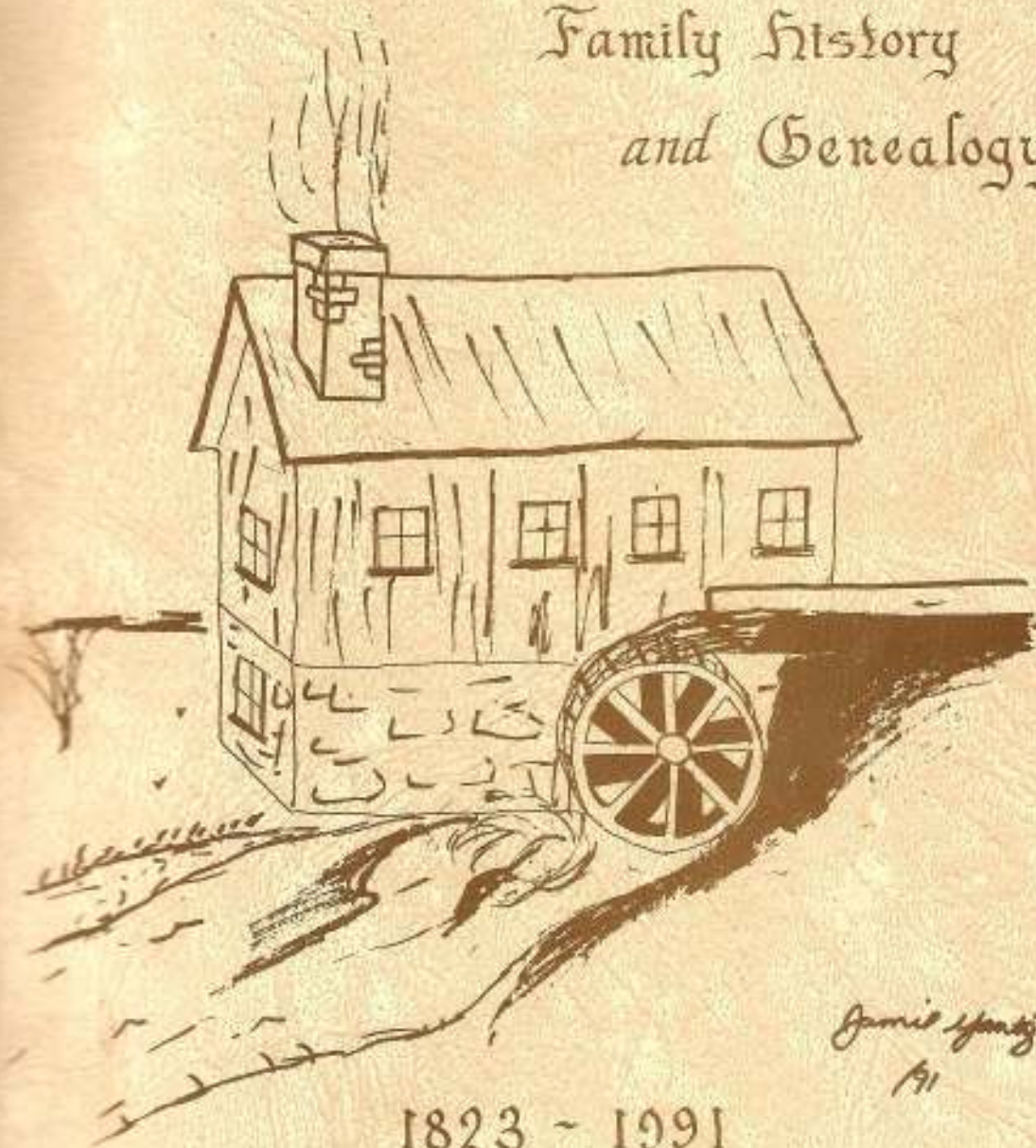


The
Michael B. Yantzi

Family History
and Genealogy



1823 - 1991

The Yantzis in Ontario and those descended from Michael B. Yantzi are related to and descended from those whose name is generally spelled Jantzi. The spelling Yancey is also found for one branch of the family in Lewis County, New York. While writing about the Jantzi family in general, we shall be using this spelling.

