

Joh. Peter Grosscross

Joh. Peter Grosscross was born February 23, 1730 in Miesau, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany, and died December 6, 1803, in what is now Ceres, Bland County, Virginia. His christening at age seven was recorded in the church records for Miesau. The church was built in 1738 and is still in regular use. It was remodeled for its 250 year anniversary celebration in 1988.

Peter married Mary Magdalena Ott about 1755 in Pennsylvania. She was born August 17, 1732, in Wila, Zurich, Switzerland, and died October 27, 1805 in Ceres, Virginia. At age eleven, Mary immigrated to America with her family, arriving in Carolina in 1743.

Their seven children were born in Pennsylvania, but the entire family moved to southwestern Virginia (now Bland County) near the end of the Revolutionary War (in which he served). Many descendants are still in Virginia but sons moved northwest, west, and south in the early 1800's and I am aware of old Groseclose families in Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and West Virginia, and current Grosecloses in almost every state.

It was thought at one time that Groseclose was an Anglicized version of the original German name, and that it originated when Peter landed in Pennsylvania and could not speak English. However, church records in Miesau show the family name as the modern equivalent of Grosscross (or Grossgloss). The variants found in early American records are all close to these versions, with the "se" in place of the "ss" not at all uncommon. The "c" and "g" seemed to come and go. The situation today is that the names of some of Peter's descendants have been intentionally modified to show four different spellings that I am aware of: Groseclos, Groseclose, Grose, and Gross. I believe all of the first two variants are related, but very few of the Grose name, and almost none of the Gross name.

Peter and Mary had seven children and 50 grandchildren. Their children were Peter Jr. (1757-1805), Adam (1759-1804), Margaret (1760-1838), Elizabeth (1763-after 1803), Jacob (1765-1833), Barbara (1767-before 1803), and Henry (1771-1836).

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