

### The Diary of Johann Michael Schmitt

Manuscript Records in the Family Bible of Johann Michael Schmitt  
as translated by Dr. Winthrop Bell and published in "Colonists of New England and Nova Scotia - Burgess and Heckman Families" by Kenneth Farwell Burgess, c.1956.  
(portions in quotes are Dr. Bell's notes)

*"The information written into this Bible is important to us because Johann Michael Schmitt was the stepfather of our ancestor Johann Martin Hirtle. After the death of Georg Herttel (Hirtle), his widow married Johann Michael Schmidt, and they eventually left for Nova Scotia, taking with them their younger and unmarried children. This account gives the family Bible information for Georg Hirtle's family, as well as that of Johann Michael Schmitt's, along with accounts of what he called "Noteworthy Events." PJT*

"Many pages of the manuscript, beginning with page 7, were avowedly written fairly consecutively by Johann Michael Schmitt in the year 1785.

"Dozens of distinctive little features of the handwriting make it seem practically certain that the main parts of the whole record--everything up to page 13, and beginning again on page 15, were written by one and the same man." (Some of the writing was determined by Dr. Bell to be Johann Michael Schmitt's son Thomas.)

"This would mean that the first few pages, recording the Herttel family, etc. must have been copied by Johann Michael Schmitt into this book--presumably from an earlier family Bible or other record, brought from Germany (and perhaps becoming dilapidated by 1785).

"But since what Johann Michael Schmitt wrote in 1785 covered the history of his own family for fifty years or so previously, he can hardly have depended entirely on memory for all the details which he gives, and must have copied at least a good part of that record, too, from earlier writings."

#### Page 1

Anno

1678: The 9th of June, I, Georg Herttel, was born into he world before midnight between 10 and 11 o'clock in the sign of the Balance.

1713: The 25th or November I held my wedding with my wife Christina Sophia, in Leimen.

1727: The 15th of May she passed away. With her I begot the following children:

1715: The 15th of January my daughter Catharina Sybilla was born between 3 and 4 o'clock in the sign of the Twins, and passed away again the 22nd of October 1717 between two and three o'clock.

1718: The 11th of January my son Georg Ludwig was born between 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon in the sign of the Bull.

1720: The 9th of April my daughter Maria Magdalena was born between 10 and 11 o'clock in the night in the sign of the Bull, but died again the 11th of March 1723.

#### Page 2

1722: The 6th of January my daughter Juliana Sophia was born between 4 and 5 o'clock in the morning in the sign of the Lion, just on the festival of Epiphany.

1723: The 14th of December my son Georg Michael ws born in the night between 10 and 11 o'clock, in the sign of the Crab, but died again the 17th of December.

1725: The 18th of January a boy baby was born to me before midnight, between 10 and 11 o'clock, but died again immediately.

1726: The 3rd of April a boy baby was born to me in the morning between 5 and 6 o'clock, in the sign of the Bull. His godfather was Mr. Georg Michael Forster, head gamekeeper at Bruchhausen, who gave him the name Georg Philipp.

1727: The 11th of May, the fourth Sunday after Easter, a daughter was born to me, between 8 and 9 o'clock in the sign of the Archer. Her Godmother was Catharina Rehm, innkeeper's wife of the "Bear," and gave her the name Margaretha.

(His wife passed away four days later, on the 15th.)

#### Page 3

1727: The 22nd of July, I, Georg Herttel, held my wedding the second time, with the maiden Maria Barbara Elisabetha Engelhorn, of Hockenheim. With her I begot the following children:

1729: The 19th of February a daughter was born to me in the evening between 7 and 8 o'clock in the sign of the Crab. Her godmother was the wife of the cartwright of the hunting outfit of the Elector Palatine, who gave her the name Susanna Elisabetha.

(Inserted later:1803: The 20th of February she passed away, having reached the age of 74 years, 10 days.)

1731: The 20th of April a son was born to me at noon between 10 and 11 o'clock in the sign of the Virgin. His godfather was Mr. Johann Georg Tornberger, host of the "Red House" in Schwetzingen, who gave him the name Johann Georg, but he died again the 31st of January, 1733.

1733: The 8th of June a son was born to me in the afternoon between 2 and 3 o'clock; his godfather was my brother-in-law Hans Martin Strumpf, pheasant keeper to the Elector Palatine, who gave him the name of Johann Martin. (Inserted later: He died in Halifax the 1st of Sept., 1776, having reached the age of 43 years and 2 months. He begot 10 children.)