FAMILY ORIGINS

We have been able to trace this family back to Lorraine, France. The first documented Jantzi was Michael, born about 1719. He was also the oldest Jantzi we have found -- he died in 1822 at the age of 103. A member of the Jantzi family who toured Lorraine was given the name of Philip Jantzi as the original immigrant to this area, but we have not been able to find any references in writing beyond the aged Michael.

Since the family was Anabaptist (Mennonite), we assume they were of Swiss origin. While doing research in Europe in 1985, the author quizzed the French and Swiss Mennonites about the Jantzi name and found it to be unfamiliar to them. In a book of Swiss family names, the name Janzi (in that form) is found only in Boltigen, a town in the Canton of Bern.

It has been suggested that perhaps the name is derived from Shantz (Tschantz in its Swiss form). The Bulletin of the French Mennonite Historical Society, in its 1989 edition, reproduced a record of death of a Jean (John) Wagler whose wife's name was given as Elisabeth Jancy. The person transcribing the record interpreted her name as "Schantzin" (the female form of Schantz). Stranger things have happened to names down through the years. This theory certainly is a possibility.

The Swiss Anabaptists were severely persecuted in Switzerland, and between 1650 and 1850 many of them migrated to other parts of Europe and some directly to America. We have stories of other persons and families who left Switzerland during this period, but the Jantzi family does not appear among these stories. How and when they got to Lorraine is still a mystery.

THE JANTZIS IN LORRAINE

Michael Jantzi I*, born about 1719, died in 1822 on the Farm Belgrad. His wife's name was Barbara Gerber, and we know of two sons, Michael and Christian. From the records of births, marriages and deaths found in the departmental archives in Metz, we have been able to establish the Jantzi family network which covers all of the Jantzi immigrants to Ontario and Lewis County, New York. In fact, all of the Jantzis found in our research in this particular area of France are descendants of Michael I's two sons.

The oldest known son of Michael Jantzi I, Michael Jantzi II, was married to Barbara Neuhauser, and their family was centered around St. Avold, about 50 kilometers east of Metz. Besides St. Avold, various births, marriages and deaths took place in the surrounding villages of Hombourg Haut, Valmont and Macheren. A map of France, showing these places, is found on the next page. Michael II and Barbara had four known children, of whom their son Michael was the oldest.

Michael Jantzi III was married, first to Barbara Beller and second to Catherine Nafziger. Michael III and Barbara had three children, and the second one was named Michael, making him Michael IV. This is the one who married Jacobena Kennel and migrated to Canada. We will eventually call him Michael B. Yantzi. He and Jacobena are the ancestors of all those listed in this book.

Michael Jantzi IV was born in 1823 at Valmont and when he was married to Jacobena in 1847, the marriage record said he was a miller from Macheren. Other members of this extended Jantzi family were also millers. Some of the mills which they occupied were the Mill Odefang at Macheren and the Pulvermill at Hombourg Haut. Michael IV's mother and grandparents died at the Pulvermill -- his mother in 1829 and his grandparents both in 1833.

Michael Jantzi I's second son Christian was married, first to Anne Farny, then to Catherine Spenler. They lived on the farm called Belgrad about 20 kilometers south of St. Avold. The town in which

(continued on page 5)

*Since there were several generations of Michael Jantzis, we will number them I, II, III, IV until we get to the immigrants to Canada where we will distinguish them by their initials. Michael Jantzi IV and Michael B. Yantzi are the same person.

THE JANTZI FAMILY -- FROM FRANCE TO CANADA

their family registrations took place was Bistroff. It was on the farm Belgrad that Michael Jantzi I died at age 101 in 1822. His death was registered at Bistroff by his son Christian and his friend Michael Salzmann, farmer at the Mill Bischwald. Michael IV, who was born in 1823, missed his great-grandfather who died in 1822 by a year.

