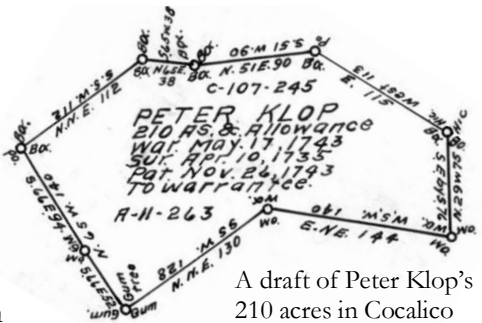




The Klop Family

Family histories quickly connect with one another in small communities, and the Historic Ephrata Cloister is no exception. The children of Peter and Magdalena Klop (today spelled Klopp) clearly illustrate the point.¹

Peter Klop (unknown - 1753) married the widow Magdalena Lutz (c. 1690 - 1766) in the Schoharie Valley of New York in 1711. They both had joined other German immigrants fleeing difficult economic conditions in Europe. A 1717 source lists both Peter and Magdalena and two children living among other German immigrants in New York. After several years, the Klops accompanied some neighbors in a move to the Tulpehocken region of western Berks County, Pennsylvania.



A draft of Peter Klop's 210 acres in Cocalico Township, about a mile from the Cloister.

In 1735, disagreements broke out in the Lutheran church in the Tulpehocken and eventually spread to the German Reformed congregation and included the Moravian church in the area. Amidst the turmoil, Conrad Beissel, Ephrata's founder, drew some converts including Conrad Weiser, Reverend Peter Miller, and the Klop family. While Peter and Magdalena affiliated with the Ephrata congregation at that point, they didn't leave the Tulpehocken region immediately. In May 1743, Peter acquired 210 acres of land in Cocalico Township, about a mile from the Cloister community.

Four of Magdalena and Peter's eight known children continued an affiliation with the congregation at the Ephrata Cloister into adulthood. One daughter, whose given name is unknown, appears in the records as Sister Tecla (c. 1718 - 1748). The death register states "She was old Brother Klop's faithful daughter."

Their daughter Maria Christina (c. 1724 - 1786) married Michael Miller (before 1704 - 1785). Like the Klops, Maria Christina and Michael Miller were also raising a family in the Tulpehocken area while following Beissel's religious guidance. The Millers moved close to Ephrata in May 1742.

Daughter Elizabeth Klop (c. 1722 - c. 1789) married Nicholas Zerfass (c. 1720 - 1784), who purchased 132 acres from his father-in-law in 1752. Records remain silent about the involvement of Nicholas and Elizabeth in the congregation at the Cloister, but their descendants held a key role in saving its legacy.

Another daughter Margaret Klop (c. 1726 - 1794) married Jacob Senseman (unknown - 1757). Like Margaret, Jacob's parents Japhet and Agnes Senseman were also members of the Cloister congregation. Margaret and Jacob eventually occupied the land of his parents adjacent to the Klop's.

Peter and Magdalena Klop's three other daughters each married but did not have a relationship with the Cloister congregation. Suzanna (b. 1716), oldest child of the Klops, married Jacob Epprecht, daughter Mary (b. 1728) married Michael Bower, and daughter Eve (c. 1727 - 1775) married Jacob Hershberger. The Klop's only son, Peter Jr. (c. 1719 - 1794) returned to live in Berks County when he became an adult.

Peter and Magdalena Klop left Germany in the early 1700s in search of a better material life. By 1735, they joined some of their neighbors under the leadership of Conrad Beissel in search of a better spiritual life. Among their children, some remained within the Cloister congregation while others did not, foreshadowing a decline in the church in the late eighteenth century. Marriage between the Klop children and other members of the congregation demonstrates the intertwined relationships within the Cloister community.

¹ Clarence Spohn, "The Zerfass Family of the Cocalico Valley," *Journal of The Historical Society of the Cocalico Valley*, 15, (1990): 4.