Page 4

1736: The 30th of January a daughter was born to me between 7 and 8 o'clock in the sign of the Virgin. Her godfather was Mr. Michael Förster, head gamekeeper of the Elector Palatine at Bruchhausen, and the wife of the postmaster at Haydelberg, who gave the child the name Regina Barbara. (Inserted later: Anno 1801 on the 30th of October she passed away peacefully, having reached the age of 64 years 9 month.)

1736: The 3rd of September Georg Herttel passed away peacefully and was buried in Leimen. With his first wife Christina Sophia he begot 8 children, and with his second wife Maria Barbara Elisabetha 4, in all 12 children.

Other Noteworthy happenings:

1736: The 17th of August in the evening about 7 o'clock there passed away peacefully my godfather Georg Michael Förster, head gamekeeper at Bruchhausen, aged 75 years two months and some days. He had served 5 Electors Palatine as head gamekeepers.

Page 5

1736: The 28th of August our pastor, Master Martin Gonter passed away peacefully here at Leimen in the morning between 10 and 11 o'clock. He had ministered a pastor here one year, five months and some days.

1746: The 22nd and 23rd of May there was the big flood here in Leimen.

Page 6  
(left blank)

Page 7

LeHave, in the district of Luneburg and province of Nova Scotia, the 18th of October, 1785.

Noteworthy Happenings and Events which have taken place in this land during the time I have been here.

What has taken place from the time of my marriage in Germany to the present time, and how many children I have begotten, together with the grandchildren according as I have learned from my children.

1714: The 7th of March, I, Johann Michael Schmitt, was born into the world, my father was Georg Schmitt of Neustatten in the land of Ansbach, where he was a magistrate, my mother was Margaretha Schmitt of Tauberzell.

1738: The last Tuesday before Advent I held my wedding with Maria Barbara Elisabetha, nee Engelhorn, and widow of the blacksmith of the hunting outfit of the Elector Palatine at Bruchhausen, with her I have begotten the following children:

1739: The 16th of August at 1 o'clock in the morning a daughter was born to me, in the sign of the Twins, and on the 18th of the month was sponsored in holy baptism by the wife of my brother-in-law of Bruhl,

Page 8

who gave her the Christian name, Maria Elisabeth. She passed away again the 2nd of July, having reached the age of 17 weeks and 4 days.

1740: The 13th of April another little daughter was born to me, in the sign of the Scorpion, and was brought to holy baptism the 14th of that month, sponsored by the wife of the magistrate of Bruchhausen, who gave her the Christian name Catharina Barbara.

She passed away again however, to my great sorrow, here on the 27th of November 1780, having reached the age of 40 years, 7 months and 14 days; just as there was the great eclipse here.

1744: The 17th of March a little son was born to me, between 2 and 3 o'clock in the sign of the Scorpion, and was brought to holy baptism the 19th of that month, sponsored by my father-in-law from Hockenheim, who gave him the Christian name Stephanus. He passed away again on the 7th of May.

1745: The 24th of June a little daughter was born to me, in the morning between 3 o'clock, in the sign of the Ram, and was brought to holy baptism on Saint John's day, being the 27th of the month, and sponsored by my mother-in-law from Hockenheim

## Page 9

who gave her the name Maria Elisabetha.

1747: The 15th of October a little son was born to me, in the morning between 2 and 3 o'clock, in the sign of the Fishes, and was brought to holy baptism the 18th of that month, sponsored by my brother-in-law Hans Thomas Engelhorn, host of the "Star" at Old Lossheim, who gave him the Christian name, Hans Thomas.

1750: The 13th of July a little daughter was born to me, in the evening between 8 and 9 o'clock, in the sign of the Balance, and was brought to holy baptism the 14th of that month, sponsored by the wife of Nicolaus Hambrecht (as proxy for my mother), who gave her the Christian name Eva Margaretha; she got to be half a year old and passed away.

1783: The 6th of December my wife Maria Barbara Elisabetha passed away here at Leehöff (German spelling for LeHave). She had reached the age of 75 years less 5 months. She was born the 8th of June in the year 1708. Her father was Joh. Jacob Engelhorn, of Hockenheim, her mother Elisabetha Engelhorn.

## Page 10

1770: The 19th of March my son Johann Thomas Schmitt held his wedding with Christina Werth, surviving daughter of the late Jacob Werth, and has begotten with her the following children.

1771: The 1st: The 13th of November a little daughter was born to Thomas Schmitt, the sponsors were Caspar Heckmann and his wife, Maria Elisabetha, who gave her the Christian name Maria Elisabetha. She was born in the evening about 5 o'clock. She is to be found in the register of the Reformed church, also in the Lutheran register.

