second class tax fields and 13 Morgen first class tax fields possessed by the lords of Nivenheim. All together: 56 Morgen 130 Ruten and 4¾ Morgen of meadows.” Final sentence and signature followed.

According to the second deed from 1669 you can still draw a plan of the farm. From the Tranchot-map<sup>11</sup> (ca. 1805) you can see that the house was situated on the westside as usual. The layout was almost square and which was called a 4-corner farm. The field north of the house is called Morsfeld and was and still is an important field belonging to the farm.

### e) The development of the name *Morsches*

It's certain that the name Morsches comes from the name of the manor/farm Morshoven. The ending „hoven” and its variations „haven, hoven, hofen” stood for farm or manor. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century these endings disappeared gradually, first with family names and then also farm names. 1654 the ending appeared for the last time while the farm name was still in use. The „o” was pronounced long as in *form* and which is often written „oo”, „oe”, „oy” or „oi”.

Even shortly after 1800 our ancestors signed document with *Moersches* while the registrars always wrote *Morsches*. The first „s” was pronounced as „s” in *sit*, that's why we often find its spelling as *Morßes* or *Morßis* which concerned people living at Morßhof. In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the change from „ß” to „sch” was complete. Since ca. 1685 the name has been written *Morsches* apart from some obvious misspellings.

## II) Korst Morßes (Morßhoven, Morsches)

Korst Morßhoven was tenant of Morßhoven Farm from 1628 to 1639.<sup>12</sup> The deed mentions a tenant of Morshoven 1659 (*Halbman Christian*), 1669 (*Cörst der Halffman*) und 1670 (*Cörst der Halfman*). Parish registers<sup>13</sup> show that Koerst Morßes got married to Berber Müller. They had four children who were baptized in Kempen: a son Vitus Morßes b. 14/10/1629, another son Johannes b. 2/3/1633 and two daughters. Our

<sup>11</sup> *Map of Tranchot, No. 35, Kempen.*

<sup>12</sup> *StAK, Mutterrollen of 1628 bzw. 1639.*

<sup>13</sup> *Personenstandsarchiv Brühl; copies at KrAK. There they have an alphabetical register.*

ancestor Judith was born 5/12/1638 and Lentgen 15/1/1642. The archives also mention Corst Morßes in 1628 and a Corst Morßels in 1629.

Unfortunately the church registers only started 1608. That's why we don't have any birth certificate of Korst. I think he was born around 1600. There are also no clues concerning his parents. We know that there were eight couples with the name *Morßes* or similar who had the children baptized between 1608 and 1617. Some other couples could be added who are mentioned as godparents around that time. For example Vitt Morsis and wife Judit have a daughter Girdt in June 1609. But I think it's not unlikely that they were Korst's parents. Korst's eldest son was named Vitus and his eldest daughter Judith. It was very common to name children after their grandparents. Vitus was also patron saint of the church of Oedt. Maybe that's where the Morsches came from. Berber Müller must also be born around 1605 because her parents might have been Vitt the Miller and his wife Lehne who had 3 sons Arnoldus b. 1610, Arnoldt b. 1611, Jacob b. 1615. Vitt Moelen (name shows connection to Geldern and Oedt belonged to Geldern) was godfather for probably his grandson Johannes in 1633. Arnold Müller appears twice as Godfather of Berber Müller's grandchildren. We also don't really know when they died. Korst was alive in 1670, in another document it says that he was dead when his wife became godmother of her great-grandson Korst Lührß in 1680 and on the 9/12/1681 when „*Berber Morsches widow of Corst Morsches, with her son in law Merten Lührß and his son Lenß Lührs*” sold a farm.<sup>14</sup> As she still lived on Morshoven, she adopted the name Morsches whereas many other women kept their family name. Because many people can't read these documents I tried to translate it.

