

*WIND THROUGH THE  
LEAVES OF TIME*

*By*

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# Descendants of Michael Jantzi I

Alsace-Lorraine, France

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## *Preface*

In order to understand the Jantzi, Yantzi, Yancey, Jansey, Zehr, Boshart and related families, one needs to go back beyond the migration to the United States and Canada to find what were the forces which molded their lives and outlook. One needs to go back, at least, to the Reformation times to find clues to answer these questions.

Martin Luther had begun his reform movement in Germany about 1517. Ulrich Zwingli was the leader who championed reformation in Switzerland. He had a group of student followers who were anxious for him to put his new ideas into practice. They hoped he would abolish the Mass and infant baptism. They felt that only those who confessed Jesus Christ and agreed to follow him should be baptized into the church. Zwingli believed this also, but was not willing to move ahead without the consent of the City Council. The City Council was not ready for such a drastic change in the social structure of society and dealt harshly with those who preached and taught this new doctrine. In January, 1525 the Council decreed that those who were from other Cantons and who preached against infant baptism were to be banished from Zurich.

The evening of the day this decree was issued, a group of people gathered to talk and pray at the home of Mrs. Manz in Zurich. At this meeting Georg Blaurock asked Conrad Grebel to baptize him and then Blaurock baptized the others. The group well knew that they were defying the laws of City Council, but they felt the Spirit of the Lord was upon them and they called out those from the group who should be responsible to preach, teach and baptize. They were confident that this was the time to set up a New Testament Church, let come what may.

The Brethren insisted on adult baptism because they saw the church as a group of believers who voluntarily and responsibly committed themselves to Jesus Christ and to each other. The concept of State Church at this time in history needed to retain infant baptism to insure stability in society as it was then understood. Hence a clash was inevitable. The Brethren understood the church membership to mean commitment and holy living for all members, not only for the clergy or religious orders. The Brethren also believed the way of the Christian to be the way of the cross. This meant absorbing hostility and violence but not inflicting injury on another, not even in retaliation. The refusal to bear arms also brought them into conflict with princes and rulers who were becoming increasingly involved in wars.

A short distance from Zurich on the shores of Lake Zurich is the village of Zollikon. Johan Brotli, the pastor of the Zolikon Church had resigned some time previously because of pressure from Zurich against his preaching concerning the Mass and baptism. Only a few days after the meeting in Zurich, Georg Blaurock and Felix Manz were invited by Brotli and others to come to Zollikon. They met in the house of Marx Boshart and his wife and father-in-law. Marx had been in on some of the conversations and had witnessed the baptism of his brother-in-law, Friedli

Schumacher. But, Marx did not consider himself to be a religious man and did not plan to become involved in this new movement. However, the meeting that night changed the course of Marx Boshart's life.

The Church at Zollikon grew rapidly, but the City Council gave them no peace. It was not long until Marx and others were imprisoned in Zurich. After a few weeks Zwingli convinced them to promise not to baptize anyone and set them free. Some of them, including Marx Boshart broke their promise and became active again. At the time of the second imprisonment of Zollikon's men, Marx happened to be out of town. With so many of the leaders in the Zollikon Church in prison or scattered, Marx was chosen also to preach and baptize. Conrad Grebel invited Marx to accompany him on a preaching and teaching tour at Gruningen and surrounding district.

All this activity resulted in Marx's imprisonment a second time. He was determined to stand true, but after a month of solitary confinement, seeing others recant and go home, and Zwingli's arguments to have patience with the State Church, Marx again gave in. Further imprisonment of influential leaders finally dampened the enthusiasm of the Zollikon Church, and they discontinued their meetings and evangelistic activities.

The Anabaptist movement spread and flourished in other parts of Switzerland. "Anabaptist" was the term used of those who were rebaptized. The Anabaptists called themselves "Brothers." Conrad Grebel died of the plague after being severely weakened by his prison experience. Felix Manz was drowned in the Limmat River at Zurich. Georg Blaurock was beaten and banished from the Canton. Upon leaving Zurich, Blaurock continued his activities in the Canton of Bern.

At this point documentation for Marx Boshart ends. The Church in Zurich and Zollikon never recovered. Although Blaurock was later also banished from the Canton of Bern, it was here that Anabaptism flourished and could not be stamped out. Persecution continued here, usually resulting in banishment for those who refused to recant. Those banished generally followed the Rhine River, disembarking in Alsace-Lorraine on the west of the river or in the Black Forest or the Palatinate on the east. A few found their way to Holland. Some also managed to remain in the Canton by retreating to the hills -- especially the Jura Mountains in the western part of Switzerland.

At the same time that the Swiss Brethren were active spreading their views in Switzerland and neighboring countries, the movement was also growing in Holland. A Dutch Catholic priest by the name of Menno Simons had joined the group. He gave a great deal of stability to the new church by his teaching and extensive writings. In time, the Swiss Brethren also adopted the name of "Mennonite" (from Menno Simons).

At the close of the seventeenth century a young bishop by the name of Jacob Amman became disturbed at the trends in the church and began insisting on stricter regulations in matters of dress and wearing the beard. A more important issue, however, was the practice of the Meidung (shunning of disciplined brothers). He taught that erring members could not only be barred from the communion table but should be shunned in social and business affairs also. Since not

everyone agreed with Amman, a rift finally took place between those who subscribed to Amman's teaching and those who did not. Many churches in the Alsace and some in other areas did comply with Amman and became known as "Amish".

Today most Amish and Mennonites who trace their ancestry to Alsace-Lorraine, the Palatinate, the Black Forest, Bavaria or Switzerland are descendants of Bernese Anabaptists. We presume that the Jantzi, Yancey, Ulrich, Jansey, Zehr, Lehman, Boshart and other related families with which we are concerned in this genealogy had their origins in Switzerland, but at this writing we are unable to provide the specific links between Alsace-Lorraine and Switzerland.

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The Marx Boshart story is taken from Fire in the Zurich Hills by Joseph Stoll. Aylmer, Ontario: Pathway Publishing Corporation. c1973  
The book may be ordered from Pathway Books, Routh 4, Box 266, La Grange, IN 46761

Stoll's primary source of information was Wuellen Zur Geschichte der Taufer in der Schweiz, Zurich. This book contains all the mandates, court records and miscellaneous data relating to the Anabaptists in the Canton of Zurich for the decade, 1523-33.

For Further Reading: An Introduction to Mennonite History by Cornelius J. Dyck, Editor. Scottdale, PA.: Herald Press. Revised edition, 1981

The Anabaptist Story by William R. Estep, Editor. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Grand Rapids, Michigan

The New Boxes Book of Martyrs by John Foxx. Rewritten and updated by Harold J. Chadwich, Editor. Bridge-Logos Publishers: North Brunswick, N.J.

## *Foreward*

A genealogy book that lists family members in descending order from the progenitor of the family to the newest born child to enter the family can become stilted, uninteresting and dry. It deals mostly with facts of birth, marriages and deaths. In that sense this book qualifies for all of those items, but, I have tried to give some life to the persons listed in this book. All have stories to tell of their lives lived among us in the past. I have tried to make the book much more interesting than just reading facts. As you identify with the family member closest to you it is my desire and prayer that you will see more than just facts.

It's my desire for you to be able to see what each individual contributed in some way to the total family picture of their time. There are some individuals who have lived exciting lives while other lives seem rather mundane and unexciting. Think of the period of time in which they lived and what the social structure of the time was. What were the pressures placed upon them? What difficult decisions did some have to make? How did they resolve those pressures and bring normalcy to their lives and to those of their immediate family members? Some lived during abnormal times of society and yet lived quite normal lives.

Some background information is given regarding the society as it was when they lived. One example is the educational level as the family moved forward from the early 1800's to today in the 21st. Century. In the beginning years of the family some wives did not attend school, were illiterate and unable to even sign their name except with an "X", witnessed by another person.

