

My Rexroad Family Story: A Family Pattern: The Iron Thread of the Rexroads

by Nancy Simmons Roberson, with *additions* from Jamie Johnson

For over two hundred years, the Rexroad family followed a rhythm set by the strike of a hammer against an anvil. While history shifted around them -- from the religious upheavals of 17th-century Bohemia to the rugged frontiers of West Virginia the pattern of their lives remained remarkably consistent: they were masters of the forge.

The Bohemian Origins

The pattern began in the heat of the Thirty Years' War. Johannes Recksrodt (b. 1590), a blacksmith and weaponsmith, forged arms for the Protestant Union. He fought in the pivotal Battle of White Mountain in 1620, a conflict that decimated Bohemia and sent ripples of change through his lineage. Despite the chaos of war, the family trade endured.

His son, Wenzelslaus Recksrodt (1621–1705), carried this legacy from Bohemia to Erbach, Hesse. Serving a Count in the Imperial Austrian Service, Wenzelslaus worked as a Hut-und Waffenschmied -- a ferrier and armorer. His life was defined by the dual necessity of the era: caring for the horses that provided transport and maintaining the weaponry required for defense.

Establishing the Guild

In the Odenwald region of Hesse, the Recksrodt family didn't just practice their craft; they defined the industry. They established a network of "iron hammers" and forges, eventually holding a monopoly on the iron-making trade in the area.

The pattern of excellence was formalized in the next generation. In 1669, two sons of Johann Balthasar Rexroth (1645–1694) were officially recorded as master blacksmiths in the local guild books. One of these masters, Johann Balthasar Rexroth II (1673–1734), ensured that the technical precision of the craft was passed down as a birthright.

The Pattern Crosses the Atlantic

In 1749, the family's "iron thread" stretched across the ocean. Johann Zachariah Rexroad (b. 1725) brought the family trade to Pennsylvania. Though he moved his family from the settled counties of Pennsylvania to the wilderness of Pendleton County, Virginia, he never abandoned the anvil.

This ancestral blueprint continued through:

- Johann George Rexroad (b. 1754): Continued the trade in Berks County and Virginia.
- John Rexroad (b. 1790): Maintained the forge through the turn of the 19th century. *John is the author Nancy Simmons' ancestor, brother to Jamie Johnson's Rexrode ancestor.*

Seven Generations of Iron

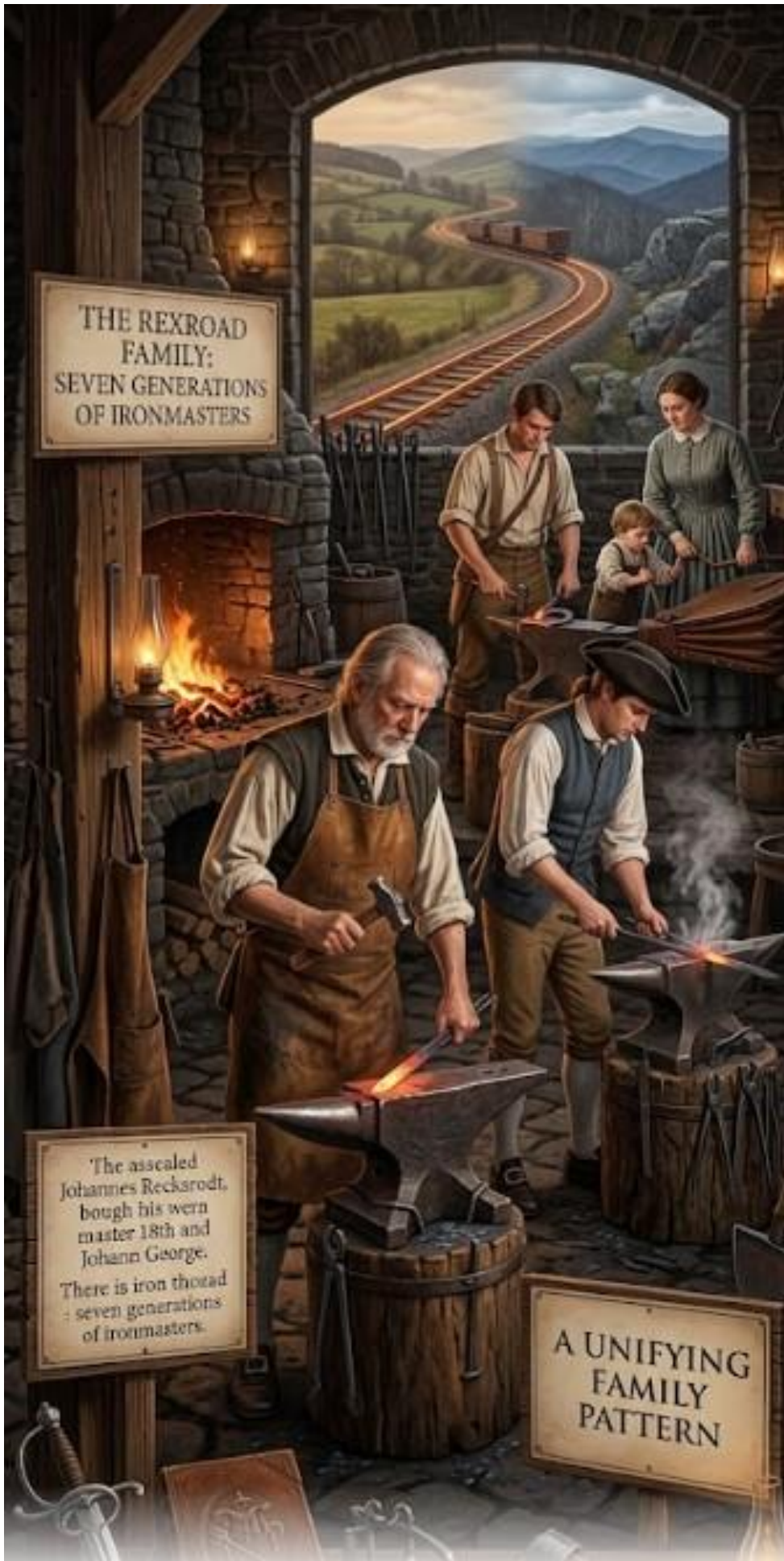
The lineage eventually led to Phebe Rexroad (b. 1833), who married Aaron Simmons in 1859. While Phebe's marriage marked a transition into a new family name, she was the daughter, granddaughter, and great-granddaughter of men who breathed the soot of the forge. *That is Nancy's ancestry. Jamie Johnson's ancestry*

(which also includes Simmons) via Rexrode descends from two lines via two children of Johannes Zachariah Rexrode (b. 1725).

From Johannes Recksrodt in 1590 to the mid-19th century, the Rexroad family maintained a singular identity. For seven consecutive generations, the family pattern was cast in iron—a relentless, multi-century commitment to the art and utility of blacksmithing

Source: Nancy Simmons Roberson, March 30, 2026, Facebook post:

<https://www.facebook.com/nsroberson/posts/pfbid0ydUtx5z6umFqTcQL1rGTpNdcjHKcZSk1My7HHAtMnhD8hkKVVY6PosNDYCfx8zvenL>, edited by James “Jamie” Arthur Johnson. Both are descendants of Rexrodes/Rexroads:
<http://family.beacondeacon.com/rexrode>



THE REXROAD
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OF IRONMASTERS

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A UNIFYING
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PATTERN