### III) Die Morsches in Kempen

Of Korst Morsches' children I can only find his daughter Judith also called Jutta as mentioned in later documents. At the age of 16 she married Merten Loerß<sup>15</sup> (also called Luers) on June, 6<sup>th</sup> 1654. Merten Loerß was born in Kempen on September, 12<sup>th</sup> 1633 as the son of Lens Loerß and his wife Behl (= Sybilla). Merten is mentioned as the son-in-law of Korst Morsches in a document from 1681. His presence in this document lets us believe that he was to be heir to Korst's widow Berber. We also learn that Merten and Jutta bought land in 1661, 1665 and 1666.<sup>16</sup>

They had 6 children:

b. 10. 8.1655	Lens (= Laurenz),
b. 23.11.1657	Gertrud,
b. 4. 7.1660	Antonius,
b. 28. 1.1663	Joannes,
b. 4.10.1665	Antonius (his brother Antonius should be dead),
b. 7.10.1668	Beell (= Sybille)

Merten was witness to his son Lauren Loers' wedding in 1679. It is interesting to learn that we Morsches should actually be named Loers. The reasons why his wife's name

<sup>14</sup> StAK, Urkunde No. 1445. Please look at the German text.

<sup>15</sup> Lengers Loers became in 1601 a citizen of Kempen. See also StAK, Urkunden No. 721 b and 750.

<sup>16</sup> StAK, Urkunden No. 1032, 1193 and 1218.

Morsches was adopted as the family's name will be discussed later on, but Merten Loers changed his family name in 1684. From then on you only find Laurenz Morsches. He married Dreutgen (= Gertrud) Harnisch (also Harnaß) on 22/6/1679. They had 9 children:

b. 25. 8.1680	Korst Loers, later called Morsches (our ancestor)
b. 26. 1.1683	Anna Catharina Loers,
b. 11. 2.1685	Jetgen Morsches, <sup>17</sup>
b. 20. 7.1687	Girtrud Morsches,
b. 13.11.1688	Berber Morsches,
b. 12. 2.1690	Anthonius Morsches, <sup>18</sup>
b. 26. 8.1691	Anna Berber Morsches, <sup>19</sup>
b. 19. 4.1693	Johann Arnold Morsches,
b. 23. 5.1694	Peter Albert Morsches. <sup>20</sup>

With his second wife Irme this Lens Morsches had another child called Freißkus (b. 16.5.1696). Laurenz Morsches died on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1724. And now to the fact of why Laurenz Loers changed his name to *Morsches* in 1684. There might be several reasons. One reason might be his taking charge of the *Morscheshof* (estate) as a tenant. Secondly at that time it was not unusual to adopt your mother's name. Perhaps the change was brought about by Berber Müller's death who had been his wife Jutta Morsches' grandmother.

Korst (= Christian) Loers, Laurenz' son born in 1680 is called Korst Morsches in all the following documents. After 1700 the name Morsches had survived all other versions (such as Morß, Morßes, Morßis and so on). Korst Morsches married Adelheid Schmabers (b. 5.12.1683, daughter of lay assessor Peter Schmabers from a neighbouring estate *Schmabershof*) in Kempen on 30/9/ 1708. They had eleven children:

b. 3/1/1709	Johann Gottfried	b. 30/6/1720	Peter Gottfried
b. 25/6/1710	Magdalena		(our ancestor)
b. 2/8/1712	Alexander Emanuel	b. 10/5/1722	Sybilla Christina
b. 18/12/1714	Petrus	b. 18/1/1725	Laurenz Johann
b. 4/3/1717	Anna Gertrud	b. 26/2/1726	Maria Magdalena
b. 16/4/1719	Laurenz	b. 13/5/1727	Michael Laurenz

Korst Morsches was entered in the citizen registry of the town of Kempen on 8/1/1711. From this you can see that he must have moved into town shortly while his father Laurenz Loers, his grandfather Merten Loers and great-grandfather Korst Morsches must have lived outside the town wall as they are not registered as citizens.

<sup>17</sup> When she was born her father already was named Morsches. In 1706 she had an illegitimate son Martin. 1707 she married Jacob Streithoven.