Today we have a number of family descendants who hold advanced degrees and teach in a college setting as they help to prepare the next generation to meet life's challenges in this the 21st. Century. Some families remained as good stewards of the soil, and farmed throughout their lifetime. Some families were involved with environmental concerns and had a desire to pass on to future generations, forests and land, to support future expansions. Still, other families chose academics and sent their children to college in order to better prepare them for social and spiritual decisions lying ahead; for themselves, their families and the spiritual life of the church.

There have been many changes, in our churches, in the structure of choosing our leaders. In olden days pastors were chosen "by lot", and had a minimal professional schooling in the Bible. Most were self-taught. Today, our churches search for pastors who have Bible School training or who have attended college. Still others advance further and are trained in a Seminary with emphasis on Bible study, counseling, interpersonal relationships, and how to properly lead their congregants. In Seminary they learn to work more closely with their congregations as the world has become more widely integrated into our church life. Most of our church leaders carry a burden for the advancement of the gospel, locally and globally, through missionary and service activities and outreach into the world.

When the first families came to Lewis County in the mid 1800's, the land was virgin soil. It was rocky and hilly making it difficult to eck out a living for the family. Lester has told me many times, with emotion, that the first arrivals were considered "different" and "strange" in their appearance and thus were taken advantage of by selling them the poorest land. This was the land in the Croghan area, on the east side of the Black River, which was in the foothills of the

Adirondack Mountains. They suffered through severe winter storms and in the spring, when the river flooded, their fields were untillable until they dried off. It meant they had short growing seasons for their crops. Later, a few families saved enough money to be able to purchase land on the west side of the river near the town of Lowville.

The Andrew B. and Mary (Moser) Zehr family was the first family to purchase land there, on the west side of the river, and make the move. This information was given to me by Melvin T. Zehr. This was his paternal grandparents. During the 1940-60's this farm was named "The Zehreyn Farm", and where Melvin grew up, as the son of Aaron Moser Zehr. he, also told me that , the farm owned during that same time by his Uncle Daniel M. Zehr, was also part of the parcel purchased by the Andrew B. Zehr family. It is unclear who originally owned the property lying between those two parcels of land. The farm next door to "The Zehreyn Farm", on Rt. 12, was owned by Chris Yancey, who married Veronica Irene Zehr, the youngest of A.B.'s daughters. So this was Lester's maternal grandparents. Up the hill, on the side road, above the Chris Yancey farm, and conjoined to it, was the farm owned by Edward Yancey, Chris' oldest brother. Edward had married another one of the Zehr daughters, Rosella.

It was much more profitable on that side of the Black River and the industrious Mennonites began to profit from their decision. It still was a period of time when the strongest survived and the weak failed to thrive and died out. Some of the men lived into their 90's and remained healthy even in those cold northern winters. Many worked as woodsmen in the Adirondack Mountains in the winter time. The ground would be frozen hard and roads could be cut in to bring out the logs to the sawmills. Many homes were built of the log cabin style and were heated with wood cut from the land.

Lester's paternal grandparents, were Daniel and Lena K.(Reyn) Yancey. They owned a farm in Belfort, a small community lying in the foot hills of the Adirondack's above Croghan. It is on the road going up into the mountains to Long Pond. Around the year of 1908 or 1909, they sold their farm and moved from Lewis County to Wayne County. His brother, Andrew Yancey, had married Barbara Lyndaker on March 13, 1909. So, it is within reason, that Andrew and Barbara purchased their farm from Daniel and Lena, freeing Daniel to move his family to Wayne County. We know where the Andrew Yancey farm was/is located in Belfort. It is the old Yancey homestead now owned by Haskell and Jane A. (Wiese) Yancey. Since Lena had a number of her Reyn relatives living in the Wayne county area, it is natural for her to desire to live closer to them. This is an area about 100 miles south of Lewis County.

This county is located on the south shores of Lake Ontario. The weather here was milder and life seemed a bit easier. All of their children were born in Belfort, but half of them grew up in Wayne County. This is an area where fruit and hay farms dotted the landscape instead of mountains and dense woods. Daniel found employment in a flour mill (called a "grist mill"). Then in about 1912, he purchased it. It is located in North Huron. According to Joan (Reyn) Davis, a grand daughter; no community can exist without a place to grind their wheat into flour. Later, the youngest son, Nelson William, purchased the mill, from his father in about 1930 and operated it as a "cider mill". With an abundance of apples grown in the area it was an easy transition to make it a cider mill. Still later, the mill was sold to his son, Mason, who owned it until he died in 2002. Now it is owned by his widow, Linda Yancey, and today, it is no longer in operation. She hopes to sell it one day.

In the beginning, at the turn of the 20th. Century, gardens were planted, and that practice

continues yet today. The wives canned and preserved the vegetables and fruits. These were stored in their basements or in a "root cellar", where it is cool. Meat was often Venison (deer) that was hunted in the fall of the year and preserved in jars. Some was cured and smoked and hung in the basement. Cattle and pigs were raised for additional meat for the families.

In the spring of the year, the Maple trees were tapped for their sap, and this was gathered and then collected by pouring the sap into a large wooden tub mounted on ski's and pulled by horses. It was then taken to the "Sugar Bush" building where the sap was boiled down in large evaporators, to make the Maple Syrup. This syrup could then be marketed. Some of it was sold in 55 gallon drums to dealers. Some was kept by the farmer and sold locally in smaller containers. Some was made into other products, like "Sugar Cakes", a rich sweet confection loved by children as candy. They, also, made what is called "Maple Cream", a soft maple sugar which could be spread on bread or toast to be eaten in that manner. It is delicious. Ummmmmmmmmm so good!

Lester many times boiled maple syrup down further, and at a candy stage he would pour it out onto trays of ice taken from our refrigerator. The children loved this as a confection like candy. He said in New York they would call it "Sugar on snow", because during the Maple sugaring time there was always snow on the ground, yet. Sugaring was always in late February or early March as the tree sap began rise as it thawed out from the cold winter and rise in the trunks of the trees where it could be tapped. It requires 30 gallons of sap to produce one gallon of syrup. A maple tree is not usually tapped for it's sap until after it is 40 years of age. It is not unusual during the winter for temperatures in the area to drop to 40 degrees below zero Fahrenheit.

A few stories that Lester used to tell (and probably Clyde did, also) was that Chris, their father would get the boys and any of the hired men, started cleaning in the barn after breakfast. Breakfast was usually maple syrup and butter on "Jonny Cake" (a type of cornbread) served with coffee. Chris would then take off and go into town to buy supplies and parts, or do business, and leave the boys and hired men to handle what they called "chores". In the late afternoon Chris would return and give the boys more jobs to do yet that day. This would happen after they were tired out from their daytime work, and prior to them doing the evening milking. Lester always felt it was so unfair when he was young. But, when he became a father, and a farmer himself, I saw the same pattern repeated by Lester, years after his father had initiated the practice. It goes back to the pattern of teaching what we have learned, at home, during our formative years.

It was always interesting to watch when our sons, David and Daniel, would come home from school, go into the house, change into their working clothes, and come out with their list of jobs to do. (Daniel always came out of the house, with at least two peanut and jelly sandwiches in his hand or a dozen of Oreo cookies, as he headed out to work!) Lester's habit, when he went to town, or to the field to work, was to leave a list of "chores" for each boy to be responsible for upon his arrival at home in the afternoon. Recently, Daniel told me that he never seemed to catch up all the jobs his father listed for him to do! I explained to Daniel that his father did not expect him to get the entire list of jobs completed in that one afternoon! That the list might have jobs on it requiring two or three days to complete, but he should begin them the day they appeared on the list that he had, and each day to do some of the task till it was completed. Daniel's reply to me was "...then why didn't Dad tell us that"? The missing key here was a lack of communication which is such an important part of parenting and mentoring. A part that many of us fail in while parenting our children. I am surprised at this breakdown, as Lester was always an excellent listener and instructor; both to his children and to his employees. He was always an excellent communicator.

