

Marriage of John Sherbondy and Catherine Bossert

Genealogical research is not an exact science. Availability of old records (before 1900) is sometimes **inconsistent**. Counties were not required to keep vital records. Churches were not required to keep records, and even with those that did, the records may not have all events and may have errors. Deeds were not even required to be filed in some counties prior to 1800. For these reasons, it is important when using old records to not rely only on one source for your conclusions. It may be necessary to estimate the time and place of an event based on other available evidence.

When searching for an event, you must collect all of the information possible from the time period so you can narrow down the dates that the event may have occurred. In a similar way, you must collect all the information about the location where the event may have occurred. By looking at everything in its entirety (the “whole picture”), you are able to see how it all fits together. You may find that there’s no electronic record of an event. You may even find that there’s **no written record** of an event in any form. You may also find that some old documents have errors.

One example of this, is the birth date of Melcher Sherbondy per the census of 1850. Per his age of 86, his birth year would be 1764. However, according to the census of 1830, the census of 1840 and the church birth records, his birth year is known to be 1769 (Jan).

Here’s a look at the marriage of John Sherbondy (Cherpantier) and Maria Catherine Bossert

The first records of John Sherbondy in America are from 1764. This is according to the book, “*The Kellers of Hamilton County, A Study in Democracy*”, (herein referred to as “Kellers’ book”) by David H. Keller in 1922. On 12 Dec 1762, a petition was filed to create a new town, **Hamilton Township**, by the primary land owners in this area in Pennsylvania. Philip Bossert was one of the primary landowners, having **purchased 250 acres** (for 150 pounds) on 11 Oct 1752. The [first assessment list for Hamilton Township](#) was in 1764 and included forty names, including Philip Bussert (12 pounds) and John Shervanty (4 pounds).

John’s wife, Maria Catharina, also first appears in Hamilton County. The first records of her (first and middle names only) are in the birth records of the children of her and Johann Cherpantier (her husband) starting in 1769 and going to 1789. These are the records of the Christ Church, Hamilton Square, Hamilton Township, Northampton County (now Mercer County), Pennsylvania. You can see the [birth records here](#).

The maiden name of Maria Catharina associated with her husband is first known from a [deed in 1773](#) wherein her father and mother, Philip and Evah Catherine Bossert, give two acres of land to their son-in-law, John Sharpienter. John owned three parcels of land in Northampton County during the 1700’s, 125 acres from May 1771 to Sept 1775 in Hamilton Township, an unknown amount in Chestnuthill Township starting in about 1775 (per tax lists because not all deeds were required to be filed with the county prior to about 1800) and an additional 336 acres in Chestnuthill Township from 1792 to 1796. This provides both property and church records placing John and Catherine (with her parents) in **Northampton County from 1764 to 1796**.

Church records were searched for available marriage records. The histories of the families of this era were closely interwoven with the history of the church they attended. According to Kellers' book, were it not for the church and its records, much that is now known concerning family relationships would be lost. The Christ Church was organized 1768 and records started in June, 1768. The church prior to this one (The Dansbury Mission) was erected in 1743 but the building was burned by Indians in 1755. The Christ Church records contained baptisms, confirmations and those who each time came to the communion. Per genealogist Richard Musselman, the church records contained [no marriage records](#). Kellers' Book also said there were no marriage records in the Christ Church records. However, they were able to triangulate the [marriage range for some couples](#) by first looking at the dates of maiden names in sponsorship records of baptisms and communicants and then looking at dates of events with the married name. There were no records of Maria Catharina in any of those records with her maiden name. However, Maria Catharina took [communion under her married name Cherpantierin](#) (with the "in" meaning "wife of Cherpantier") in 1769, 1771, 1772, 1774, 1782 and 1784.

There were no living adult children of Maria and John prior to Melcher per John's will. If there were children who died young, we will never know since it would have been before the church records started in June, 1768. With Melcher's birth in January, 1769, we can only assume they were **married early in 1768**. As for the location, they were both in **Hamilton Township from 1764 to 1775**, so that would be the location of their marriage. With this evidence, it is clear there was **no marriage record**.

If you think you're going to find evidence of any event electronically on the internet, you're either going to be extremely disappointed, or, you're going to have many errors in your data. The internet only has a portion of the old records digitized and in some cases, with old records, there's **no written record** of the event in existence anywhere.

For my standard disclaimer: there may be key information that we may never know and, as is often the case, there may be undiscovered documents that turn up later with new information.

Then for grins, we looked at some of the claims on **Ancestry**. One that's very popular said they were married in **1763 in Somerset County**, Pennsylvania. That was probably picked because someone saw the (incorrect) birth year of 1764 for Melcher and looked for marriage records a year earlier. Somerset County is about a 10 day trek (one way!) by horse and covered wagon from Hamilton Township! They wouldn't make that trek to get married and they wouldn't leave family and populated areas during that time due to the recent [Indian attacks](#) on the family.

Then, finally, another popular Ancestry record had them married in Saint James, **Jamaica** on 19 June **1798!**

WHAAAAT????

Jeffrey D. Sherbondy
Sherbondy Family Association
www.Sherbondy.org
Dec 2021