<sup>18</sup> In 1713 he married Anna Gerdrud Fenges (d. 1728). They had 7 children. 1733 und 1738 he became maire of Kempen and died at 30.6.1740.

<sup>19</sup> In 1716 she married Michael Steves (later called Morsches; d. 1752), had 10 children (d. 1751).

<sup>20</sup> His wife had a daughter Christina in 1717.

On 15/6/1718 the couple Cörsten Morschus and Aletgen Schmabers bought the so-called *Leoniussen-Haus* in the town centre of Kempen.<sup>21</sup> The place where the house must have been is so well-described that it can be marked in a map today without a doubt. Today a chemist's can be found at this address *Markt 7*. The building has a square ground plan and is painted yellow. Windows and doors have brown frames. It is extraordinary with an iron-cast lion above the entrance and an ancient Lantern on the corner of the house.

Adelheid Schmabers died on 30/4/1733. Christian's second wife Adelheid Max had a daughter Adelheid on 23/4/1735 shortly before he passed away on 29/6/1735. Probably Christian made a living as a baker as his children and grandchildren worked as bakers. Later on we learn that Alexander Emanuel son of Christian Morsches lived in Kempen. He married Anna Sophie Schmitz and they had many children starting in 1738. Petrus Theodor Ilbert Morsches born on 7/9/1742 started to study at Cologne University in 1761 after leaving Laurentianum Grammar School.<sup>22</sup> He died as the rector of Saint Hubert Cloister (3 km from Kempen) on 19/7/1791. Christian's son Johann Heinrich Morsches born on 3/2/1748 also attended Laurentianum Grammar School and started studying in Cologne in 1766. These two were the only *Morsches* to study in Cologne before 1800. In 1751 a baker Martin Morsches occurred in Kempen.<sup>23</sup> He probably was Christian Morsches' nephew and son to Michael Steves, called Morsches, and Anna Barbara Morsches. There is a letter of acquirement from 15/6/1718.<sup>24</sup>

#### IV The Morsches Family in Neuss

On 20/9/1756 the name *Morsches* appeared in the church registry of Neuss for the first time when my great-great-great-grandfather Johann Jakob Morsches was born. The church registry don't say anything about the origin of Jakob's father Peter Gottfried. After research through all the registries in the neighbourhood without any success I drove to Neuß Archives without any hope. But here I was surprised by finding files on families of Neuss dating from the time before 1800 and I discovered three index cards under the name *Morsches* which helped to understand and learn more.

*„Petrus Godefridus Moersches from Kempen, son of Christian Moersches and Adelheid Schmabers married in Kempen to Christina Holthausen, born locally, a baker, registered marriage on 4/3/1745.“* Thus was the text in the three index cards. Now I knew where to look further and then it was relatively simple to find facts about the Morsches family in church registers and documents from Kempen. *„Peter Gottfried was a baker. His index card shows additional information about his profession and taxation such as: Bakery: 1748 – 1780; brewery: 1758 – 1780; juniper berry distillery: 1775 – 1780; winery: 1758.“* Like many other bakers of his time Gottfried Morsches also had a pub, at least since 1758. He certainly brewed his own beer. Maybe his vine had not been sweet enough, because he stopped growing it in 1758. Since 1775 he also distilled juniper. On 9/9/1781 *Peter Godefridus Morches* died at the age of 64 in Neuß, after having left his bakery to his son Johann Jakob the year before.

<sup>21</sup> *StAK, Urkunde 1466 f.*

<sup>22</sup> *Matrikel der Uni Köln, VII, 1559-1797, Register.*

<sup>23</sup> *G. Terwelp, Die Stadt Kempen im Rheinlande, Kempen 1894/1914/1923, p. 220.*

<sup>24</sup> *Please see the German text.*

On the backside of the index card mentioned above all the children of Gottfried Morsches and Christina Holthausen are written down:

- 1) b. 5/9/1746 Joann Petrus Michael
- 2) b. 10./9/1748 Anna Margaretha
- 3) b. 17/12/1750 Christianus
- 4) b. 25/1/1754 Anna Catharina Margaretha
- 5) b. 23/9/1756 Joann Jacob
- 6) b. 11/6/1761 Joann Reinerus

Reinerus Morsches died in 1781. Catherina Morsches married Gerhard Elfges and died shortly giving birth to their only daughter Maria Gertrud in 1788 at the age of 36. Gottfried's three older children aren't mentioned in the Neuß Church Registry not even as godparents who might indicate that they had already died by 1756 when the Morsches family was still living near Neuß (or maybe Üdesheim). There is no prove that the family was related to a Nicolaus Morsches deceased in Neuß on 15/5/1787.

Jakob probably was the only son of Gottfried's who passed on the name *Morsches*. He married (church: 21/3/1778; registry: 15/5/1778) Maria Margaretha Josten (b. 21/3/1756 in Neuß) daughter of Joes Peter Josten und Anna Gores. Maria Margaretha Josten died on 20/7/ 1794 after having given birth to eight children:

- 1) b. 21/12/1778 Catharina Marg. married Johann Wilhelm Theodor Brußeler in 1806.
- 2) b. 18/7/1780 Johann Wilhelm, married 1802 as a baker Maria Barbara Gabriel and in 1804 he had a daughter Maria Christina Cornelia Morsches. 1806 he was a merchant. He must have left Neuß. I don't know whether there live any descendants of his named Morsches.
- 3) b. 10/5/1782 Anna Gertrud
- 4) b. 26/2/1784 Maria Catharina Elisabeth
- 5) b. 22/12/1785 Anna Margaretha
- 6) b. 5/4/1787 Peter Matthias
- 7) b. 5/11/1788 Johann Peter, my great grand father (see below)
- 8) b. 12/4/1790 Johann Jakob Theodor

After his wife's death Jakob married Maria Gertrud Zelt on 1/11/ 1795. Maria Gertrud Zelt was born around 1765 as the daughter of Jakob Zelt and Eva Keyll. After Jakob's death she married Gerwien Flieges and died in 1829 in Neuß. She and Jakob had 7 children:

- 9) b. 17. 8.1796 Anna Christina Margaretha
- 10) b. 7.10.1797 Johann Peter Michael Morsches
- 11) b. 1798/99 Johann Adolph (year 7 of the new French calendar), d. 1799 at the age of 5 month.
- 12) b. year 9 Johann Gottfried, d. 1801 aged 5 month.
- 13) b. year 10 Johann Melchior
- 14) b. year 11 Anna Maria Josepha, d. 1803 aged 2 month.
- 15) b. year 12 Maria Christina Josepha

Jakob Morsches appears as baker (boulanger) in most documents (1799-1807). Only once at Melchior's birth he is called distiller (*fabricant de l'eau de vie*, literally

*producer of water of life*). Jakob died on 9/7/1804. 58 years later at his son's Peter's death his occupation is called *proprietor*. In Wißplinghoff's great history of the town of Neuß it says, „In 1787 the biggest baker Jakob Morsches also had a brewery and distillery”. Since 1780 the index cards says he was a brewer and baker and paid tax on *juniper*. Jakob signed everything with Jacobus Morsches or Jacobus Moersches. His children's signatures were W. Moersches (Wilhelm) and C. M. Mörsches (Catharina Margaretha). The pronunciation of the „o” in Morsches must have originally been long as the „e” was often used to indicate that the preceding vowel was pronounced long in this area of Germany. Apart from the signatures in legal documents you only find *Morsches* without any „e”. After Jakob's death or more exactly after his mother Christina Holthausen's death in 1807 the Morsches family started to migrate. Only Gertrud Zelt, Jakob's second wife, died in Neuß in 1829 after remarrying. Leaving Neuß may have been caused by the French Occupation at that time. Three of Peter's siblings died as infants in Neuß and I can't say what happened to the eleven other children. They have changed their name. Perhaps their descendants were named *Nüsser* (= coming from Neuß) or totally differently or there weren't any descendants.

