RESEARCH REPORT · VILLAGE CHECK

SAMPLE REPORT
real records · no client

Where was Henry Biebighauser born?

Old records rarely allow 100 %. How sure we are, per statement: ● CERTAIN ◕ VERY LIKELY ◑ LIKELY ◔ POSSIBLE ○ OPEN

YOUR QUESTION

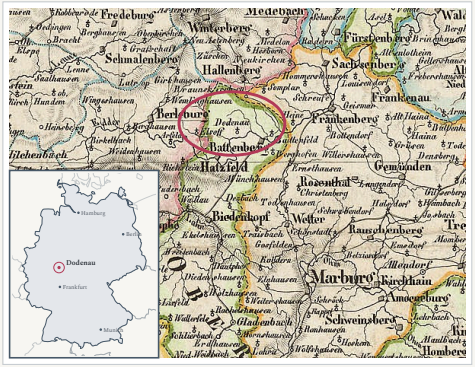
Henry Biebighauser (1848–1921) was a butcher in Galion, Ohio. His American records name only "Hessen Darmstadt". In which village and parish was he born and baptized, and who were his parents?

THE ANSWER

Henry was born in **Dodenau**, a village on the upper Eder – in 1848 in the Grand Duchy of Hesse ("Hessen Darmstadt"), today part of Battenberg (Eder). ◕ VERY LIKELY

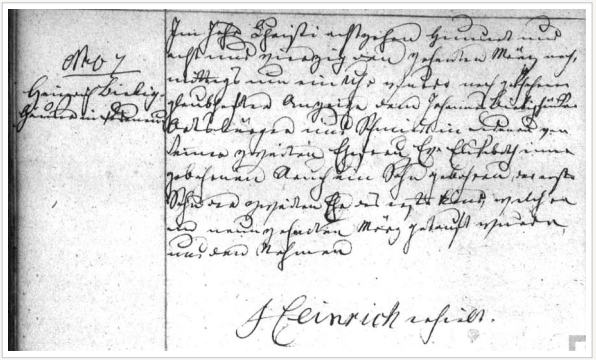
He was baptized as **Heinrich** in the Protestant church of Dodenau. He was born on **10 March 1848** and baptized on **19 March 1848**, "the first child of the second marriage" of Johannes Biebighäuser, citizen ("Ortsbürger") of Dodenau, and Elisabetha (?) née Rauch.[1]

His father **Johannes Biebighäuser**, a smith, was born on 3 June 1802, son of Jacob Biebighäuser "auf der Hobe" and Maria Elisabetha.[2] As a widower of 45 he married on **18 November 1847** a widow née Rauch, born 17 December 1809, daughter of Karl Friedrich Rauch of Hatzfeld.[3] He died on **28 December 1857**, aged 55 years, 6 months and 25 days.[4]



Dodenau on the upper Eder, between Hallenberg and Battenberg; Marburg at the bottom right. Inset: Germany today – Dodenau is part of Battenberg (Eder), in the state of Hesse. Map by C. F. Weiland, Weimar 1835 (detail). Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, HStA Stuttgart N 100 Nr. 404, CC BY 4.0.

THE ORIGINAL ENTRY



Baptism of Heinrich Biebighäuser, Dodenau, 1848 No. 7 (detail). Zentralarchiv der Evangelischen Kirche in Hessen und Nassau, Darmstadt, KB Dodenau, Taufregister 1839–1852, p. 482.

TRANSCRIPTION

Im Jahr Christi achtzehnhundert und achtundvierzig den zehnten März nachmittags um ein Uhr wurde … dem Johannes Biebighäuser, Ortsbürger und [?], von seiner zweiten Ehefrau [?] Elisabetha geborenen Rauch ein Sohn geboren, das erste Kind der zweiten Ehe, welcher am neunzehnten März getauft wurde und den Namen Heinrich erhielt.

TRANSLATION

In the year of Christ 1848, on 10 March at one in the afternoon, … a son was born to Johannes Biebighäuser, citizen and [?], by his second wife [?] Elisabetha née Rauch – the first child of the second marriage – who was baptized on 19 March and received the name Heinrich.

Only words we are sure of are written out; "[?]" marks a word still open, "…" words left out.

"HESSEN DARMSTADT"

Before 1871 Germany was some thirty states. "Hessen Darmstadt" was the everyday name of the Grand Duchy of Hesse, ruled from Darmstadt – the state, not the city.