This was a family trait passed to Lester by his mother, Veronica. She was wise beyond her years and always a willing listener. Her wisdom in making business decisions, was learned, or gifted to her, by her father, A.B. Zehr who was an excellent businessman. She had a quiet and calm personality. I don't think I ever heard her raise her voice in anger. She could be stern, but not unreasonable, in her comments to family members. Deeply spiritual, her Bible had favorite verses marked in it. I am sure some of them were a result of the hard life lived in that cold and severe north country. Lester's bible has many verses underlined and notes placed in the margins, just like his Mother.

Chris' family also lived a hard life as they ecked out a living raising their seven children, on their farm, on the rocky and hilly land of Belfort, above Croghan in the Adirondack Mountains. Two of Daniel and Lena (Reyn) Yancey's children remained in the Mennonite faith, and raised their families in that faith. Those were the two oldest boys, Edward E. and Christopher E. Yancey. The other five children, all of whom, lived in the Wayne County area of New York, were affiliated with the Methodist faith, as was the mother.

Peter and Magdalena (Zehr) Yancey\*, both of whom were born in Alsace-Lorraine, France, were the parents of twelve children, one of whom was Daniel Yancey, Chris' father. Peter and Magdalena lived in the Belfort area of Lewis County, and are both buried in the cemetery located at New Bremen, which now is named Orthodoxy Christian Cemetery\*. It formerly had been known as the Evangelical Baptist Cemetery, (and before that was known as Apostolic Christian Church Cemetery) but recently the name of the church and the cemetery were changed to conform to changes in the By Laws of their National Church Conference. This information came to me from the Sexton of the cemetery the day we were researching family members buried in that cemetery. One day in 1982, I remember when Lester and I were in Lewis County visiting, and we went to this cemetery to try and find some of his ancestors, whom he knew were buried there. However, that day we did not have enough information on his ancestors to be certain that we were locating correct family members. I remember we found the headstones of Peter and Magdalena but were unsure if they were his ancestors. We needed to do more research, which has now been done.

Daniel Yancey married Magdalena (Lena Katherine) Reyn in Beaver Falls, Lewis County, New York on 29 August 1887. She was born in Doufessel, Germany and immigrated here in the summer of 1886. The 1920 Federal U.S. Census states that she was born in Alsace-Lorraine, France and spoke the French language. She was bilingual and also spoke the German language. I do not know if Doufessel, Germany is located in the Alsace-Lorraine area of France or not. It must have been as it was shifted back and forth between the two countries of France and Germany.



\* Their photo's are on the first page in the "Family Photo" section of this book, and, there is also one of their headstones in the New Bremen Cemetery also in this same book section.



## *Introduction*

This book had its beginning more than 60 years ago. It was when I was welcomed into the family of Chris(tian) and Veronica Yancey. The date was June 7, 1949, when I married their son, Lester Christopher Yancey. The date brought new names, faces and experiences into my life. Now, a new leaf was added to the family tree. Overnight, I had a brother-in-law, two sisters-in-law and many nieces and nephews along with aunts and uncles I had never met before. I began the process of learning, and knowing, how I fit into the family. It was a slow learning process, for them and for me, as I became absorbed into the family unit. How did each of his family members fit into the puzzle for me? Who were these people who made up the core of the family and who were their ancestors? How were our lives going to be molded and affected by the melding of my life into theirs, and theirs into mine.

I was embracing a new way of life. They came from northern New York State. My family roots stemmed from Ohio and Illinois. My life had been lived in the south, since a young child. His life was lived in the north. I had joined his church prior to our wedding, so I was embracing a pacifist lifestyle for the first time and unknown to me before. His families spiritual background was steeped in the German/Swiss Amish/Mennonite faith. My three brothers and I grew up attending a small Baptist congregation. My Mother came from Illinois; her grandfather was a minister in the Methodist Episcopalian faith and from Scotch/Irish background. My father was baptized and raised in the Lutheran church in Ohio, also of German parents. I was a very active participant in the Baptist church where attended and where I was baptized. I was active in the International Youth For Christ organization, participating locally, during my formative teen years.

Lester's parents divided their time each year between Lowville, in New York and Sarasota, in Florida. About equal time was spent at each home. In the fall of the year they would load their car and drive south, when the snow and cold began to blanket their upstate New York area. They would return to their New York home a day or two after Lester's birthday each year, which is May 16th. The trip was 1,500 miles in length and took two full days to drive it with few stops along the way. I have always admired them for undertaking this long journey twice each year. At the time Lester and I were married his mother was 57 and his father was 61 years of age.

They had a new and beautiful 1948 Buick car, blue and white in color, with lots of bright chrome on it. After Chris' death this car sat in the barn at his home on State Street in Lowville, until a still later time, when it acquired new owners. The new owners were the triplet sons of the youngest daughter, Beulah. Mark, Luke and Paul received permission from their mother, when they were teen-agers, to take it out of the garage, and work on it. They spent hours cleaning it up and then were able to get it running again.

Since both Mom and Dad drove, they shared the driving and changed drivers often on their trips. To my knowledge they never stopped overnight in a motel or hotel. They preferred to always drive straight through with a few hours of rest time. This was popular in those days, right after the World War II period of time. The rest and sleep time would take place at a safe gas station/truck/restaurant stop area. The car would be parked in a darkened, but safe, area and after some hours of sleeping in cramped conditions in the car, they would again be back on the highway. This all took place during the Pre-Interstate highway period.

Mom and Dad preferred to make sandwiches to eat on the trip, most of the time while traveling in the car.. So, few restaurants were visited. A few stops were made to visit friends along the way on different years. Dad loved to visit; he was the "talker" in the family. Lester and I used to kid that it was the "Reyn blood" in him, since Lena was known to be a "talker". Beulah inherited that gift also, she loved to talk.

I remembered one year when Mom and Dad were returning to New York, they stopped in Williamsburg, Stanton County, Virginia area to visit friends. Later that year Dad talked a lot about what they saw while visiting the Colonial "Williamsburg" area. Still another time they stopped overnight, in Pennsylvania to visit with their friends, the Minniger family. But, other than those few times, most of their trips were just as I have described them.

During one summer Mom and Dad took a trip west to visit family members out there. From memory I know they visited with members of the Yancey family in Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and they even went as far west as into Iowa and Nebraska. They had such a good time. I wish I had been better acquainted with the family then, I would be able, now, to share more information about members of this family. But, at that time I had a young and growing family which occupied so much of my time. I remember listening to the conversations but not really knowing who the persons were that they visited. I do know they were some of the earlier immigrant Yancey's who pushed on west instead of stopping in New York. Chris and his family must have maintained some contact over the years in order to know where to go and visit them.

Several interesting events happened on their annual trips. One time they had problems with the car on the New York Thruway, quite a distance south of Albany. A stop at a local garage failed to reveal the problem. Chris, never willing to spend money, or trust another mechanic that he did not know, made the decision to drive the car on home to Lowville after being assured it was not going to damage the engine. The only problem was the speed of their car would only allow them to go about 35-40 mph. That caused back-ups behind them on the highway, the Thruway, which was a high speed Toll Road, as they chugged along slowly toward home. Mom used to laugh about how the other cars would honk their horns at them as the other drivers drove past them. Their speed was a minimum of what that Toll Road allowed: 35 mph.