## V) The Morsches Family in Oedt and in Düsseldorf

Johann Peter Morsches appears again in documents in 1818 after he must have been travelling for 10 years to be trained in a handicraft. He got married in Oedt on 8/8/1818 (today 4155 Grefrath). He works as a tanner and called himself red-tanner, but he also tanned with oak bark. He probably arrived in Oedt by accident where possibly two hundred years before his great-great-great-grandmother Berber Müller had grown up near Oedt Mill before she married Korst Morsches in 1628. The village of Oedt also is only 2 km from the Morsches estate at Kempen where Peter's ancestors had lived in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Peter Morsches married Anna Gertrud Claßen (b. 16/9/1796 in Vorst, today Tönivorst; daughter of Peter Joan Claßen and Theresia Meer) in 1818. The Morsches family lived at 106, Oedter Straße in Oedt. There their first children were born:

- 1) Gertrude Antonette Hubertina Morsches (b. 1819)
- 2) Johann Jakob Wilhelm Hubert Morsches (b. 14/9/1821) lived 1862, when his father died, at Crefeld and was a baker and innkeeper. 1868 he emigrated to America and as *William Morsches* he became the ancestor of all American Morsches, about which I shall tell in a later Chapter.
- 3) Peter Anton Theodor Hubert Morsches (b. 1823) married Maria Christina Kempen (b. ca. 1832) at 2/9/1858. He worked as a *Hauderer* (a carter). Three children of his died very young: Franz Anton Adrian Morsches (b. 1864, d. 1864), Anton Theodor Hubert Morsches (b. 1865, d. 1865) und Elise Hubertine Morsches (b. 1867, d. 1868). 1864/65 they lived at Crefeld, Hochstr. 13, and 1867/68 in Crefeld, Dreikönigenstraße 18. 1923 they had only two children left: „*Gertrud, named Traudchen, she is old and ill, and Carl. ... Carl has 3 children, the boy is Tony*”.<sup>25</sup>

Two more children of Peter and Anna Gertrud were born at Düsseldorf:

- 4) Franz Joseph Morsches (b. 13/9/1826), mein Urgroßvater (see below).

<sup>25</sup> Letter of Febr. 27<sup>th</sup> 1923 from Sophie Morsches to her cousin Mabel in America.

5) Margarethe Theresa Huberte Morsches (b. 20/4/1829) married Julius Bergmann at 20/9/1852 in Crefeld. 1923 four children of them were still alive. Only Maria of these four had children, a boy and a girl.<sup>26</sup>

Shortly after moving to Crefeld Peter's wife Gertrud Claßen died in their flat at Crefeld No 175 on 27/7/1831. The registrar mentions that she had been *no experienced writer*, illiterate. In a letter from 20/1/1982 Paul Morsches a relative of ours living in the US wrote that there had been a Gertrude Morsches who died in America in 1874. She must have been born in Germany in 1833 and she must have been his grandfather William's sister. But at that timer Peter Morsches couldn't have had any legal children because until his death in 1862 he had been known a widower since his wife Gertrud Classen had passed away. If the year is correct the American Gertrude Morsches could have been William's cousin whose family had emigrated earlier and who might have invited Willam to do the same. If the year isn't correct she might have been William's sister Gertrude Antonette Hubertina Morsches born in 1819 who stayed single and whose death certificate I could not find here. Of course, this is open to speculation and it might be quite different.

It's intriguing to learn that four of the five children Peter had the name Hubert, Hubertina or Huberte as a middle name. In later generation there has hardly been a member of the family who did carry that name as a middle name. Why? St Hubertus was known as the saint protecting hunters. In Germany there are hunting societies called Brethren of St. Hubert, so maybe that's why. Or perhaps the Monastery St Hubert nearby made them choose the name. My uncle Karl Morsches always claimed that the name Hubert was given to protect the child from dog bites. But in his case it had not worked which he proved by showing the scar from a dog bite. Peter Morsches died in his Crefeld flat, Fischelner Strasse 13 on 3/7/1862 at the age of 73. He was the first one of our family to trade in leather and established a family tradition because his son the saddler Franz Morsches, his grandsons Peter Morsches (Peter Morsches und Söhne AG, Lederhandlung) and Wilhelm Morsches (Schuhfabrik Morsches) as well as his great-grandson my father Ernst Morsches (Ledergrößhandlung Ernst Morsches) and because of him my brother Rolf Morsches, all traded in leather until 1975.

