

Genealogy and Story of Conrad Doll (1772-1819)
Organ Maker & Schoolmaster of Lancaster, Pennsylvania
by Jeff Moore November 20, 2011

The Problem

Our family records are rich with information about Mary Anne Doll, wife of Dr. William Moore of Womelsdorf. Her father, Conrad Doll, is simply named, while her mother's genealogy is laid out in detail.

A preliminary search of census records around the time of her birth, 1811, showed Dolls in York and Lancaster counties, and a plethora of Conrad Dolls in York county will abstracts. The problem of Conrad Doll was at a standstill until receipt of another family history stating that "Conrad Doll, a musician, played the pipe organ in the Lancaster church & taught music". With a simple web search the floodgates of information opened.

Conrad Doll started life as a talented man, publishing a song book and building organs; he settled as a schoolmaster, then descended into tragedy. Presented here is first his genealogy, with many names and dates, and then his story, in the form of extracts from various sources, presented without comment.

GENEALOGY

Ancestry of Conrad Doll

The ancestry of this Doll family was worked out by a Charles Edward Doll, and published in his 1972 manuscript entitled "300 years of the Doll Family 1672-1972".

Conrad Doll's grandparents Johannes Dohld (Doll) (1700-1765) and his wife Catharina Hartmann (1704-1785) were both born in Bretten, Baden-Württemberg, Germany. The Evangelical church there has records of their births, of their 18 May 1728 marriage, of the births of seven children from 1729 to 1741, and of their emigration to America in 1741. They arrived 23 Sept 1741 on the ship Marlborough, Thomas Doll master. The baptism of another child is recorded at the First Reformed Church of Lancaster.

Johannes Doll died February 3, 1765, intestate. I obtained a copy of his estate file from the Lancaster County Historical Society. It contains an inventory, a renunciation of administration by his widow Catharine, an account, and an administrator's bond. The inventory of personal goods was for £60.0.11, and, in addition to household goods, listed a bible, and shoemaker tools and supplies. The inventory, the renunciation and the account give his residence as the "Borough of Lancaster", while the bond describes him as "John Doll of Bethel Township". Catharine died November 7, 1785.

Conrad Doll's father Johannes Doll (1736-1807), son of Johannes and Catharina, was born September 25, 1736 in Bretten, Germany. He immigrated as a child with his family. The Doll manuscript gives his wife's name only as Elizabeth, born June 7 1742, without

her maiden name or any details of their marriage. The manuscript lists seven children and their births, born 1766 through 1778. I have found baptism records for the first two at the Lancaster First Reformed Church, and the last three, including Conrad's, at the York First Trinity Reformed Church. The records of the Lancaster First Reformed church list the burial October 16, 1807 of Johann Doll, schoolmaster, aged 71 years 2 weeks 4 days.

Johannes died intestate. I obtained a copy of his estate file from the Lancaster County Historical Society. Taken 5 November 1807, it contains only an inventory of his personal estate, totaling \$358.33, describing him as "John Doll Schoolmaster late of the Borough of Lancaster", recorded for administratrix Elizabeth Doll and Elizabeth Doll (presumably his wife and daughter).

Conrad Doll (1772-1819), son of Johannes and Elizabeth, was born 6 March 6, 1772 and baptized April 19, 1772 by Rev. Philip William Otterbein at the First (Trinity) Reformed Church at York, Pennsylvania. That record lists his parents as simply 'Johannes Doll and wife'.

Conrad Doll's First Marriage - Maria Trissler

From the records of the First Reformed Church of Lancaster:

Marriage: 8 October 1801 - Conrad Doll and Maria Trisler, of the city [Lancaster]

Death: 3 April 1803 - Anna Maria Doll aged 23 years 3 months

Death: 16 July 1803 - Elizabeth dau. of Conrad Doll aged 4 months 13 days

So Maria died about five weeks after giving birth to their daughter.

Conrad Doll's Second Marriage - Maria Magdalena Graff

Quoting from the German records of the First Reformed Church of Lancaster:

Marriage: 18 November 1804 - Conrad Doll & "Bally" [Polly] Graff, of the city [Lancaster]

Baptism: 1809 Catharina Elisabetha, born 1st October, baptized 14th November, parents Conrad Doll wife Maria Magdalena. Witness Catharina Graff (grandmother)

Baptism: 1811 Mariane, born 2 August, baptized 12 September, parents Conrad Doll legitimate wife Magdalena, baptism witness Elizabeth Doll (single woman) [Conrad's sister]

Death: 1813 June 28 Maria Magdalena - Conrad Doll's wife, aged 37 years

Conrad Doll's Death

Conrad Doll died in August 1819, probably in Lancaster. The details are saved for the story below.

Brief Ancestry of Conrad's 2nd Wife Maria Magdalena Graff

Maria Magdalena (Polly) Graff (1776-1813) was born August 6, 1776, daughter of Andreas Graff or Groff and his wife Catharine Graffert.

