

evidence that even if my ancestor Elias's full name was, in fact, Johann Elias, or vice versa, he nevertheless was the son of Hans, as indicated in the next paragraph.

Ulrich Dueck of Germany reported (via Mike Hornbaker) that there were two Elias von Bergens of the same period: one, a preacher who lived in Pastwa, the son of Gerhard; the other, the son of Hans. In my opinion, this confirms that Elias (1742-1808) was indeed the son of Hans, because Pastwa, West Prussia, does not seem to fit in with the other place name data very well and there is no indication that the Heubuden preacher was my ancestor.

Hornbaker cites a report in *Der Berg: Sippenzeitung der Familien van Bergen*, according to which our mutual line stemmed from the Netherlands, but was separate from the two Hamburg lines, contrary to the story about an ancestor living in Hamburg-Altona in *The Baergen Heritage*, as mentioned under # 824, whose applicability I doubt.

If there were five separate lines, as *Der Berg* reportedly states, this might help to account for the van Bergen stories in various genealogies, which are cited here for the purpose of facilitating comparison and research.

A Hans van Bergen is listed in 1615 in Scharfenberg or Hochzeit. If *The Baergen Heritage* has the right ancestor, this Hans could not have been an ancestor, but could well have been a relative.

Great-great-grandson Gerhard Baergen wrote in 1886, "It is ... known that there were some among our people who were among the nobility and in accordance with these properties wrote 'von.'" (Unruh and Baergen, p. 3).

Alvin Baergen, in *The History of the Bergen and Redekopp Families*, writes: "Family legend speaks of a Count Bergen who was expelled from Norway to an island in the North Sea called Hel(i)goland in the early 1600s."

Lynell Berg reports the same, but notes that the van Bergen name was mentioned in Prussia as early as 1585.

One may compare these stories with those relating to the von Eitzens and the van Riesens.

I tend to be skeptical about such stories. It is indeed true that the German prefix "von" has about the same meaning as the British "Sir," although this was not universally the case during all historical periods (Moreover, at least one descendant of a German noble from the days of the Teutonic Knights, whose name had been Polonized in the meantime, converted to the Mennonite faith.) But I doubt that this was necessarily true of the Dutch/Flemish "van." I suspect that the "van/von" was deliberately dropped in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries precisely because people became acutely conscious of, or uncomfortable with, the German connotation.