1773: The 2nd: The 14th of July a little son was born to Thomas Schmitt, in the morning between 1 and 2 o'clock, and was brought to holy baptism the 2nd of August. The sponsors were I, Johann Michael Schmitt and my mother-in-law Maria Sybilla Heckmann, and gave him the Christian name of Johann Michael. He is to be found in the register of the Reformed church, also in the Lutheran register.

1775: The 3rd: The 15th of August another little son was born to Thomas Schmitt, in the morning about 1 o'clock, and was baptized the 24th of September. The sponsors were I, Johann Michael Schmitt and my wife Maria Elisabetha, and we gave him the Christian name

## Page 11

Johann Jacob. He is to be found in the Lutheran register.

1777: The 4th: The 2nd of July in the evening about 9 o'clock a little daughter was born to Thomas Schmitt, and was brought to holy baptism the 19th of July. The sponsors were Heinrich Oxener, and his daughter, Maria Elisabetha, who gave her the name Catharina Elisabetha. It stands in the Lutheran register.

1779: The 5th: The 10th of August another little daughter was born to Thomas Schmitt, in the morning about 6 o'clock, and was baptized the 28th of the month. The sponsors were: I, Johann Michael Schmitt and my wife, Maria Elisabetha, who gave her the Christian name, Regina Barbara. It is to be found in the register of the Reformed church with Mr. Braun, and in the Lutheran register.

1781: The 6th: The 11th of October a little son was born to Thomas Schmitt, in the evening between 10 and 11 o'clock, and was brought to holy baptism the 1st of November. The sponsors were: The brother-in-law of my son Thomas, Christian Ernst in Oakwood and his wife

## Page 12

Regina Barbara, who gave him the Christian name Johann Christian, as may be found in the Lutheran register.

1784: The 7th: The 20th of April about 2 o'clock in the morning, in the sign of the Virgin, a little daughter was born to Thomas Schmitt, and was brought to holy baptism the 13th of May. The sponsors were Heinrich Ochsner, and his daughter, Elisa Margaretha, who gave her the Christian name, Elisa Margaretha. It is to be found in the Lutheran register.

1786: The 8th: The 18th of January a little son was born to Johann Thomas Schmitt in the morning about 3 o'clock in the sign of the Goat, and was brought to holy baptism the 10th of April. The invited sponsors were Joh. Thomas Ochsner and Elisa Margaretha Ochsner, and gave him the Christian name Johann Thomas. It is to be found in the Lutheran register. 1791, 9th of November he passed away.

1788: The 9th: The 7th of November a little daughter was born to Joh. Thomas Schmitt, in the afternoon about 3 o'clock in the sign of the Twins, and was brought to holy baptism the 15th of December. The invited sponsors were Caspar Heckmann and his wife Maria Elisabetha, and gave her the Christian name Maria Elisabetha.

## Page 13

1791: The 10th: The 8th of March a little daughter was born to Joh. Thomas Schmitt about 2 o'clock in the morning in the sign of the Bull, and was baptized the 30th of April. The invited sponsors were Joh. Thomas Ochsner together with Maria Magdalena the daughter of my brother-in-law Christian Ernst, and they conferred on her the Christian name Maria Magdalena.

1794, passed away the 23rd of January at 12 o'clock in the night.

1794: The 10th: The 7th of February a little son was born to Johann Thomas Schmitt about 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning in the sign of the Bull and was brought the same day to holy baptism, and the invited sponsors were Johann Thomas Ochsner and Maria Matlena Haun and conferred on him the Christian name Johann Thomas. Died 1796, the 5th of May, about 11 or 12 o'clock.

1796: The 12th: The 15th of February a little son was born to Thomas Schmitt in the evening about 10 or 11 o'clock in the sign of the Bull and was brought to holy baptism the 16th of February and the invited sponsor were Johann Georg Ramigen and his wife Reba and conferred on him the Christian name Johann Georg.

#### Page 14

1756: The 15th of February my wife Christina Catrina Wirth was baptized. Her father was Jacob Wirth and the mother Sibila Wirt. Her name as given above is recorded in the register of the Anglican church.

Johann Georg Schmidt was a son of Johan Thomas Schmidt and his mother was Christina Catarina Schmidt. He was born in the year 1796, the 15th of February; died as we hope and wish in salvation, in the year 1819, the 17th of June and was buried on the 19th, having reached the age of 23 years, 4 months, and 2 days.

Johann Thomas Schmidt was a son of Johann Michael Schmidt. His birth is recorded in this book on the 5th sheet. He died in the year 1821 the 19th of October and was buried on the 22nd, having reached the age of 74 years and 4 days.