THE JANTZIS AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Although we do not know when the Jantzis arrived in France, it is certain they experienced the French Revolution and its aftermath. As isolated as they were, they may have escaped the worst of the terrorism itself, but the outcome of the Revolution affected them a great deal. The French got rid of their king (Louis XVI) and drafted a Constitution which was to free every citizen of their territories. "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" was the slogan. It all sounded very good, but the interpretation of the Constitution caused the Anabaptists a great deal of trouble.

In October of 1792 all cities, towns and villages were to declare a day of national celebration -- a "swearing in" of the Constitution. Every adult male was to appear and swear allegiance to the Constitution. Since the Anabaptists did not believe in swearing -- even oaths -- what did they do about this? It seems they usually were willing to "promise" allegiance, and in most places the local authorities found this acceptable. We do not know how Michael Jantzi and his two sons handled this situation, but they likely got around it somehow.

Along with the new Constitution came several changes. One of them was the loss of status of the Catholic Church. Up to this time the Church had officiated at the major life events, but now the State or "Law" was in charge. Births were registered in every city, town and village. Marriages were performed by the Registrar in the name of the "Law." Deaths were also registered with the Registrar. In some areas Anabaptists avoided these registrations for a time, but it seems the Jantzis complied very early. Today we reap the benefits, because the records are an invaluable source in our research.

One of the changes which caused the Anabaptists more trouble was universal military conscription. Before the Revolution, the Anabaptists had generally been granted exemptions. Now, however, everyone was equal and everyone

was free; so everyone was equally responsible to defend the State. In 1792 two Anabaptist ministers, Christian Guingrich and Nicolas Blanc, who served the Mennonites of Bistroff and the surrounding area petitioned the authorities, and the department ordered that the Anabaptists not be forced to take up arms, but that they should pay a special tax.

It is difficult to say how things would have worked out had the French Republic been left alone to work at it. However, an ambitious soldier by the name of Napoleon Bonaparte came on the scene, and he had military conquests in mind. It seems the French situation furnished Napoleon with an excuse for his military exploits and the citizens of France became his reservoir of soldiers.

The Anabaptists were constantly negotiating for military exemptions. With the Republic and with local officials they had been able to limit their involvement to paying a special tax or to serving as unarmed teamsters. Napoleon soon changed this when he organized the teamsters as a division of the army and armed them. Then the Anabaptists tried again. Two ministers from Lorraine, Christian Guengerich and Christian Engel, went to Paris in 1809 and tried to negotiate for exemption with Napoleon himself, but he flatly refused. Three more delegations went to Paris between 1809 and 1829 but to no avail. Although Napoleon was removed from France in 1815, military conscription remained. After the French Revolution all young men were subject to conscription. Men were not issued passports to leave the country if they had not completed their military service. Some slipped out without passports. Some served in the army and accepted the fact that this is the way things were going to be, but others gathered up their goods and families and set out for America. The trek continued during the entire nineteenth century with several Jantzi family groups arriving between 1830 and 1850.

THE JANTZI FAMILY COMES TO CANADA

The first Jantzis to arrive in Canada were Michael and Joseph, sons of Christian Jantzi and Anne Parny. Michael brought with him a certificate of his birth and certificates of the deaths of his parents. These have been preserved in the Archives of the Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana. It is logical to carry a birth certificate, but why certificates of his parents'

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deaths? After doing research in the French records, the reason became quite clear. Following the French Revolution, there was marriage only by "Law." The local Registrar was the agent of the "Law." When a young man and woman wanted to marry, they had to present their birth certificates and have their parents' consent. If their parents were no longer living, they had to have proof of their death -- usually also in the form of certificates. When Michael came to Canada he had marriage in mind and came prepared with the necessary documents! In the Archives, these certificates are called "passports." Michael considered them "passports" to marriage, however, not to travel. Michael married Maria Boshart on August 31, 1834 and eventually the Boshart farm across from the St. Agatha Mennonite Church became theirs. Joseph Jantzi also married a Boshart girl, but he died at age 34 of smallpox.