Another time driving through Pennsylvania his speed was faster than posted. A local policeman stopped them. After the conversation Chris received a ticket for speeding. Well, that did not sit well with him! He felt he was not over the speed limit! He did take the ticket but refused to pay the fine. So, for a number of years after that, they did not drive through Pennsylvania. If caught a second time he would have to pay the fine, plus penalties....and he would not do that. Back then the law read that if he was stopped, failed to pay the fine and penalties that he would lose his license to drive in that state and possibly have to go to jail for disobedience. Being stubborn he had his own way to deal with the law in Pennsylvania. He just would not drive in their state again! So, he didn't. On their trips after that he drove around that state!

Family was always important to them. It was the way of life during the early 1900's. Families were closely knit; relying on each other. They kept in close contact with one another through visitation. Chris' family, the Daniel Yancey, family consisted of five boys and two girls. Veronica's parents were Andrew B. Zehr. Her family included ten children; four girls, one of whom was an adopted daughter, Blanche, and six boys. Veronica came from a family that continued to live predominately in the Lewis County area. Many belonged to the same church, so

were in contact with family members on Sunday at worship services. Weddings and funerals always brought large gatherings of family together, too. They turned out in large numbers to help each other when tragedy or illness struck. It was their way of life.

During the early years of our life we subscribed to the local, weekly newspaper the *Lowville Journal and Republican*. It's amazing the knowledge a person gains about their new family and that community by regularly reading the local newspaper. It afforded me the opportunity to learn by asking questions, or by sharing of an article that I had read. Many times this opened up conversation that enlightened me about persons who were written about in the paper, only to learn the article was about a family relative.

I remember reading about a man, Erwin Yancey, who was killed in his barnyard by a Holstein bull that had been let out of his stall for some exercise. Then I learned it was a cousin of Chris'. Now, I learn that he was the oldest brother of Haskell Yancey. Haskell and his wife Jane, live on the Belfort farm that was the original property owned by Daniel's parents. It was Jane who I bought Maple Syrup from on our last trip to Lowville.

On a trip to Lewis County in 1980 to attend the funeral of Wilson "Bud" Knechtel, Lester had Susan, our youngest who was then in college, come up to be with us during that time. After the funeral in Mannsville, Lester drove up into the Adirondack Mountains toward Long Pond. Since it was late October he wanted her to see the leaves changing and the beauty of that season. On our drive that day he stopped at a farm owned by a "Yancey" family. We knew that from the name on the mailbox.

In the yard was a man that Lester began to talk with. He was Joseph O. Yancey, brother of Andrew Yancey and this was the Yancey homestead. That afternoon Joe spent about four hours with us as he took us around the Belfort community and told us about how the Yancey family had settled that area. He pointed out where the original Log Cabin had been, now torn down, but originally down near a small stream. Today, that area is out in the pasture probably 500-600 feet from the present family home. Across the road from the home is the barn used to house the livestock during the winter. What a priceless afternoon that was. The Conservation Magazine issue of January-February 1986 had it's main article featuring Joe and his brother-in-law, Mike Virkler all in color. They were taking a hunting group from New York City into the mountains to hunt for deer. (See Photo section for picture of Joe and Mike.)

Chris' family wasn't as close knit due to some of the family members living in Wayne County, which is about 100 miles south of Lewis County. I knew very little about Chris' siblings until I began the research of this genealogy. I barely knew their names. I learned about Veronica's family when she and Chris came to Florida every winter, because she shared about them with Lester, and I would listen to their conversations. Mom talked more to me when Dad wasn't around, when he would be out working with Lester on the farm.

Several years ago, while in Lowville I went to visit with Mom's niece, Iva Rose (Yancey) Yousey. It was an interesting day that I spent with her. Iva Rose had hundreds of photos of her family taken over the years and she had them all catalogued in boxes. Taking each out she talked about it. Some of the photos in this book, are from her pictures. Iva Rose remembers her father, Edward Yancey, would stop at an Ice Cream shop about half-way from their home in Lowville, on the trip down to North Rose in Wayne County, to his parents home. This allowed children a break in the trip and a chance to stretch their legs. Did they travel by buggy or by car? I don't know the answer to that question. She remembers the trip as being really long for them as young

children.

She told of sometimes when a family member would stay over with the grand parents for a short period of time and then return home when another family member would come down to Wayne County and visit. During my research we found items in the *Lowville Journal and Republican* relating some of those events. In one of the *J & R*, there was an article telling about the time Mom and her sister-in-law, Aunt Pearl (Reyn) Zehr, had been to Watertown on a shopping trip. On the way back home their horse, pulling their buggy, became alarmed and took off running. In the process the buggy was upset. It said a gentleman stopped and helped them right their buggy and pick up their items that had spilled.

According to the U.S. Federal Census of 1890, Daniel and Lena Yancey were living in Lewis County, with three children; Edward E., Christopher E., and Theodore M., but by the census in 1910 they are found living in Wayne County with four additional children: Lena Louise, Elsie E., Benjamin Alvin and Nelson Mason. I find it interesting that the first two sons each had the middle initial of "E", but no name to it. One time Chris told me that his middle initial "E", does not represent a name; is simply an initial.

While researching this genealogy many questions came to me. Many of these are what drove me to continue the research. I wondered why the two families lived so many miles distant from each other. What family dynamics brought that about? One hundred miles separated them in a day when it was an all day trip to travel so far. Why did Edward and Chris each marry wives from Lewis County and remain in the Mennonite faith? Lena Louise, the third child, married Mason Burdick, Chris' friend, and remained in the Lewis County area, but not in the Mennonite faith.

Why did the other four siblings marry spouses in Wayne County and not remain in the Mennonite faith? Today those last four claim membership in the Methodist Church. Is it because there are no Mennonite churches in the Wayne County area? Was Daniel from the Mennonite faith and Lena was not? One family member recently stated they could not remember Lena ever attending the Mennonite church. Her Aunt Mary (Addison) Lehman, with whom she lived until her marriage to Daniel, attended it, but evidently Lena did not. Those are unanswered questions .

Researching the family through the U.S Federal Census I learned that there were two other "Reyn" family members living in Huron Township, in Wayne County. Were they brothers of Daniel's wife, Lena? On the 1910 Census report page it lists all three families living side by side as neighbors. Was this the reason Daniel and Lena moved their family from Lewis County to Wayne County? Was it Lena's desire to live close to her family members? Was the hard life they lived in Belfort and Croghan a consideration? It gets so cold in that area. It's a popular area for hunters and outdoor enthusiasts. Reyn families, and their descendants, continue to live in Wayne County.

On the 1910 census report all of the children are listed as living at home in Wayne County with Chris being the oldest at 21 years of age. Chris is listed as "doing odd jobs" for his income. When did he return to work in Lewis County? What drew him back? Was it a return to the church he grew up in? Or, was it a certain young lady from Lowville? Was it because he could find work as a woodsman? From Post Cards sent to him in 1910-1913, we know he was working for Mike Efferly on his dairy farm in Castorland. I know from stories he told, and photos, that he also worked in the woods as a young man. He married Veronica Irene Zehr on 15 January 1914. I don't know where they resided when first married. In those days, many of the newly married young couples lived with one set of parents until they could earn enough money to purchase their

own farm. Did they purchase the farm next door to her parents at that time or later?

Edward is not listed on the 1910 U.S. Federal Census, so he was no longer living at home. When did he return to live in Lewis County? Or did he not move to Wayne County with the family? He was 25 years of age in 1910, so did he continue living in the Croghan area? He married Rozella M. Zehr on 13 June 1912. When did they move to Harrisburg Township? That is where they raised their family on a dairy farm. Ed's and Chris' farms joined with a line fence. Did each of them purchase their farms from their father-in-law, Andrew B. Zehr, or from other land owners in the area?

We know from Rozella's diary of the boat trip to *Isle of Pines, Cuba*, in October of 1908, (see Diary of Rozella) that upon their return the Andrew Zehr's purchased a large farm on the West Road of Lowville, moving there from Croghan. This today is the Aaron and Pearl (Reyn) Zehr farm, and is now owned and farmed by their son.