Her father, Andreas Graff (1740-1816) was a prominent citizen of Lancaster, a judge, father of sixteen children, son of immigrant Sebastian Graff (1711-1763) and his wife Eva Weber, Lancaster Moravians.

Her mother, Catharine Graffert was the daughter of Christopher & Mary Graffert of Lancaster. Christopher Graffert (about 1720-1805), also a prominent citizen, was an innkeeper, was a member of Lancaster Reformed church in 1750, and was on the Franklin College board of trustees at its founding in 1787. The name was Graffert in German and Crawford in English.

STORY OF CONRAD DOLL

Timeline

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1772 | b. Conrad Doll, York, Pa. |
| 1798 | Publishes tunebook (age 26) |
| 1801 | m. Conrad Doll & Maria Trissler |
| 1803-5 , 6? | Deacon at Lancaster First Reformed Church |
| 1803 | d. 1 st wife Maria (Trissler) Doll |
| 1803 | b. & d. daughter Elizabeth Doll |
| 1804 | m. Conrad Doll & Maria Magdalena Groff |
| 1805 | Purchases a lot in Lancaster for £500 |
| 1806? | Builds chamber organ |
| 1807 | Builds Peace Church organ |
| 1807 | d. father Johann Doll Schoolmaster (age 71) |
| 1809 | b. daughter Catharine Elizabeth Doll |
| 1811 | b. daughter Mary Anne Doll |
| 1813 | d. 2 nd wife Maria Magdalene (Groff) Doll |
| 1814 | Becomes schoolmaster at Lancaster, having returned from Lebanon |
| 1814?-on | Daughters raised by aunts |
| 1819 | d. Conrad Doll, probably at Lancaster |
| 1830 | m. daughter Catharine Elizabeth Doll (age 20) & Simeon Guilford |
| 1840 | m. daughter Mary Anne Doll (age 28) & Dr. William Moore |

Tunebook

In 1798 at age 26 Conrad Doll compiled and published a tunebook entitled *Sammlung Geistlicher Lieder nebst Melodien*. Only three copies are known to exist.

It is described by Robert Benaway Brown and Frank X. Braun in their article "The Tunebook of Conrad Doll" published in *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, Vol. 42, 3rd Qtr., 1948, p. 229-238. They wrote:

Aside from its rarity, this represents, insofar as an extensive search has revealed, the first German-American singing book printed before 1800 in which the music is presented in parts together with all the words for several stanzas. And...it shows strong evidences of both the effect upon the transplanted German community of the musical work being produced in other sections of the new country and of the best hymnody of their religion in the continent from which they had come. (p. 230)

The Doll book...restricts itself exclusively to songs of a religious nature. The sources from which Conrad Doll drew the hymns for his *Sammlung* [include] Zollikofer, Bachofen, and Schmidlin...the most ingenious and inventive of these Swiss hymn writers. (p. 235, 236)

As to Doll's training as an organist, it seems reasonable to assume that he studied under that cultured scrivener and author of the famous *Music Book*, Caspar Schaffner, who taught music and penmanship and played the church organ (built by Tannenberg) from 1795 to 1799. (p. 234)

Two Organs

Conrad Doll is best known for the organ which he built in 1807 for Peace Church, near Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. Pictures of it can be seen by Googling "Doll Organ at Peace Church".

In his article "A Conrad Doll Chamber Organ" (published 1981 in *The Tracker, Journal of the Organ Historical. Soc.*, 25:16), Raymond J. Brunner writes:

On July 6, 1807, Doll signed a contract with the German Reformed and Lutheran Congregations (a union Church) near Camp Hill, Pennsylvania for the construction of an organ with six stops. He agreed to complete the organ in five months for the sum of \$466.67.

Brunner goes on to describe a second organ which came to light at a 1978 estate sale.

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The organ is a two stop chamber organ in a small Hepplewhite style case. It was probably built between 1805 and 1810...The size of the organ and case style suggests that it was built for household use rather than as a church organ. (p. 16)

The chamber organ measures 4 feet wide by 2 feet deep and is 3 1/2 feet high. Its Hepplewhite case is African mahogany with inlay banding of curly maple and walnut. The top of the case is solid mahogany, while the curved doors and the sides are mahogany veneer over pine. The 54 note keyboard has ivory natural coverings with poplar sharps, stained black. At each end of the keyboard is an inlaid cheek block and beyond the cheek blocks are pierced wood grilles for sound emission. (p. 17)

Land

On April 3 1805 John Lefever and his wife Catharine conveyed to Conrad Doll, in consideration of £500 paid, a lot in the Borough of Lancaster on King Street (Lancaster Co. Deed Book 3, p. 363-7). I have been unable to find the sale of this property in the grantors index of Lancaster deeds.

Family Loss

Conrad Doll lost his first wife, Maria Trissler, a year and a half after they married, and their daughter Elizabeth three months later. After a year and a few months he married again, to Maria Magdalena Graff. In the eight and a half years of their marriage, there are only two known children. The two daughters, Catharine Elizabeth and Mary Anne, were raised in the families of their aunts, their mother's sisters Margaret Tressler, Catharine Stoy and Elizabeth Moore.