Michael and Joseph Jantzi's brothers and sisters (except one sister) and Christian's second wife came in two different groups -- one in June of 1833 and the other in June, 1834. They all went to Lewis County, New York. A few years later the John Jantzi and Christian Kennel families came to Canada from New York and settled in the Amish Settlement south of Wellesley. Christian Kennel's wife was Magdalena Jantzi.

It was not until a generation later that some of Michael Jantzi II's descendants set out on the trek across the Atlantic. His daughter Barbara was married to Joseph Nafziger, and she and her family

came to Canada in about 1840, leaving again in about 1850 for Iowa. As far as we know, Barbara was the only immigrant in this generation.

Next we turn our attention to the family of Michael Jantzi III. Some of the descendants of Michael Jantzi IV maintained the tradition that the family landed in Halifax. Research in the passenger ship lists in Washington, D.C., however, has turned up a contingent of the Jantzi family which landed in New York. Michael IV, his wife Jacobena and little two-year-old Michael were among them. Because of misspellings and even incorrect names, it was at first difficult to interpret this family list. The two married men were called "Junz." The rest of the family was listed as "Naszeyer."

A letter from Charlan Graff from West Lafayette, Indiana, containing a list of the Jantzi family, prompted another look at the list. I had found other instances where widowed women gave their maiden names rather than their married names, and this turned out to be one of those times. All of the young people and children listed under their mother were called Nafzigers when actually they were Jantzis.

There was only one Nafziger on the list and that was 19-year-old Samuel. The Nafziger and Jantzi families had also retained the tradition that Samuel had come to America with the Jantzi family and that he carried little Michael K. Jantzi around on the ship.

A transcription of the passenger list is given below with a corrected list beside it.:

Pierre Juntz, age 28, miller,
from Germany
Magdalena " , age 26
Barbara Naszeyer, 38
Joseph " 22
Barbara " 20
Catharine " 18
Magdalena " 14
Jacobea " 12
Susan " 10
Christiana " 8
Anna " 5
Maria " 3
Michel Juntz, 25
Jacobea " 27
Michel " 2
Samuel Naszyer, 19

Peter Jantzi, age 28, miller
from France
Magdalena " , age 26
Catherine (Nafziger) Jantzi, 38
Joseph Jantzi 22
Barbara " 20
Catharine " 18
Magdalena " 14
Jacobena " 12
Susan " 10
Christian " 8
Anna " 5
Maria " 3
Michael Jantzi, 27
Jacobena " 25
Michael " 2
Samuel Nafziger, 19

Peter, Joseph, Barbara and Michael Jantzi were children of Michael Jantzi III and his first wife Barbara Beller. The rest of the children, from Catherine to Maria, were children of Michael III and his second wife Catherine Nafziger. According to Charlan Graff, Michael III died in 1848. The widow and children left on the Ship Seme(?) from La Havre, France, and landed in New York September 17, 1849. Son John is not on the ship list. Either he came at another time or he was missed. Peter, Michael IV and Joseph stayed in Canada while the rest of the family left for Peoria, Illinois in 1850.

Peter Jantzi was married to Magdalena Spenler, daughter of Peter Spenler and Barbara Jantzi. Barbara was a first cousin to Peter's father. Peter was listed in the 1851 census of Wilmot Township as a wagon maker. He and Magdalena had no surviving children. Peter died in 1854, and his widow married Christian Besinger.

Joseph "Jantze" was listed in the 1851 census of Waterloo Township as a labourer. He may have been working for the merchant Hartman Schnarr who had a store and tavern. There is no further record about Joseph.

