

Charles Cayser or Carl Kayser who married Mary Shelly or Shelly

by Sharon L. Lemkuil, 16 Sep 2019

This document is a discussion of the few facts we know about the man **Charles Cayser or Carl Kayser** or who married Mary Shelly or Shelley, daughter of Christian Shelly/Shelley and his wife Magdalene.

It is written as a fact sheet to compare this man with the man baptized as **Carl Sebastian Kayser**, son of **Andreas Kayser**, citizen and butcher of Möckmühl, and his wife **Catharina (Anna Catharina Schuhmacher)** and who is commonly known as Charles Kyser (various spellings). **Carl Sebastian Kayser** is known to have landed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, soon making his way to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and then moving on to Frederick/Dunmore/Shenandoah County, Virginia in the area that is now Page County, Virginia where he remained until the end of his days.

Nothing is known about the parentage of the man **Charles Cayser or Carl Kayser** who married Mary Shelly or Schelly, daughter of Christian Schelly/Schelley and his wife Magdalene. One can find a number of men of similar name in and around Pennsylvania during this period. **Charles Cayser or Carl Kayser** or who married Mary Shelly or Shelley is known to have remained living in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania after his marriage for several years and at least until 1786. All we know of him is from the land transactions of the Schelley family and the Will of Christian Schelley, Mary's father.

The two men have been combined by poor research and a tangle of family lore into one man over the years, despite these enduring ideas being oft refuted by family historians and scholars such as Dr. E. J. Sutherland. However, the idea that **Carl Sebastian Kayser** is the man who married Mary Shelly/Schelly has recently been resurrected again as "fact."

The first mention of a **Charles Keyser** who married a daughter of a man named **Dr. Shelly** in Philadelphia is from the book titled "The Keyser family: descendants of Dirck Keyser of Amsterdam" published in 1889 by Charles S. (Shearer) Keyser, a Philadelphia lawyer. On page 153 it states, "(21) ⁵JOHANNES⁴, m. Barbara Funk (circa 1744); ch., ¹JOHN⁵, ²CHRISTIAN⁵, ³MICHAEL⁵, b. --, d. 1794, ⁴CHARLES⁵. ⁴CHARLES⁵, m. ----Shelly, d. of Dr. Shelly, Philada., moved from Germ. to Page Co., Va., prior to the Revolution; ch., ¹JOSEPH⁶, ²----⁶, ³JOHN⁶, ⁴----⁶, m. and left one son, ¹CHARLES⁷, b. 1793, and living 1889." The lineage continues with John Keyser who married Catherine Rhinehart.

Note that the marriage and children of John KEYSER in this book are all direct information from Isaac Columbus DOVEL as is the information about a move to Page County, Virginia and possibly other information on this line. John KEYSER, a son of the immigrant **Carl Sebastian Kayser**, was the grandfather of Isaac Columbus DOVEL through his mother Elizabeth Anna KEYSER.

However, the records of St. Michael's and Zion churches in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania record the marriage of Johannes Keyser and Barbara Funk (above) on 20 April 1747. This leads us to understand that their son **Charles Keyser**, who would have been about 10 years old in 1761, is *neither Carl Kayser or Charles Cayser* who married Mary Shelly or Shelley by 1761 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (see deeds for approximate marriage date), *nor* can it be **Carl Sebastian Kayser**, son of **Andreas Kayser** who was born around 1:00 a.m. on 16 Jan 1726 in Möckmühl, Württemberg, Germany and arrived as a young man to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on 19 Sep 1749. This means that we are dealing with *at least* three separate persons of similar names.

The statement in the book titled "The Keyser family: descendants of Dirck Keyser of Amsterdam" on page 153, "moved from Germ. to Page Co., Va., prior to the Revolution", is very likely drawn from the author Charles S. Keyser's conversation with Mr. Isaac Dovel in October of 1876. We find this information in the book "MEAD RELATIONS ~~3333~~ MEAD – BROWN – POWELL –

KEYSER KELLY – TRUMBO – AUSTIN TOLER – PRICHARD ~~CCCC~~ Virginia – Kentucky ~~CCCC~~
 COMPILED BY A.M. PRICHARD STAUNTON, VIRGINIA 1933” in which on page 179 Dovel
 writes: “Ironton, Ohio, October 1, 1877. This day, one year ago, I arrived home from my visit to the
 Centennial Exposition at the City of Philadelphia, and my visit to my friends and relations in
 Shenandoah and Page counties, Virginia. I. C. DOVEL.” This note explains the year of 1876 which is
 listed for the “compiled records of Isaac C. Dovel”. One could assume he gathered much information
 from family in Virginia and also from records in Philadelphia which explains the tangled genealogy
 which entered into the book by C. S. Keyser, but may also explain the differing notes on the “two
 wives” of “Charles Keyser” gathered by Dovel. As genealogists gathering family history, one collects
 ALL information before sorting through it to see which is correct. It should be noted that this is the
 SAME TIME that the curious family members opened the grave of their ancestor **Carl Sebastian**
“Charles” Kayser and disseminated the incorrect, yet enduring “facts” about him including a birth year
 of 1702.