#### Page 15

##### Noteworthy occurrences

1752: The 9th of May we left Leymen (Leimen) for America, and arrived at Halifax the 6th of September in the same year. The 4th of May we moved to Lunenburg, and in 1754 the week after Easter to Leehöff where I still live up to the present time. The names of those who came hither with me and belong to my family are as follows: I, Johann Michael Schmitt, and my wife Maria Barbara Elisabetha; 6 children: namely (1) Susanna Elisabetha Herttel (2) Johann Martin Herttel (3) Regina Barbara Herttel (4) Catharina Barbara Schmitt (5) Maria Elisabetha Schmitt (6) Johann Thomas Schmitt. For this great mercy, that God led us all in health and safety such a long way hither across the wild ocean into this land, such a think as no family can boast as a matter of course, we praise, bless and than Him, and have resolved to maintain an annual day of prayer, penitence and thanksgiving to God the Lord, fixed by us for all time on the first Sunday after the date of our arrival in this land and

#### Page 16

this day shall be kept so long as a member of our family remains. To which may almighty God give His mercy and blessing. Amen.

The ship with which we traveled across the great sea bore the name Göhl (Gale), and in Rotterdam 262 souls embarked in her. On the voyage to America 12 children were born, of which all but one died. Of the above 262 souls embarked, 53 died on the ocean and the remaining 221 landed safely at Halifax. There were 183 freights and 53 bedplaces. From the 8th of July 1752 to the 28th of February 1753, 83 persons from the above-mentioned ship died in Halifax. We were 14 days travelling down the Rhine and 14 weeks on the ocean, not counting the time we were on board the ship in Rotterdam and again in Halifax before we were put to ashore, all of which amounted to 22 weeks.

Anno 1757: The smallpox raged at Halifax so that whole families died out. 1757: Mr. Beissang, his wife, 2 children, his maid and her child and another man and his son were scalped and carried off by the Indians. (Dr. Bell notes that this was the PAYZANT massacre which actually occurred in 1756)

1758: The 22nd of March in Passion week the Indians scalped and carried off Ochs and his wife and 2 children and Roders wife, 5 persons in all.

#### Page 17

1758: Little Joseph and Jacob Hatt's wife were scalped and 2 soldiers from the Leehöff guard.

1759: The 26th of April Tripo and his wife and daughter and the child of Mr. Greten's maid were scalped - 4 persons. (Dr. Bell notes that Greten is very probably CREIGHTON)

1759: The 12th of April, my wife's sister, Anna Catharina STRUMPF, the wife of the head pheasant-keeper at Sandhausen, appeared in person to my wife Maria Barbara Elisabetha SCMITT here in Leehöff. At the time I did not know what it signified; but later we learned that she died on the same day in Mannheim.

1760: The 10th of July we suffered a fire at Leehöff with 3 houses, mine, REINHARDT's and UHRICH's.

1769: In the month of August a comet was seen here, towards the eastward. 1775: In this year the smallpox raged in the township of Lunenburg, and about 1,100 had the smallpox; but thanks to God, only a very few died.

Of my family, 44 grandchildren and the wife of my son Thomas had it, 45 in all, and not one of them died of it and, thank God, not one of them received any blemish from it.

1776: The 23rd of July our neighbor Leonard UHRIG died suddenly. On the 21st of the month he fell from his house and was buried on the 26th. 1778: In the month of October, German soldiers came to Lunenburg, Brunswickers and Hessians, 100 men in number; they lay that Winter here in Winter quarters.

1779: The 11th of January the privateer Litsch was here and fired over a hundred shots against the houses, but God averted it so that only 3 shots hit in houses, and without great damage. Let thanks be given to God for this and may He protect us still further from misfortune.

#### Page 19

1783: In the month of August the Hessians were taken from Halifax and back to Germany again.

1775: The war began between England and France, and with the fleet there came several thousand men to Halifax. In the same year 3,000 men, soldiers and civilians died here. And in this year England deported all Mines and Bisquit and burned all the buildings from Mines and Bisquit the Germans drove over 1,000 head of cattle to Halifax and Lunenburg (Dr. Bell note: Minas and Piziquid )

1781: The 1st of July the Americans attacked and plundered the town of Lunenburg and robbed out of Mr. KRAUT's shop alone around 4,500 pounds' worth and in the town altogether about 8 or 9,000 pounds' worth. Besides this they exacted from the town for not burning it down a ransom of 1,000 pounds, which however was not paid. (Dr. Bell notes: official records say this was in 1782)

1797: The 27th of July our neighbor the REINHART woman, widow of Leonhard UHRIG, was buried.