The farm once owned by Chris and Veronica on the West Road, and known to us as the "home farm" is now owned by one of Beulah's sons and his wife, Keith and Linda Widrick.

Lena married Daniel on 29 August 1887 in Beaver Falls, Lewis County, New York. Their old German Family Bible, now owned by the Lester Yancey family, lists that Edward was born on October 2, 1885. Family lore has it that he was born in France and came to America with his mother, as an infant.

But, in my research I find that on the 1930 U.S. Census Lena gave 1885 as the year that she immigrated from France. We know that she came on a ship with her sister-in-law, Mary (Christman) Reyn in the early summer of 1885. Mary had her three youngest children (Marie, Louise, and Theodore P.); Peter and Margaret (Schere) Christman (Mary's parents); and Lena with her on the trip over. Mary's husband, Theodore Reyn, supposedly came on a ship in the fall of 1884, to prepare for the families arrival. If Lena came in the summer of 1885 with her sister-in-law, she would have been pregnant with Edward, and if so, then he was born here in the U.S., after her arrival in Lewis County. Based upon this research his birthplace then is Croghan, New York.

We know today that Lena did have relatives in Wayne County when they moved there. According to Joan (Reyn) Davis, her grand parents; Theodore M. and Mary (Christman) Reyn, moved from Lewis County sometime after Joan's father, Christian N. Reyn was born in Castorland, New York on January 06, 1891. He was one year old or so when they moved to Lyons, NY/Clyde, NY. There a daughter, Leona, was born on April 18, 1893. Then they moved to North Huron between 1893 and 1897, as Pearl was born on August 28, 1897 in North Huron. Her grandfather Theodore M. Reyn, was a "miller" and had the flour or grist mill, on Slaughter Road, from then until his early death on July 11, 1903 at the age of 47, of Bright's (Kidney) disease. This Mill remains in the Reyn/Yancey family yet today. It's now been owned by a family member for more than, four generations, consisting of one hundred and fourteen years! Remarkable.

On the 1910 Census of Wolcott, Daniel is listed as a "grain farmer". On the 1930 Census, his occupation is listed as working in a "flour mill". Since Nelson Mason was born on 18 February 1905, and is listed as born in Belfort we are assuming that the family sold the farm in Lewis County and moved to N. Rose, Huron Township in Wayne County, in about 1907-08 and prior to the 1910 census being taken. The weather was warmer and milder there, where it is near Lake Ontario. In Belfort, the temperature can easily dip down to -40 or -50 degrees in the Adirondack Mountains during the winter time.

Farmer's in the Wolcott area raised lots of apples. Many fruit farms dot the landscape there as well as grain and hay farms. When I married into the family, Uncle Nelson and Aunt Greta owned and operated an apple cider mill. That mill was the one previously owned by his parents Daniel and Lena Yancey.

Family lore has it that this Cider Mill (or maybe it was yet a "flour mill") was owned at one time by Chris Yancey. Why did Chris get it? Why not Edward, who is the eldest son? Was that when Theodore died in July 1903? Did Daniel and Lena purchase the mill from Mary, Theodore' Reyn's widow? Later, supposedly, it was owned, or operated, by a younger brother of Daniel, Theodore., who lived in the house with his family. At that time a young woman's pregnant body was found in the Mill Pond. There were suspects but no one was ever charged with her murder. Who was she? How did she get there?

After that event the mill became the possession of the youngest child, Nelson, who made it into a cider mill. Today, it is still a cider mill. It was owned by Nelson and Greta's son, Mason, until Mason died in 2002 at which time the ownership passed to his widow, Linda Yancey. We have one of the new wooden cider barrels here in Florida that was purchased from Uncle Nelson.

Lester used to tell the story of how his Uncle Nelson liked to keep a barrel of cider down in the basement. There it would ferment into hard cider. At times Aunt Greta would find him down there consuming his "special brew". I remember Uncle Nelson as being a fun person, as his son, Nelson junior was. We always enjoyed being with Uncle Nelson and Aunt Greta.

History has always intrigued me, so researching family history has been a priority as an adult. I suppose I inherited this talent from my mother, along with the fact that our family lived so many miles from our relatives. Mother's maternal ancestors immigrated from Portrush, Ireland, which is in County Cavern, Ireland. They first lived in Noble county, Ohio and farmed it. However, this was down near the Ohio River in hilly country and not the best farmland. Her grandfather, Samuel Large, and his brother Richard left Ohio a few years later and pushed on west to find better farm land. The trip, overland by horse and Conestoga Wagon, took three months to cross the distance of the three states of Ohio, Indiana and half-way across Illinois.

They finally settled on an area south of Taylorville, Christian County, Illinois, where there was an abundance of fertile farm land. They named this prairie area "Buckeye Prairie", after the state of Ohio that they came from and today it continues to be named that. My great grandfather, Samuel Large, established the first "Buckeye Prairie Methodist Church" and was the first pastor. In May 2011 they celebrated their 150th. year as a continuing congregation. He, and many of his descendants, along with his wife and children, are buried across the road from the church building in the "Buckeye Prairie Cemetery". This is a well maintained cemetery containing many of my ancestors and relatives.

Mother's paternal ancestors immigrated from Wales, England. They landed first in Baltimore, Maryland, and it was near here that they first settled. Moving from there they went south into Virginia and still later settled near Lexington, Kentucky for awhile. They, too, were farmers and plantation owners. Pushing on west, Samuel Cole, my great grandparents located in Pike County, Illinois on fertile farm ground, not too many miles from the Mississippi River. Here they raised their family. Many of my Cole ancestors are buried in a small, well-kept cemetery near the town of Perry located in Pike County, IL. When the children of the family were teen-agers they moved back to eastern Illinois, to the small town of Bement, where equally good farm land was available.

There are many of my ancestors buried in two different cemeteries in that town. The Methodist church where the family worshipped still stands in the center of town beside of the Park. Also, in the center of that town is the Historical home, now restored and preserved, where Abraham Lincoln slept the night before he had his big Lincoln/Douglas debate. Impressive place to visit.

My Grandpa Cole owned and operated a tile and brick factory near Taylorville, Illinois. Later in his life his health began to fail, brought about by his firing of the Kiln's full of bricks. His brother, my great Uncle Jim Cole, encouraged them to move to NW Ohio and buy a farm near him. My grandparents did that. They sold the Tile and Brick factory and purchased a 120 acre grain farm in the Spring of 1912 and lived there until he died on 14 January 1918. His death was the result of damaged lungs caused by the Kiln firing process. My Mom was eight and her brother, James Hollis, was thirteen years old. Grandma kept the farm, remarried a Stanley Smith and lived there until her death on May 5, 1932 when she died of a stroke.

Mother came from a musical family (she played 4 or 5 instruments), as did my father. Mother and her brother both attended Defiance College in Defiance, Ohio. Later Uncle Hollis graduated from the University of Colorado at Boulder with a double major in Engineering. He was employed all of his life by the Standard Oil Co., in Berkeley, California as one of their top chemical and production engineers. Mother was a member of the "Hart's Ohio All Girl Orchestra and Band", and traveled with them. One trip, by train, took them south to New Orleans then west into Texas before returning to Ohio through Oklahoma, Missouri and Illinois.

My father's paternal grandparents immigrated from Alsace-Lorraine, in the 1860's, much as the Yancey family did, and they settled in Toledo, Ohio. My grandfather, Jacob Knerr, owned a large grain and vegetable farm in the Maumee section of Lucas County where they raised their family of seven children. All played musical instruments and sang together as a family. Grandpa Henry and his brother Fred, both played violins, then called "fiddle's". They played for many "barn dances", not necessarily played in a barn. Grandma was a good dancer and at times they got to dance together, resulting in their romance and later their marriage in June 1891. Today the Ohio Turnpike runs past where their farm was located. Part of his farm today is a residential subdivision of the city. One street in the subdivision is now named "Knerr" Street. My father's maternal grandparents, came from Ireland and settled first in Connecticut, and later moving to Toledo when Grandma was 6 years of age.