Michael B. Jantzi (formerly referred to as Michael IV) was also listed in the above-mentioned census as a miller, with his wife Jacobina and son Michael, age 2. Their son John's birth and death at five weeks is also recorded in the census. Since Michael is called a miller, and since he is listed on the page following the the operators of the mills at present-day Bridgeport, we suppose that he was employed at one of the mills there. A more detailed story of Michael B. Jantzi (Yantzi) follows this introduction.

Some additional details on the other members of this Jantzi family will be found in the Jantzi family lists in the Appendix.

Notes:

Information concerning the experiences of the Mennonites in France are found in Les Assemblées Anabaptistes-Mennonites de France, by Jean Séguéy. Paris: Mouton, c1977



The chest which contained the belongings of the Michael B. Yantzi family and a cup which they used on their voyage across the Atlantic in 1849 (preserved by the Barbara and Christian Leis family)

MICHAEL B. AND JACOBENA (KENNEL) JANTZI / YANTZI FAMILY

Michael B. Jantzi (also referred to as Michael IV) was born on September 14, 1817 in Valmot, Lorraine, France. His parents were Michael Jantzi III and Barbara Sellar. Michael B.'s mother died in 1829 at Hombourg Haut, and his father married again -- to Catherine Wafziger -- the following year.

In 1847 Michael B. was married to Jacobena Kennel, daughter of John Kennel and Elizabeth Saltzmann. They were married at Hampont where the Kennel family was living at the time. According to the marriage record, Michael was a miller at Macheren at the time of their marriage. The Jantzis, who were generally millers, seemed to have moved from one mill to another. We shall see that Michael B. continued in that tradition when he got to Canada.

Michael B. Jantzi, Jacobena and two-year-old Michael packed up, along with all of Michael's brothers and sisters and their mother, and set out for America in 1849. They travelled to Le Havre where they boarded a ship sailing for New York. No one remembers the stories of how they got from New York to Canada, nor when they arrived. According to Charlan Graff, the mother and most of her children continued on to Peoria, Illinois, in 1850.

Michael B., Peter and Joseph remained in Canada. We have already indicated that Peter died in 1854, leaving no children, and no further record of Joseph has been found after the census of 1851 in Waterloo Township.

It would seem that Michael B. found work in the mills at Bridgeport (then called Lancaster). We suppose that flour milling was Michael's specialty, and it was Elias Eby and Barnabas Devitt who operated the flour and grist mill at Bridgeport. Several other mills were found there, including carding and spinning, fulling, oil and saw mills.

Jacob Kropf had established a sawmill in what is now Baden, but there probably was no flour and grist mill until after the arrival of Jacob Beck. He bought Lot 15, South Snyders Road, in 1854. The settlement which had grown up in this area was then known as Weissenburg, after an old bachelor who lived there. Beck developed a mill on the site of the present mill. He is also credited with naming the village Baden. It is likely that Michael transferred to Baden also in 1854, because the document dealing with the estate of his deceased brother Peter, dated August 21, 1854, indicates Michael was from Wilmot. In the 1861

census the Jantzi family was living beside Jacob Beck, a good indication that he was employed with Beck.

From the census, one cannot establish the exact location of the residence of the Michael Jantzi family. In the column indicating the quantity of land, is written "1/4 (rented)." It may have been on Beck's property, but certainly was in the same neighbourhood. The family had one cow and two pigs, valued at \$20.00.

What made Michael B. leave this Amish-Mennonite centre and take his family to Sebringville, so far out of the Mennonite community? It was on the road to the settlement in Huron County, and perhaps that helped to make it attractive. Perhaps there was a better position in the mill. We have evidence, besides family memories, of Michael's presence in Sebringville and Downie Township. A County of Perth Gazetteer and General Directory was published in 1863. The part of the page containing the Sebringville entries is reproduced on the previous page.