#### Page 20

1791: The 19th of March Mr. EMENO and his wife and his son's daughter were murdered, burned and robbed by the 2 murderers, arsonists and thieves named George and Friderich BOTTELIER. The 9th of May 1791 both were hanged on the gallows in Lunenburg and the next day were taken by their friends to North-West and buried as a memorial.

1791: The 6th of August God punished us with black caterpillars. On the 6th there was such a rain of them that the ground was all covered. They ate the crops and grass until the 20th of August. Then they all died. In the whole settlement they did great damage. With me they ate almost all of the 10 bushels of seed barley, so that I scarcely got back the quantity I had sowed, 4 bushels was all we got for our portion. My damages were a good 60 bushels, and if God had not taken away the punishment after two weeks they would have consumed all the crops and grass.

1790: The 1st of October Caspar HECKMAN Sr. died in Lunenburg and was buried on the 3rd and had reached the age of 78 years and 6 months and 13 days.

1800: The 13th of January in the evening about 11 o'clock our neighbor Nicklaus REINHART passed away peacefully and was buried on the 15th. Had reached the age of 59 years 8 months.

#### Page 21

[This page has nothing to do with family records or the history of Lunenburg. It consists of some notes about the persecutions of the early Christians under the Roman emperors, etc., which Mr. Schmitt writes that he had copied from a book of martyrs belonging to Mr. Beisteiner of Lunenburg. This had evidently made a great impression on him. He says, for instance, that the persecution lasted 300 years and that 54,750,000 Christians perished in it.]

#### Page 22

1783: The 6th of December my dear wife Maria Barbara Elisabetha SCHMITT passed away. She became ill the 1st of the month and died on the said date. She was buried on the 8th. Through her 6 children she had 61 grandchildren and great-grandchildren, of all of which ten had died and 57 remain yet alive so long as God wills it. She was born in 1708, the 8th of January, and entered into her first marriage in 1727, became a widow in 1737, entered into her second marriage, with me, Johann Michael SCHMITT, 1738 and lived in this second marriage 45 years, so that her whole married life was 56 years. She reached the age of 75 years less 5 months.

1798: The 9th of June my father Johann Michael passed away, having reached the age of 84 years 3 months and 2 days, and was buried on the 11th in Oakwood cemetery.

#### Page 23

1790: The 20th of October my brother-in-law Caspar HECKMAN died in Loyenburg. He lay sick for 14 weeks. His age was 78 years.

1806: The 21st of December our pastor SCHMEISSER passed away having reached the age of 55 years and 9 months.

\* \* \* \* \*

(Notes by Dr. Bell, regarding the Gale and other ships)

"A 'freight' was a full-fare passenger - everyone over a certain stipulated age, which varied from time to time or ship to ship, but was frequently 14 years. Infants (usually under the age of 4) were carried free and no space allocation was made for them. Children between those ages were accounted 'half-freights.' Thus: Mr. Schmitt meant by the numbers of adults and of children (on the GALE from Rotterdam leaving Leymen for America on 9 May 1752 and docking in Halifax on 8 June 1752) were such that the 262 'souls' amounted to 183 'freights.' The still extant ship's manifest shows that there were actually 249 "souls" and 183 'freights.' The 'bedplaces' were subdivisions of the 'tween decks space in the ship, to which the emigrants were assigned. There were certain regulations with respect to these. The minimum 'bedplace' size was supposed to be 6 feet square, and no more than 4 'freights' were to be assigned to any one 'bedplace.' On John Dick's ships the 'bedplace' sizes were somewhat larger than the legal minimum. Mr. Schmitt's statement means that the GALE's emigrants had somewhat more room than they would have had the ship been filled."

(The original item was written in German script in a family Bible which Johann Michael brought with him from Leimen, a small town near Heidelberg. It passed through the hands of Rev. Mr. Bowers, a collector of old Bibles in 1901 Rochester, PA. Kenneth Burgess tracked him to Philadelphia, contacting his daughter there only to hear it had been distributed to one of many Lutheran seminaries upon Rev. Bower's death. He then tracked it to Temple University in 1940 where it was returned to Kenneth as a descendant of J.M. Schmitt's. It was restored by Lakeside Press of Chicago in Nov. 1954 and was deposited in the Library of Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois where it is (in 1956) available for examination, under the title "The Schmitt-Heckman-Burgess Bible". The Bible itself was originally printed in Germany in 1664.)

<http://www.library.northwestern.edu/reference/index.html>