## **VI. The Morsches Family in the United States of America**

Johann Jakob Wilhelm Hubert Morsches (b. 14/9/1821 in Oedt), a son of Peter Morsches and Anna Gertud Classen was the patriarch of the Morsches in the US. He was a baker and innkeeper in Crefeld. Wilhelm was first married to Anna Sabina Christina (b. 1829) daughter of Johannes Büren from Anrath, but who died in Crefeld on 26/1/1858. On 14/4/1863 he married Anna Gertrud Kempen (b. 1841 in Kleinenbroich) his brother Anton's sister-in-law. This second marriage produced two children born in Krefeld: Wilhelm Bernhard Morsches (b. 21/1/1864) and Elisabeth Therese Morsches (b. 30/8/1865). This is the information I could send to Paul J. Morsches to America on 9/1/1982. He sent me further information.

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<sup>26</sup> Letter of 1923 from Sophie Morsches to Mabel.

In 1868 Johann Jakob Wilhelm Hubert Morsches called William henceforth immigrated to the US with his wife *Ann Gertrude Kampton* accompanied by Anton the son from his first marriage who was 10 in 1868. His mother might have died giving birth to him and another child: Gertrude. Apart from these children from his second marriage William Bernard and Elisabeth Therese (d. 1889) there is another child, Helen Agnes born 21/4/1868 but not in Krefeld. She must have been born in Germany during the long journey. She died in 1962 at the age of 94. „*And there was a Gertrude born in Germany in 1833. She must have been my grandfather William`s sister*” which cannot be correct. In 1833 William`s mother had already been dead for two years and his Father Peter had not been married as he was called *widower* when he died. ”*This Gertrude immigrated with my grandmother to the US to look after the three children. She died in 1874.*”

Paul J. Morsches goes on: „*My grandfather had a job in a town in Illinois near Chicago. ... He was about to build a house of his own when he was persuaded to move to Columbia City, Indiana where a new brewery had been opened. Columbia City was to become their new home and there the family grew up.*”

William Morsches and his wife Ann Gertrude had eight more children in Columbia City. His oldest son was Fredrick Ferdinand (b. 1873; d. 1950) whose wife Mable Foust Morsches was still in contact with the German Morsches in the time after World War I when she sent *Relief Parcels* with clothes. After Frank (b. 1875;d. 1952) there was Julius Henry (b. 1877; d. 1954) who was married to Arvada Susan Brown (b. 1884; d. 1946) Julius Henry was Paul J. Morsches`s father who sent me all the information. There also was Elizabeth Ann (b. 1879; d. 1938) and Barbra (b. 1880; d. 1967). I think it is interesting to know that these five reached an average age of more than 75. All the other children, Karl (b. 1882; d. 1884), Josephine (b. 1884; d. 1889) and Ernest died early. William Morsches died on 10/12/1906 at the age of 85 and his wife Ann Gertrude Kempton died in 1908. This is all the information I could find about the immigrants and their children. On 2/8/1984 Paul J. Morsches wrote to me that he was currently working on the family tree „*of our family in the USA*”. And he promised to send me a copy as soon as he would have finished.