In the next paragraphs, Prichard debunks the “The Keyser Family” genealogy and shows it as
 being inaccurate for **Carl Sebastian “Charles” Kayser** and for the Dutch “Keyser” family. First, he
 states correctly that “Mr. Dovel’s conclusion that Charles Keyser had no relations in the United States,
 flatly contradicts the genealogy embraced in “The Keyser Family” next referred to; and the year 1702,
 as the date of his birth, renders it impossible for Charles Keyser to have descended from Peter Dirck
 Keyser, who heads the family.” I would add that his birth in Germany, arrival in America in 1749, and
 birth year of 1726 still do the same, even if 1702 is incorrect as his birth year.

The key phrase in the genealogy is “Charles, m. ---- Shelly, Philadelphia, moved from Germ. to
 Page Co., Va., prior to the Revolution.” Firstly, this Charles is **Charles Keyser** son of Johannes Keyser,
 a Dutchman whose family had been in America for some time, and his wife Barbara Funk to whom he
 was married about 1744 [shown to be incorrect, see above] and had a son Charles. Secondly, this
 Charles being born about 1745 at earliest [shown to be 1751, about the time Charles Kyser, Jr., son of
Carl Sebastian “Charles” Kayser, is born in 1752], if these dates are to be relied on, would have been
 age 16 years in 1761 [actually age 10 years] and therefore could not be either the Carl/Charles of Page
 Co., VA or the Carl/Charles of Lancaster Co., PA. This makes the entire sentence irrelevant to us and to
 the solution of who married a Shelly in Philadelphia. Obviously, there was more than one Carl or
 Charles Keyser or Kayser and more than one woman named Shelly in Pennsylvania who could have
 married a man of that name. The book was issued 13 years after Dovel’s trip.

As an aside, it should be pointed out that the Shelly mentioned as the wife of this **Charles**
Keyser is NOT listed as Mary, and subsequent researchers used both Mary and Elizabeth, or a
 combination of these names when adding her to their lineages as the wife of **Carl Sebastian “Charles”**
Kayser.

As Dovel’s visit to Philadelphia **predates** the book “The Keyser family: descendants of Dirck
 Keyser of Amsterdam” by a number of years, one must conclude the men shared information about their
 ancestors of the same name and thus we have the following “tangled web” which it seems Dovel later
 was able to correct for himself with further information, possibly gathered later, on a wife named
 Elizabeth Grossgloss from Württemberg.

Unfortunately, this same information was repeated by Adam Strickler, a step-son of **Andreas**
Kayser, also known as Andrew Kiser and Andrew Keyser, son of **Carl Sebastian Kayser**. The family
 of Andrew Keyser adopted the Keyser spelling and continued the erroneous ideas put forth in the “The
 Keyser family: descendants of Dirck Keyser of Amsterdam” book.

The book “The Keyser family: descendants of Dirck Keyser of Amsterdam” written by Charles
 S. (Shearer) Keyser, who was born in 1825 and died in 1904, and was published in **1889**. Adam Strickler

was born 05 Mar 1812 in New Market, Shenandoah (Page) Co., VA and died 12 Mar 1894 in New Market, Page Co., VA age 82 years, 7 days. The letter to Ephraim “Keyser” who appears to be Ephraim Kiser, son of Absalom Abednego Kiser, was written in 1892, his 80th year, and quoted in “Forerunners”, page 120, written by Harry M. Strickler, and published about 1925. The Letter includes the “new” information written by Charles Shearer Keyser about the Shelly connection, which is then repeated in 1925 by Harry M. Strickler and eventually incorporated into the “facts” of their ancestor **Carl Sebastian “Charles” Kayser** (Kysar, Kyser, Kizar, Kizer, Kiser) by the following generations. This also seems to be where the “Keyser” spelling, from Keijser, a Dutch (Netherlands) surname, begins to be used. And so, the erroneous idea that **Carl Sebastian Kayser** married a woman named --- Shelly was given a “stamp of approval” by repetition instead of proper documentation and research.

Full Title: “Forerunners : a history or genealogy of the Strickler families, their kith and kin, including Kauffmans, Stovers, Burners, Ruffners, Beavers, Shavers, Brumbachs, Zirkles, Blossers, Groves, Brubakers, Neffs, Rothgebs and many other early families of Shenandoah, Rockingham, Augusta, Frederick and Page counties of the Shenandoah Valley; a memorial to those who have gone before” by Harry M. Strickler. “From about 1700 to the present time, 1924”. Published about 1925.

Another book, “Settlers of the Long Grey Trail” on pages 401-402 repeats the information from the Keyser book using it as the source. So now we have *four known books* who have stated the erroneous information that **Charles Keyser** of Page County, Virginia married a daughter of Dr. Shelly.

To conclude, **Charles Keyser** who married a daughter of a Dr. Shelly of Philadelphia is *neither Carl Kayser or Charles Cayser* who married Mary Shelly or Schelly, daughter of Christian, *nor* is he **Carl Sebastian Kayser**, son of **Andreas Kayser** who was also known as Charles Kyser (various spellings).