This void in my life, and the life of my brothers, sent us in pursuit of information. We wanted to document who we were. How we were impacted through our ancestors. What gifts and talents were present in the family DNA, and gene pool, that we had inherited. It was this desire to know more, and document the information, about Lester's family, both for myself and for my children, that caused me to begin the research of the Yancey family.

Always in the back of my mind, the desire became more intense following the death of Lester on October 26, 1986. I felt almost compelled to research his family, so that our five children, twelve grandchildren and sixteen great grandchildren could know more about who he was, and who the persons were that made up his life. I wanted them to know about the richness of his life. To know where the family lived. To identify some of the challenges they faced over the years. To learn some of the stories that made it come alive. To realize the gifts and talents in this family. This is a living document of their lives. I have included information on family members as they have shared it with me. I have listed occupations, educational achievements, hobbies and talents plus medical information so future generations can be knowledgeable of medical issues present.

I spoke with Clyde, Lester's only brother, during the 1990's to determine his interest. Clyde came to my house one day following Lester's death to view the Bible with recorded family data in it. I gave him a copy of the page recording the births of Daniel and Lena's children, and also a copy of their Marriage Certificate. I, also, gave him copies of a few pages of Ruth (Jantzi) Ryan and Lorraine Roth's research on the Jantzi family. I own a copy of the book recording their research. I have, also, received written permission from Lorraine to use their research in mine.

Lorraine is a research librarian who lives in Ontario, Canada and Ruth Jantzi Ryan died here in Sarasota in March 2009 at the age of 105 years. Her son, who also lives here in Sarasota, told me that her mind was still sharp yet when she died. What a gift, to have her memory to the end! While at my house that day Clyde shared with me some of the family stories that he had heard while growing up, but I didn't record them. I always planned to spend more time with Cyde working on this project. But, sadly it never took place. I guess we were all too busy in those days. It is sad, as now the time has passed and so have the people who could tell us those stories, and make the past come alive.

In 2001, Clyde and their oldest sister, Arletha Pearl (Yancey) Knechtel both died. Clyde died on May 7, 2001 and Arletha on October 6, 2001. Now I was alone to try and research the family. The one remaining sister, Beulah Jane (Yancey) Widrick's memory is no longer reliable so she is unable to provide me with accurate information. I was thankful for one of her daughter's, Irene (Widrick) Roggie, who was able to provide me with some names and addresses of family members living in the down state area of Wayne County, New York. Through contact with a couple of them, I have had help in moving this project along.

I am forever grateful for Debra Ann (Yancey) Miller, a daughter of Donald Benjamin and Lavada (Mundy)Yancey. She has been such a special blessing as we worked on the family lines together. Now, as we have moved the project along slowly, we have had two other Reyn family descendants join us as part of our research team. Joan (Reyn) Davis, daughter of Christian Reyn, and Sasha Beck, whose grandfather is a Reyn.

In the beginning, one of the first family members who helped me was Mary Christina (Yancey) Swartzentruber back in 1998. Another willing helper who worked tirelessly to obtain information for the book is Savilla Rose (Yancey) Steria, grand daughter of Edward E. Yancey. Ed's daughters, Bertha Faith (Yancey) Roes and Rosella Ruth (Yancey) Roes, along with their sister, Iva Rose (Yancey) Yousey, all helped in countless ways, which included identifying persons in photos. Iva Rose had a treasure trove of family pictures that she copied, and shared with me on the day I spent with her in Lowville during July 2008. That source was priceless.

Over the past decade I was told that someone had written a book on the "Yancey Family". So, I began to ask different family members if they had any knowledge of one, hoping that I could glean some jewels of information from it, but I was always given the same answer....."No, not to my knowledge". Arlene Yousey, who kept a journal for many years while growing up, has documented much of the stories of Mennonite families living in the Lewis County area in her book entitled: "*Strangers and Pilgrims*". However, the Daniel Yancey family is not documented in her book. Perhaps, because the family had moved to Wayne County before she began her journaling.

In the year of 2007 serious work began again on this project. Contact was made with as many of the family members as possible with a request for them to help by listing their family information, or update it. Letters were written to many of the family members enclosing family unit

sheets, to record their family information on for our database.

We all know how time consuming it is to compile family information after the data is received. However, it is even more time consuming to search out and find who is willing to give us the information. Debbie, Joan, Sasha and I all use the Family Tree Maker program and access the Internet through [www.Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com) to gather information from the U.S. Census and other sites on the Internet. The Census are now complete through 1930. The 1940 Census is scheduled to be released during this year of 2011.

In July 2008, while on a trip to Lowville with my husband and grandson, Benjamin Comes, we made a stop at the Rose Cemetery in Wayne County, on our way back to Ohio. That stop allowed for documentation of dates taken from the headstones of family members interred there. Unable to visit some of the other cemeteries in the Wayne County area, Debbie has been gracious in helping me to obtain other data locally. It was my desire, and intent, on that trip, to visit in the area and talk with many of the Yancey descendants still residing in the villages of Huron, North Rose, Wolcott, Newark, plus a few others. Unfortunately, time was short and we had to postpone that part of our trip. Debbie's mother, Lavada, has been able to give us some information to connect us to the past. As the older members of the family leave us we lose our ability to make the family come alive through sharing their stories of the past.

Plans were made for the 3rd. Yancey Reunion in Florida, and that event has now taken place. It was held in April 2011, at the Fellowship Hall of the Myakka City Baptist Church where my oldest daughter, Kathie (Yancey) and her husband Jimmie Driggers are the pastoral couple. Planning was done by Brenda (Yancey) Kolb and Kathie. Their husbands, Jim and Jimmie, co-hosted this event which was attended by approximately 60 family members. As this event continues in the future we hope that more family members will participate.

This work now is offered, not as the final chapter and not perfect, but as a beginning chapter of the lives of those living today and of those who preceeded us. We are grateful for the lives they lived, the challenges they faced and won, and for the core values they established in the family. We are thankful for the example they have been to us living today. May we never forget the past, and continue to build upon it, as we look forward to the future. One that is bright with promise for those who follow us. May God bless each of you and prosper you as you serve Him.

*Remembrance and honoring of our past secures the future.*

## BOOK STATISTICS

For those who are acquainted with other family record books, this one will need a little explanation. The computer software program used to compile this record is the *World Family Tree Maker, Version # 16*. It arranges families much the same way that other record keeping systems do.

The families are numbered from 1 to 380 at the beginning of each paragraph. The number assigned to the family member is followed by the person's name. In (parenthesis) following the person's name is the name of the immediate ancestor (s), or parent and his or her generation number.

Where there is no number assigned it is because the individual has no immediate descendants. This can be due to being a child in their parent's home yet; single and not married yet, or married but having no descendants born to them yet.

There are Eleven generation's listed beginning with Michael Jantzi I born about 1719.

Included with some of the notes are listed information regarding burial place, occupation, training, education, political, medical, marriage, multiple births, adoption, residence, church membership, and ordination of minister. Where there was background information regarding that individual it was included, also.

I have included some historical background of the families and the area where they lived, along with some stories concerning the family members.

An Index is provided giving the page or pages where the individual person's name is listed. Somewhere on that listed page or pages, you will find the name of the person you are searching for.

File Statistics:	Total number of individuals listed.....	3,425
	Total number of marriages listed.....	1,256
	Total number of surnames listed.....	799
	Average Life Span.....	61 yrs.7 mos.