The rest of the information is also only on Paul J. Morsches and his family. He was born in January 1905 and his second wife was Martha married after 1970. He had 4 children from his first marriage: Paul J. Morsches junior (b. ca. 1930) who had three sons: Fritz, Hans who also speaks German and Franz. Then there was Richard R. Morsches (b. ca. 1935, single, living in New York in 1982) and Jane Ann Morsches (b. ca. 1937, married to D. W. Langeloh, two children Heidi and Brooks Langeloh) and last Robert (b. ca. 1944, second marriage to Jane, two children daughter Leah, son Troy and one step daughter Jamie). The Morsches have a DIY center *Morsches Builder`s Mart* in Columbia City. According to the letterhead Paul J. Morsches senior was *Chairman of the Board*, his son Paul J. junior *President*, his son-in-law Donald W. Langeloh *Vice president* and his son Robert F. *Secretary*. The address was Box 170, Columbia City, Indiana 46725, Tel: (219) 244-6145. Their private address was Blue Creek Farm, R.R. 10, Columbia City, Indiana 46725. In the middle of the 1970ies Paul J. Morsches reestablished familiy ties between the families both sides of the Atlantic when searched telephone directories throughout the Rhineland for people named Morsches and he discovered my uncle Karl who introduced him to his son Peter. Peter Morsches was not

able to tell his American guest anything about their relationship but they founded a friendship that led to several visits to the American family by Peter and his family.

## **VII: An interesting letter from 1923**

On 27/2/1923 my grandfather Peter Morsches's sister then living at 12, Beckerathstr. in Crefeld wrote to her cousin Mabel, wife of Friedrich Ferdinand Morsches (b. 1873; d. 1950), the first Morsches to be born in the USA. This letter seems to me very important for the family history. As most of us understand a little English I do not want to translate this literally. The letter contains a list of all 41 living descendants of my great-great-grandfather Peter Morsches in Germany in 1923 including their marriage partners. There are some interesting details for some of the people mentioned. The writer of the letter Sophie Morsches was single and a teacher. On pages three and four she describes the dismal situation many people lived in throughout French occupied Germany as a devastating inflation set in.

## **VIII. My great-grandfather, Franz Morsches the saddler**

Franz Joseph Morsches (b. 13/9/1826 in Düsseldorf) married Henriette Louisa Hubertine Lavezzari (b. 2/3/1827 in Crefeld) in St. Tönis (belonging to Tönisvorst today) on 2/6/1854. As she signed the marriage certificate with „*H. L. Lavezzari*” she might have been called Hubertine and not Henriette. I have no dates of death, but I do have a copy of their certificates of baptism. That is how I know that Franz Josef Morsches son of Johann Peter Morsches and Anna Gertrud Clahsen had been christened in the Roman Catholic church St. Maximilian in Düsseldorf on 14/9/1826. Henriette Louisa Hubertine daughter of Friedrich Lavezzari and Johanna Samans was christened in the main church of Krefeld St. Dionysius on 4/3/1827. The death certificates of our great-grandmother's parents say: Friedrich Ludwig Lavezzari living at no 635, Crefeld, widower of Johanna Samans died in Crefeld on 6/7/1835 at the age of 48. He had been born in Hamburg and his parents were Paul Lavezzari and Sophia Eleonora Giuzzetti (both dead in 1835). He had no job in 1828 nor in 1835. His wife Johanna Reinolda Samans died at no. 536, Crefeld on 3/12/1828 at the age of 32. She was the daughter of Johann Heinrich Saman and Maria Josepha Kuypers and was born in Kempen. My great-grandmother Henriette Louisa Hubertine Lavezzari lost her mother when she was 1 and her father at the age of 8. You can retrace the Samans and Kuyper families further into the past but I don't think the details matter. But I find something else of interest. One great-grandfather of Johann Heinrich Samans was Peter Schmabers and possibly Father-in-law of Christian Morsches married to Adelheid Schmabers whose great-great-grandfather had been Franz Joseph Morsches. Maybe Franz Joseph Morsches and Henriette Lavezzari had had the same ancestors going back five generations. I know of seven children from Franz Joseph Morsches. They were born in St. Tönis between 1855 and 1873. I am going to explain about them in part five of the history of the Morsches family. When my grandfather Peter Morsches was born Franz Joseph Morsches lived at 110, Hochstr. in St. Tönis which became no 208, St. Tönis since 1873.