I speculate that the daughters were moved to their aunts' care within a year of their mother's death in June 1813. Conrad began as schoolmaster for the church in Lancaster in June 1814, and there is no mention of children in the Consistory records. Furthermore Catharine Elizabeth's son William Guilford, in his Graff genealogy, says that the daughters "became orphans at a very early age", upon the death of their mother.

Schoolmaster

At the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society at Lancaster, I photographed selected pages from a book "The Chronicles of a Reformed Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania" compiled by F. Colin Williams, 2002. It provides information on the lives of Johannes Doll and his son Conrad. Both served as schoolmaster there, and Conrad also as choirmaster.

In the book is a 1947 letter by Elizabeth Kieffer, the archivist of the Reformed Church in Lancaster, who had studied the tunebook and the Doll family. About the father Johannes she writes:

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From 1789 until his death in 1807, Doll appears regularly in the records as schoolmaster. He lived in the back room of the schoolhouse, received a salary of 15 pounds yearly, and a fee of ten shillings a term for each pupil. He also picked up small additions to his income by such chores as writing the names of the congregation *im langen Buch* (which we still have) for two pounds." (p. 1000)

Continuing, with extracts from F. Colin Williams' book:

January 4 [1806], It was resolved that: 'Mr. [Johannes] Doll, because of his age and weak school, and because of the services of Herr Conrad Doll who plays the organ for the congregation shall have his salary raised to £18. 15s. 0d. (p. 223)

June 13 [1814], a letter of resignation was received from the schoolmaster Kraut...A Mr. Welschans from York County was recommended, and invited for an interview. On the same day, however, that his letter accepting the invitation was received, came a letter from their old friend Conrad Doll, of Lebanon, applying for the position.

The congregation were so delighted at the prospect of getting back this good old friend, now a widower in his forties, and a seasoned schoolmaster, as well as a competent organist, that they broke all negotiations with Mr. Welschans, and immediately elected Mr. Doll. (p. 227)

[1818] Schoolmaster Conrad Doll, petitioned to be allowed to raise the price of schooling, as he can no longer live on what he gets. Resolved: to allow him to charge \$2.00 for every child of a member of the congregation; and for outsiders 'so viel als er kriegen kann.' (Anything he can get). (p. 229)

Conrad Doll was listed as a deacon 1803, 1804, 1805 & 1806?. (p. 896)

Conrad Doll's Tragic End

At the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society at Lancaster, I photographed selected pages from the "Consistory Minutes of Lancaster First Reformed Church", and had them transcribed and translated from German by a certified translator, Ann C Sherwin:

On April 26, [1819],
at 7 o'clock in the evening

after proper invitation, the church board met at the home of the preacher.

I. The reason for such a late meeting was announced and explained — namely, that this afternoon a very unfortunate situation had arisen with our current schoolmaster. It was alleged that he had summoned a woman from the congregation, already advanced in years, to come to him, by all appearances to talk with him about her children whom she was sending to school; and that said schoolmaster had used the opportunity to try to rape her, but she had forcibly wrenched herself away.

- II. This unfortunate and troubling matter was taken in due consideration. The schoolmaster and the woman were summoned, and both appeared. After the woman had explained the circumstances and the scandalous behavior and the schoolmaster was given a chance to defend himself, he was in no way able to say anything in his defense.
- III. Both parties were allowed to leave.
- IV. After long and careful reflection and deliberation, it was unanimously resolved that the schoolmaster be dismissed from his post immediately and that he be notified by the trustees William Cooper and Georg Messerschmitt that his service was over and that he must move out of the house without delay.

On August 28

at 10 o'clock in the morning,

after notice was given, the church board met at the home of the preacher.

The preacher reported to the church board the sad and terrible end that Conrad Doll had come to, in that he had taken his own life with a rope, and that his relatives had requested that be buried in our churchyard. After long and careful consideration of all the circumstances, it was unanimously

Resolved: that Conrad Doll, having committed suicide, not be granted burial in our churchyard. It was further

Resolved: that on this occasion a clear rule be established: In the future, no one who takes his own life out of licentiousness, having led an evil and godless life, be he rich or poor, shall be granted or permitted burial in our churchyard.

Burial

Elizabeth Kieffer, the archivist of the church, in her 1947 letter mentioned above, comments on Conrad Doll's probable burial:

...the consistory, again in special session, refused a petition of his relatives to be allowed to bury him beside his wife in our graveyard. There is no record of where he was buried, probably at a crossroads with a stake in his heart, which was still a custom with suicides. (p. 1001)

Laws banning the practice of "cross-road burials" first began to be passed in the 1820s.

Probate

Conrad Doll died intestate. I obtained a copy of his estate file from the Lancaster County Historical Society. It contains only an inventory, made 30 June 1820, totaling \$107.45, exhibited at the Register's Office at Lancaster by administratrix Catharine Stoy. She was a sister of Conrad's deceased wife Maria Magdalena (Graff) Doll. The inventory lists a few household items, tools, and piano keys.