*This book is dedicated*

*In loving memory to  
Lester Christopher Yancey.  
who was  
devoted to me and our five children.  
Kathrine Lea, Jean Ann, Lester David,  
Daniel Richard and Veronica Susan.*

*All gifted to us by God.*

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## IN QUEST FOR A NEW LIFE

In the summer of 1821 an Amishman by the name of Christian Nafziger set out from his home in Bavaria. In Amsterdam he received help to take a ship to America. He landed in New Orleans and made his way to Pennsylvania. The Amish or Mennonites who had settled there in the 18th. century advised him to seek land in Canada. Some Pennsylvania Mennonites had begun to move into Canada in the late 1700's.

In August 1822, Christian found himself in Waterloo County. the Mennonites there suggested he look at the Crown Lands west of their settlement and contact the governor of Upper Canada about it's availability. Governor Maitland promised Nafziger that the land would be available for himself and others of his faith. For clearing a roadway and some acreage and building a cabin, they would be given 50 acres free, and the remainder of the 200-acre lots could be bought at a reasonable price whenever the settlers so desired.

No sooner had Christian returned to Europe when many Amish began to pack their trunks and make their way to the harbors of France, Holland and Germany. From Philadelphia, Baltimore or New York they made their way to Canada via Pennsylvania.

The area was not settled exclusively by the Amish. There were Mennonites who had been coming from Pennsylvania since the turn of the century. There were Catholics from the same neighborhoods in Alsace-Lorraine. These settlers came with their various German dialects, but it seems that the Pennsylvania Dutch (with it's roots in the Palatinate) predominated. Those coming from areas in Alsace-Lorraine where French had become dominant were also familiar with that language. Unfortunately this element was soon lost. But, then, how could one expect a people who were barely literate to learn and keep up three languages, because in Canada English also had to be reckoned with.

The Amish Mennonites thrived on the new soil. Determination and hard work went a long way. Accident and disease took their toll, but that was an accepted part of life whether in the Old Country or in the New. In time, each farmer was able to build a substantial barn, house and other necessary buildings and purchase his farm and perhaps one for each of his sons.

Canada was not the only place beckoning the European Amish, Mennonites, or others. A French count, James LeRoy de (King of) Chaumont, who was connected with the Castorland Company (caster is the French word for beaver), purchased a large tract of land in Lewis County, New York. He hired an agent, John Keiffer (who may have been Mennonite) to find settlers for this land. The Amish and Mennonites were a fertile field for recruitment.

On the eve of the migration of the Jantzi's, Canada's Amish Mennonites had almost completed the first ten years of their history. In Lewis County, New York, the Jantzi's would be part of those who blazed the trail.

## THE EUROPEAN SCENE IN THE 1820'S

By 1820 the Anabaptist movement was almost 300 years old. Prolonged persecution had taken its toll. The Anabaptists had, by now, given up their mission activities in exchange for tolerance.

Many of the Swiss Brethren had been banished from their native Switzerland, and their descendants were found on both sides of the Rhine River in France and in Germany. A few small migrations had left the Palatinate for Pennsylvania during the latter part of the 17th. century and during the 18th. century up to the time of the American Revolution.

The Anabaptists of the Netherlands had by this time found tolerance, influence, and some wealth. This was not the case with those of Swiss descent. The area in which they were located was a frequent battle ground, and the industrious Anabaptists (or Mennonites as they preferred to be called) were tolerated mainly for their contribution to building up the agriculture of the area after each military escapade. The latest of these was Napoleon's exploits throughout all of Europe.

Napoleon's military expeditions required more soldiers than there were volunteers; so he resorted to conscription. The Mennonites sent several delegations to Paris to request exemption. It is said that Napoleon told one group that if they did not like it, they could go elsewhere! The general populace, whether Catholic or Lutheran, were not in favor of Napoleon's aggressive wars either, but the non-resistant Mennonites found this situation quite intolerable.

Another one of Napoleon's impositions was the secularization of vital statistics. Until this time the Church (the Catholic Church to Reformation times, and the state churches after that) had presided at all births (through baptism), marriages and deaths. Since Anabaptists were outside of the State Church, this caused them many problems. Napoleon's institution of state records and marriage in the name of the law may have been a relief to the Anabaptists, but having to appear before the French authorities on every occasion especially for the solemnization of their marriages also must have been somewhat frustrating. However, since it was not a faith matter, they complied.

Economically, the Amish and Mennonites had a very bleak future. In most cases they could be discriminated against because of their being aliens or Anabaptists at the mere whim of any prince or local ruler. They could not own land and frequently lost any accumulated goods in fines or taxes. This situation and the opening up of travel between Europe and America following the Revolutionary War, made the expectations of religious and economic freedom worth risking the hazardous journey into the unknown.

## THE STORY OF ELLIS ISLAND

The story of Ellis Island begins on the southern tip of Manhattan Island within Battery Park at Castle Clinton. Built originally as a fort in 1808, it eventually became a concert hall known as Castle Garden. From 1855 to 1890, Castle Garden served as the primary immigration processing station in the United States. (Many immigrants would remember it as "kesslegarten".) During those years, 8,000,000 immigrants were processed there. As the tide of immigration increased, it became apparent that the facilities at Cstle Garden were inadequate to handle the many problems the immigrants presented. The overcrowding became intolerable, while corruption was rampant, with thieves descending upon the unsuspecting immigrants. When the federal government took responsibility for the process in 1890, officials looked for alternative sites. They didn't have to look far because located in New York Harbor, between Battery Park and New Jersey, lay a three-acre oyster bed, called Ellis Island. It was named after an eighteenth-century owner, Samuel Ellis, a New Jersey farmer. Prior to that it was Kioshk (or Gull) Island by the Native Americans who would frequent it for the oysters. On eighteenth-century maps it was called Oyster Island, Bucking Island and later Gibbet Island. The officials hoped that by moving the place of inspection to an island they would have more control over the treatment of immigrants.

Measuring 400' by 150' and made of Georgia pine, the building opening on January 1, 1892. (Between 1890, when Castle Garden closed, and 1892, when Ellis Island opened, the Barge Office in Battery Park was used for receiving immigrants.) Unfortunately, five years later, on June 14, 1897, a fire broke out, destroying the entire complex. The two hundred immigrants on the island were taken to safety and the Barge Office was again put into service until a new facility could be built.

At the time of construction of the present-day structure, America was in a depression and immigration statistics led officials to believe that the days of mass immigration were over. How wrong they were! Built to receive no more than 500,000 new immigrants a year, it was soon swarmed with prospective citizens. Steamship companies, eager to make a sale, place posters throughout Europe with pictures of cornucopias to entice would-be immigrants. News that there was work in America spread quickly through Europe and many who saw no prospect of a better life at home decided to try and see what this new, young land had to offer. With immigrants numbering over 5,000 a day, the facilities were far too small. Construction began again and ultimately a total of thirty-three buildings were built, including dormitories, hospitals, contagious disease wards, and dining rooms. At peak times there were more than 500 people working at Ellis, including inspectors, interpreters, doctors, nurses, matrons, and clerks. Many worked twelve-hour days, seven days a week. Ellis Island was virtually a city unto itself.

After a long and arduous journey to America, the steamships would arrive in Nedw York Harbor. Medical inspectors would board the ship and give a cursory examination to the first-and second-class passengers. They felt that if one had the money for an expensive ticket, he or she, would be unlikely to become a public charge, one of the main reasons for the inspection process at Ellis. The steamships then berthed in the many piers that lined New York waters. Those first-and second-class passengers were free to go on to their new lives in America, while steerage class passengers were grouped, tagged and put on piers to await transportation to Ellis. Steamship companies were required to keep strict manifests which included detailed information on each

immigrant, including name, age, occupation and former address. These manifests would later be given to immigration officials at Ellis Island as the basis for the legal inspection. In an effort to create some order out of such chaos, tags were placed on the immigrants to keep those on the same manifest page together.