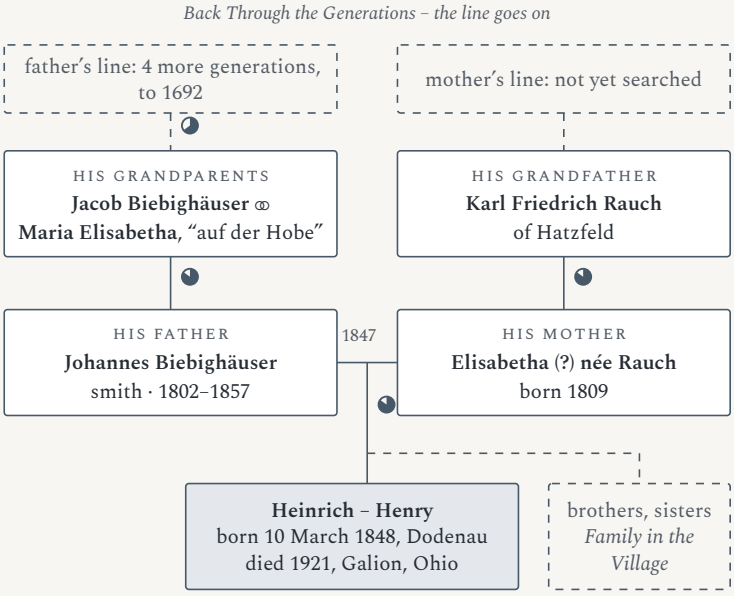
WHY A CHURCH BOOK

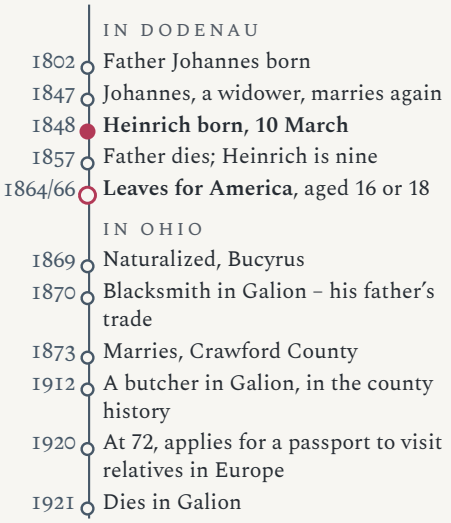
German civil registers began only in 1874–1876. Before that, the parish books of baptisms, marriages and burials are the record of a life, kept by the pastor.

NÉE, ORTSBÜRGER

née (French, "born"): the name a woman was born with. An *Ortsbürger* was a full citizen of the village, with a share in its rights – not every inhabitant was one.

HENRY'S FAMILY AND HIS EARLY LIFE





Circles: how sure each link between the generations is. Dashed: further steps, not part of this report.

WHERE THE AMERICAN AND GERMAN RECORDS MEET

DETAIL	AMERICAN RECORDS	DODENAU REGISTER
Birth date	10 March 1848 (passport application 1920; county history 1912)	born 10 March 1848 (baptism)
Father	Johannes (passport); a horseshoer, died 1857 aged 55 (county history)	Johannes, smith; died 28 Dec 1857 aged 55 y 6 m 25 d
Mother	"Ephra (Rauth)" (county history)	née Rauch; first given name still open

Three details from independent American records meet the original German entries.

1 Baptisms 1839–1852, p. 482, 1848 No. 7. 2 Register 1780–1807, 1802 No. 12; later margin note "† 28 Xbr 1857".
3 Marriages 1808–1875, 1847 No. 11. 4 Burials 1854–1875, p. 126, 1857 No. 39.
All: Zentralarchiv der Evangelischen Kirche in Hessen und Nassau, Darmstadt, Dekanat Biedenkopf.

HOW SURE WE ARE

Born in Dodenau	His birth date, his father's name and his father's age at death in the American records all match the Dodenau entries.
Baptized Heinrich, born 10 March 1848	The baptism gives both dates clearly, and the birth date is the one on his passport application.
Father Johannes Biebighäuser, smith	His marriage and burial entries give the same birth date, 3 June 1802, and his age at death adds up exactly to 28 December 1857.
Mother née Rauch	The baptism and the parents' marriage agree; the county history's "Rauth" is the same name as an American heard it.
Mother's first name Eva	The marriage entry seems to say Eva, and "Ephra" may be an American rendering of it – but the baptism is unclear at this word.
Year he left: 1864 or 1866	His passport application says May 1864, the county history and a village list say 1866; no passenger list has turned up yet.

ALTERNATIVES WE RULED OUT

- **"Darmstadt" (the city):** "Hessen Darmstadt" names the state, the Grand Duchy of Hesse; family trees that give the city have misread it.
- **Biebighausen:** the surname looks like this hamlet's name, but the hamlet belonged to the parish of Hatzfeld, while the family's records cluster in Dodenau – where the matching baptism was found.
- **Another Johannes Biebighäuser as father:** the baptism's father is in his second marriage; the 1847 marriage (widower, born 3 June 1802, smith) and the 1857 burial (born 3 June 1802, smith, aged 55) describe the same man. The bride of 1847 was herself the widow of another Biebighäuser; her own birth date and her father's name keep the two women apart.

STILL OPEN

- The mother's first given name (see above). Until it is settled we write Elisabetha (?) née Rauch.
- Whether another boy of the same name was born in the parish in the same years – we will make sure before delivery.

SOURCES

RECORD	ARCHIVE AND REFERENCE
US passport application, 18 May 1920	U.S. National Archives, Passport Applications 1906–1925 (M1490), roll 1217, certificate 37893
US census 1870, Galion, Crawford Co., Ohio	U.S. National Archives (M593), roll 1186, p. 542B
Marriage license, Crawford Co., Ohio, 6 Feb 1873	Crawford County marriage records, return No. 591
J. E. Hopley, *History of Crawford County, Ohio* (1912)	Biography of Henry Biebighauser, pp. 1031–1032
Emigrant list "Die Auswanderung"	Gemeindearchiv Dodenau (published online) – a lead, not a record
Baptism 1848 No. 7 (Heinrich)	Ev. parish Dodenau, baptisms 1839–1852, p. 482
Marriage 18 Nov 1847 No. 11 (the parents)	Ev. parish Dodenau, marriages 1808–1875
Burial 1857 No. 39 (Johannes)	Ev. parish Dodenau, burials 1854–1875, p. 126
Baptism 1802 No. 12 (Johannes)	Ev. parish Dodenau, register 1780–1807

Dodenau registers: Zentralarchiv der Evangelischen Kirche in Hessen und Nassau, Darmstadt (Dekanat Biedenkopf).

IF YOU WANT TO GO FURTHER

The Dodenau registers survive far back. The father's line can be followed in the same village, father to son, to a marriage in 1692. ◕ LIKELY Each entry names the next generation; these older entries have so far been read once. **Family in the Village** would add Henry's brothers and sisters and the household he grew up in; **Back Through the Generations** would follow this line.

RESULT

Village found: Dodenau, Grand Duchy of Hesse.