However, due to the enduring nature of such unfounded information by repetition over the years verbally and in print, the idea that “Charles Keyser married Miss Shelly” became family lore. Another part of the family lore comes from a story which was printed by Samuel Kercheval in the book “A history of the valley of Virginia.” by Samuel Kercheval, 1786-1845, page 33, which states, “Maj. Andrew Keyser also informed the author that an Indian once called at his father’s, in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, appeared to be much agitated, and asked for something to eat. After refreshing himself, he was asked what disturbed him. He replied, “The Southern Indians have killed my whole nation.” Andrew’s father is **Carl Sebastian Kayser**. This statement, along with church records of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania located by Mark Kiser in 2002 at the Palatines to America library in Columbus, Ohio, confirm the residence of **Carl Sebastian Kayser**, at least for a brief time, in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. In “The Earliest Records of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity, Lancaster, Pennsylvania Vol. 2” translated by Frederick S. Weiser there were two entries regarding the immigrant **Carl Sebastian Kayser**. On page 347-349 we find “From January 1, 1750 on, the following announced themselves for Holy Communion: #55 Carl Sebastian Kayser, recently arrived. Servant of Jacob Eichholtz.” On page 370 we find “Those who have announced themselves to go to Holy Communion on Estomihi Sunday, February 17, 1751: # 21 Carl Sebastian Kayser, with Jacob Eichholtz.” From these records we know that after he arrived in Philadelphia on 19 Sep 1749, he was able to find work with Jacob Eichholtz in Lancaster County and was there from after 01 Jan 1750 to at least 17 Feb 1751.

Due to the knowledge that he was in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania during this brief time and taking the above, oft repeated idea that he married a Miss Shelly, despite the information that she was a daughter of Dr. Shelly of Philadelphia, and despite that this has been proven not to be the father and mother of John Keyser or Andrew Keyser, a record of a Mary Shelly or Schelly, daughter of Christian Schelley or Shelley of Manheim Township in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania who married a man

variously known in records as **Charles Cayser or Carl Kayser** has been entangled once again with **Carl Sebastian Kayser**, son of **Andreas Kayser**.

We do not have a marriage record for Charles Cayser/Carl Kayser and Mary Schelly, but it was after her father Christian Schelley wrote his Will dated 22 Apr 1760 as she is mentioned as Mary but not as a married woman at that time. We must conclude that they were married between 22 Apr 1760 and 06 Jun 1761. That said, we know that **Carl Sebastian Kayser** was married between 17 Feb 1751 and 1752 as the birth year for his eldest son Carl Kyser (as he signed it) is 1752.

Deeds state “Charles Cayser and Mary his wife, late Mary Schelly, Margaret Haldiman widow late the wife of John Haldiman deceased and formerly Margaret Shelly, Samuel Huber and Esther his wife, late Esther Shelly, John Reisar and Catharine his wife late Catharine Schelly and Susanna Shelly **all of the County of Lancaster in the Province of Pennsylvania and who all signed 06 Jun 1761** **who all were present before the Court Recorder and signed that they had received of Elizabeth Shelly the monies owed for each of their portions of the inheritance** [Carl Kayser, Margaret X (her mark) Haldiman, Samuel Huber, Johann Riesar, Susanna X (her mark) Shelly, Witness and sent, Johann Reizer, Robert Mcagaw (?) **who all signed on 12 Jun 1761 in Lancaster Co., PA**. This means that **Charles Cayser or Carl Kayser** the husband of Mary Schelley or Shelly, daughter of Christian and Magdalen, was **alive and present in the Court in Lancaster Co., PA on 06 Jun 1761, 12 Jun 1761 and 31 Oct 1786 and resided in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania on those dates.**

This alone means that the **Charles Cayser or Carl Kayser** who signed as the husband of Mary Schelly *cannot be the same man* as **Carl Sebastian Kayser** who is also known as Charles Kyser (various spellings) because of two facts. According to British Records of the Virginia Conscripts of Frederick County, Charles Kyser or Kysar was in Frederick County, Virginia *before 1755* and he died Intestate *before 28 May 1778*, the date of his Estate Inventory. We also know because of the birth dates given by headstone reading of Charles Kyser, Jr. of 1752 and the birth date given by Andrew Kiser/Keyser in his pension documents of 1758 in Mill Creek, Shenandoah County, Virginia that **Carl Sebastian Kayser** was *not living in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania* at the earliest after 17 Feb 1751 and at the latest by 1754 or early 1755, long before the marriage of **Charles Cayser or Carl Kayser** to Mary Schelly or Shelly.

In conclusion, the differing dates and places of the two men are significant and make it impossible for them to be one and the same person. This also, once again, means that **Carl Sebastian Kayser** *did not marry* Mary Schelly/Shelly, daughter of Christian Schelley and Magdalene his wife. And, as proven above, neither of these men is the son of Johannes Keyser and Barbara Funk.