

Some Thoughts On The Origin Of Zacharias Barth/Beard

Zacharias was clearly German. It might be helpful to note that the name was almost certainly “Barth” in German. In the colonies, German-speaking clerks would normally have recorded it as Bard or Bart, while English-speaking clerks typically recorded it as Beard, Bard, and occasionally Baird.

During the more than 30 years that I have been interested in this family, I have run across only two persons researching the same Zacharias Bard. However, I have corresponded with several descendants of his children who were unaware of the connection to Zacharias. (I have been much amused to find my correspondence with many of these people resulted in their filing family group sheets with the LDS library, and more recently into the World Family Tree. Since I have changed some of my theories over the years, the earliest of these documents are now incorrect in several respects.)

The origin of Zacharias Bard is a mystery to me. There are few citations for him in Virginia, probably because he was of modest means. Apart from the census and tax records of the 1780s, which do not exist for earlier periods, there is a gap of nearly 25 years during which he is not mentioned anywhere in the Shenandoah records. It is entirely plausible, given the scarcity of records, that he had been in Frederick County, Virginia considerably earlier than his first appearance in 1770. I also find it curious that there seems to be no evidence of brothers or sisters in the area.

There are, however, several other people with the same name who appear elsewhere. “Zacharias” is a relatively unusual German name. But there appear to be at least three other Zacharias Barths of roughly the same age as ours. There were also several people with similar names nearby in Virginia. The Bard Family, G. O. Seilhamer (1908) mentions numerous Bard immigrants, including a few Zacharias Barths. Pennsylvania German Pioneers, Ralph Beaver Strassburger and William John Hinkle (reprint by Genealogical Publishing Company, Baltimore, 1975) lists ten Bard/Bart/Barth immigrants. These lists represent considerably less than half the estimated population of German immigrants of the period, so there were probably another dozen or two Barth immigrants who are not identified in any extant passenger lists.

1. Zacharias Barth, 1730 Immigrant

Only one of the passenger lists has a Zacharias Barth. He arrived in Philadelphia from the Palentine on the ship *Joyce* 30 November 1730. He is listed on the embarkation manifest as age 15, but was apparently 16 by the time the ship arrived, when he signed both the oath of allegiance and the oath of abjuration (which were required only of males 16 and older).¹ Among the 24 male passengers were also John Bear, age 40, and Hans Jacob Bear, age 17, but no other

¹ These passenger lists actually are three separate documents: a passenger manifest, the oath of abjuration, and the oath of allegiance. These are called the A, B, and C lists in the archives and all three lists exist for only a small fraction of ships. The records of the oaths are limited to males aged 16 and over. This record for Zacharias Barth is quite unusual in that a passenger manifest exists and it has the passenger’s ages (presumably at the time of embarkation).

Barths. Zacharias may have been traveling with relatives of a different surname. Whoever this was, he was not the same person as the Zacharias Barth of Lancaster County (below), who was both younger and surely already in the country by 1730. It is possible this is our Zacharias, but there's no way to prove it.

2. Zacharias Barth of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

A Zacharias Barth, son of Johann George Barth, was born in Germany in 1721 according to several researchers. His father arrived in 1727, probably accompanied by his son (who, being under 16, would not have been mentioned in the ship's records). By 1730 they were in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The records of the Trinity Lutheran Church there contain baptismal records spanning the years 1755 to 1766 for seven children of Zacharias Barth and his wife Susanna Catherine: Zacharias (1755), Johan Philipp (1757), Susanna Catharina (1759), Johann Christoph (1760), Johann Michael (1762), Johann Adam (1764), and Catharina (1766). Johann George Barth deeded his land and house to his son Zacharias Barth in 1762. Zacharias was taxed on that land in the tax lists of 1769, 1771, 1773, and 1779. His own son, Zacharias Jr. also appears on these tax lists in 1779 (the first year he would have been over 21). Both he and his son took the oath of allegiance in Lancaster County in 1778, and one or the other was on the 1782 tax list. I could not find him in the 1790 Pennsylvania census, nor could I find a record of his death. He was probably dead by 1782, for Zacharias Barth Jr. is thought to have moved into Washington County, Maryland about that time, where he is probably the Zacharias Beard who died there in 1820.