The mills were located on the Ellice Township side of the road, and the property was owned by John Sebring. In the same Gazetteer, across the road in Downie Township (Con. I, Lot 18), one finds "Yentge, Sichae," which we suppose is "Yantzi, Michael," badly misspelled. Since his name does not appear in the registry office with any of these properties, he did not own them. We suppose he rented a house in Downie, and worked across the road in Ellice. Since he is the only miller listed, he was at least the head miller, and it may be that he had a lease arrangement -- with John Sebring, listed as "gentleman" in the Gazetteer.

Whether Michael could have made a better living here, we will never know. Many years of heavy lifting had taken its toll. He had a rupture, and in the fall of 1865 he suffered inflammation of this rupture, and died on October 8. They buried him at Sebringville. Henry and Chris Yantzi took a trip to Sebringville several years ago to see whether they could find a tombstone but were unsuccessful.

We suppose that the use of the spelling "Yantzi" is due to the family's sojourn among English-speaking people at Sebringville. This is the spelling which this family came to use, and the spelling we will now use in the stories which follow.

MICHAEL B. AND JACOBENA (KENNEL) YANTZI / YANTZI FAMILY

MICHAEL B. YANTZI b. Sept/Oct 14, 1823 Valmont, Lorraine, France
 d. Nov 2, 1865 Sebringville, Ontario
 m. Oct 8, 1847 Hampont, Lorraine

JACOBENA KENNEL b. Dec 17, 1820 Machern, Lorraine
 d. July 28, 1909 East Zorra, Ontario
 dau. of John Kennel and Elizabeth Saltzmann

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III	FAMILY IV	FAMILY V
MICHAEL K. YANTZI b. Aug 22, 1847 d. July 6, 1917 m. Dec 3, 1872 BARBARA RUBY b. Feb 20, 1849 d. Feb 25, 1915 (pages 15-85)	JOSEPH K. YANTZI b. May 10, 1852 d. Jun 27, 1926 1m. Feb 15, 1881 2m. Nov 10, 1891 3m. Feb 15, 1900 MARY BENDER b. Jul 19, 1861 d. Sept 3, 1889 MARY (LICHTI) KROPP b. Nov 10, 1852 d. Sept 9, 1894 ANNA (SCHWARTZEN- TRUBER) BENDER b. Feb 11, 1869 d. May 1, 1934 (pages 87-102)	ELIZABETH YANTZI b. Apr 1, 1854 d. Jan 31, 1925 m. Nov 30, 1875 JOSEPH RUBY b. Sep 30, 1853 d. Mar 28, 1937 (pages 103-132)	DANIEL K. YANTZI b. Nov 16, 1856 d. May 10, 1927 m. Jan 27, 1885 MAGDALENA BENDER b. Jun 17, 1862 d. Apr 19, 1935 (pages 133-134)	CATHARINE YANTZI b. Dec 26, 1861 d. Jul 19, 1939 m. Feb 19, 1885 JOEL SCHWARTZENTRUBER b. Jul 20, 1850 d. Jan 4, 1906 (pages 135-156)

Children who died in infancy: Barbara Yantzi, b. Jan 10, 1850; d. Jul 15, 1850
 John Yantzi, b. Apr 24, 1851; d. May 22, 1951
 Christian Yantzi, b. Apr 2, 1858; d. Jan 18, 1860

JACOBENA (KENNEL) YANTZI

After the death of Michael B. Yantzi, Jacobena (known as Bena) returned to the Amish community, first to Baden, where she is to have resided on property owned by a Geisler. His wife was a Zehr and likely related to Bena through the Kennels. Her brother John Kennel had settled in East Zorra Township. No doubt she moved to East Zorra in order to be near him.

The details of the family's sojourn are continued in the stories of her children. Until the children married, they maintained a family unit. Bena's last place of residence was with her daughter Catharine who was married to Joel Schwartzentruber. She died on July 28, 1909 and is buried in the East Zorra Mennonite Cemetery.

Several of Bena's brothers and sisters also came to Canada. An outline of the Kennel family is found in the Appendix.

"The voice of joy and health is in the dwelling of the righteous."
 Psalm 118:15