This does not appear to be our Zacharias. His children bear no resemblance to the known children of our Zacharias, and at least some of them were known to be alive when our Zacharias' heirs were being named in 1797. More importantly, he was continually residing in Lancaster County through at least 1779, when we know our Zacharias was in Virginia.

There were other Barth families in Lancaster as well, but whether they were related to Johann George Barth or not I don't know. A Johannes Martin Barth arrived on the ship Snow Betsy (no age given) on 27 August 1739 and was likely the same Hans Martin Barth who married Eva Juliana Frantz in 1746 in Lancaster, and who died in 1758 at age 40 leaving children named Daniel, Ludwig, Martin, John, Eva, Maria, and Catherine. There don't seem to be any other candidates for Zacharias or his father in Lancaster County.

3. Zacharias Barth of Frederick County, Maryland

There is another record in Frederick County, Maryland of a Zacharias Barth. The minutes of the Monocacy Lutheran Church include the baptisms of three of his children:

Eva Rosina - baptized 31 October 1746; sponsors: Peter and Eva Rosina Schmidt. [This child would typically have been known as "Rosina", rather than "Eve", but she is about the right age to be our Eve Beard.]

Maria Catherina - born 24 December 1749, baptized 7 January 1750; sponsors: Martin Wetzel and wife. [If this is our Zacharias Bard, this child must have died. We have no record of a Maria and his daughter Catherine was born nearly ten years later.]

Johann Martin - born 7 January 1751, baptized 3 March 1751; sponsors: Martin Wetzel and wife. [This child would have been known as “Martin”. He is exactly the right age to be our Martin. Note that he would have been 20 in late 1771 when our Martin Beard was age 20.]

The first child was probably named for the sponsor (the godparent), as was Martin. Note that Eva and Martin are reasonably close to the presumed birth dates of our Eve and Martin. No wife is mentioned. I have not pursued further records in Frederick County.

4. John Henry Beard

A very intriguing coincidence surrounds Zacharias Bard’s adjoining landowners, the Snapps. Lawrence Snapp, who owned the next-door mill, was the son of John Snapp, who had been in Frederick County as early as 1749 when he patented land “where he now lives”. John Snapp’s will names a daughter, Christiana Beard, who was the wife of a John Lewis Beard. John Lewis Beard was earlier known as Johann Ludwig Barth. The Johann Ludwig Barth who arrived on the ship *Patience* in September 1749 may be this same person. He generally called himself John Henry Beard in later years. He must have married Christiana Snapp in Frederick County, for that is where her father lived at the time. By 1756 John Lewis and Christiana Baird were among a group of German Lutherans who were living in Rowan County, North Carolina. He was quite active in the Lutheran Church and appears frequently in the Rowan County records. He was deceased by 1794, and had a son (JLB Jr.) born in 1754, so he was of the same generation as our Zacharias. Although it’s tempting to speculate, I don’t know of any evidence connecting him to our Zacharias other than the fact that he married the sister of Lawrence Snapp, who was later Zacharias’s next door neighbor.

5. Other Barths & Beards

There were numerous Barth/Beard families in Pennsylvania and Maryland who might be related to Zacharias, but I’ve never found any evidence of a relationship. There were also a number of people in Frederick and Shenandoah Counties with similar names. An Andrew Beard who appear often in Frederick County left a will there in 1765.² A “Jacob Bard Sr.” bought 200 acres on both sides of Stony Brook in Shenandoah County on 29 September 1790.³ In nearby Rockingham and Augusta Counties were several other Beard families.

² Frederick County Will Book 3, p263.

³ Shenandoah County Deed Book H, p1.