Traveling steerage class was no doubt an experience most were anxious to forget. The average trans-Atlantic voyage lasted from eight to fifteen days. Steerage-class cost approximately thirty dollars. Many had saved for years to be able to afford the tickets for an entire family.

Double and triple bunk beds, minimal facilities and horrible food must have made many immigrants wish they had never left home. Often times, steerage class passengers were allowed on deck for only a brief time each day. By the time they arrived many were no doubt sick, exhausted and frightened.

Once on Ellis Island, the immigrants were met by inspectors who rapidly directed them under a large canopy and into the baggage room. In satchels swung over their shoulders or, if they were from a larger city, in a wicker basket, they would have placed what they felt they needed to begin their new lives: a Bible, family photograph, some clothing, perhaps a samovar and most important of all, a peren, down-filled comforter for sleeping which often became part of a woman's dowry. Uniformed inspectors would try to get the immigrants to check their bags; however, many of the immigrants were afraid of uniforms and besides, could they trust these Americans with all of their worldly belongings?

However, there was another reason for the immigrants to carry their bags as they were being processed. They all knew that they were about to undergo a medical examination and a bag could be used to disguise a limp. The inspectors were there to make sure that the immigrants would be able to work; any physical problem could be grounds for denying admittance. From the baggage room they were directed up a flight of stairs which led to the Registry Room, also known as the Great Hall. Unknown to the immigrants as they climbed the stairs, their medical examination had begun. At the top of the stairs were two inspectors observing the immigrants. They were watching to see who had difficulty making the climb.

With chalk marks hastily written on the immigrant's lapel, the inspectors would indicate any potential problems. An "H" would warn of a heart problem, an "L" of lameness. Upon entering this enormous room, surely the largest they would have ever seen, they were confronted by a system of walkways called "cattle runs". As the immigrant walked the passageway, he would encounter different inspectors. One would check limbs and fingers: another would check hair and scalp. The most feared was the "eye" man. At that time trachoma was a very contagious eye disease. Incurable, it would require that the immigrant be returned to the port of departure. The inspector would place a buttonhook under the immigrants eyelid and check for any signs of redness. If there were any indications of the disease, he would take his chalk, mark an "E" to indicate a problem and the immigrant would be put aside for further examination.

Most of the immigrants, however, did not have medical problems and within a few hours they would find themselves at the other end of the hall waiting for the legal examination. There was a row of tall legal clerks, behind each a legal inspector and beside him an interpreter. It was their responsibility to make sure the immigrant had no legal reasons to deny him entry.

The the immigrants arriving daily in such numbers, it was impossible for the inspectors to spend too much time on each immigrant. They had about two minutes to ask a series of twenty-nine questions: "What is your name? Where do you come from? Why did you come here? Do

you have any money? Do you have any relatives in America? Are you an anarchist?" Perhaps the most important question of all was "Do you have a job waiting for you?" The unions were just developing at that time and it was illegal for an employer to import labor. Those immigrants who answered "Yes" were forced to go before a Board Of Special Inquiry, where they were given an opportunity to plead their cases. Most immigrants, however, were prepared for these questions. It was the steamship's responsibility to return any immigrant denied entry to the port of departure. Therefore, they coached the immigrants as to the correct answers to give. It was, basically, up to the immigrant to show an ability to work and a desire to do so. Most accomplished this within five hours. About twenty percent of the immigrants were detained; some for only one night as they waited for a relative to appear, or possibly for a longer time, waiting for a medical problem to clear up. It must be remembered that only 2% of those coming here were forced to return. That is a small figure in some ways but in human terms it translates to about 250,000 people whose lives were surely marked by deep disappointment.

After their inspection, immigrants could change their foreign currency into U.S. dollars at the money exchange on the island. They could then purchase railroad tickets to their final destination. The concessions at Ellis Island were held by private contractors and required constant vigilance by the immigration officials on the island to assure provision of decent and honest service.

The immigrants service provided immigrants with free postcards to notify friends or relatives in the U.S. of their arrival. After years of separation many families were reunited on Ellis Island at a spot popularly known as "the Kissing Post of America."

At the end of five hours, one third of the immigrants were given a pass to board the "Ellis Island" Ferry to take them to Manhattan. The other two-thirds traveled by barges which were pulled to New Jersey to make train connections for points across the United States.

The immigrants were not without friends on Ellis Island. An important part of the story is the contribution of the many and various social service agencies such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, The Italian Welfare League, The Red Cross, the YWCA, The National Council of Jewish Women, and the Daughters of the American Revolution. These volunteers were there to assist the immigrants in finding employment, a lost relative, or simply providing a kind word or shoulder to cry on.

With so many people bringing such large expectations to Ellis Island, it must have been a place of heartbreaking sorrow. Families were forced to make hasty decisions when forced to separate. Who would stay with a sick child or accompany an immigrant denied entry back home? Assurances were made to send money back to the old country so that family members following later would be able to enter second class, thereby avoiding Ellis Island altogether. To those who were denied entry it surely earned its name as *The Island of Tears*, *Isola dela Lacrime* to the Italians, and *Tranen Insel* to the Germans.

Those who truly believed that the streets were "paved with gold" were surely in for a rude awakening. What they did find, however, was a country that had coal to be mined, canals and subways to be dug, fields to till and factories to man. For this America promised a chance for a dignified wage, the freedom to worship as one pleased, and a future for their children: in short, a piece of the American Dream.

This *Golden Door*, situated in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty, has come to represent the best of what America had to offer: a chance to begin again. Our lives are the products of their dreams and courage. We must always hold that sacred.

## FOOD AT ELLIS ISLAND

When the federal government took over the responsibility of inspecting the immigrants in 1890, the idea of moving the inspection process to an island was attractive to the officials. Castle Garden, located on the mainland, provided too easy a target for the thieves and criminals that would prey upon the unsuspecting immigrants. In addition, by the time Castle Garden closed, the corruption within the inspection process was bordering on a public scandal. The concession contracts were often awarded by patronage, not for the quality of the services they offered the immigrants. Officials hoped for a clean sweep of those mistreating the immigrants.

On the steamships, passengers were provided with little to eat in steerage except lukewarm soups, black bread, boiled potatoes, herring or stringy beef. In the early years, any hopes the immigrants had in receiving better treatment at Ellis Island were futile. It did not take long for corruption to find its way to Ellis Island. Surely the first concessionaire made himself a rich man at the expense of the immigrants' stomachs. The detained immigrants were generally served stewed prunes over dried bread. Often there was no cutlery. Bowls were used and reused without washing; floors and tables often went unwashed. When they were washed, it was often by an intimidated immigrant.

As time went on, the commissioners became more involved in the treatment of the immigrants and the situation improved. Food, including thick soups and stews, became plentiful. The facilities were better maintained and, in time, ethnic and kosher meals were provided. This both solved and created problems. An immigrant appearing at the wrong seating might be exposed to unfamiliar foods. White bread was thought to be cake; bananas were a complete enigma. How strange and frightening it must have been!

As most of the immigrants were not detained and were destined for points outside of New York City, provisions were made to supply them with some food for their train trips. Boxes of food, fifty cents for a small one and one dollar for a large one, were sold to the immigrants in the railroad waiting room. The contents of each box were printed on the sides, with corresponding prices, in several languages: two pounds of bread, eight cents; one pound of cervelat sausage, twenty-two cents; five sandwiches, twenty cents; four pies, twenty cents; two boxes of cake, twenty cents; oranges or apples, ten cents. Surely the immigrants wasted no time in tasting the contents of the boxes to sample the flavors of their new country.

Mealtimes were one of the few times the detained immigrants were reunited with family members. Surely the enormity of their decision to come to America was hammered home when they sat down to eat and did not know what they were eating, or how they were to eat it. No doubt they were most anxious to recreate the comforting smells of the kitchen they had left behind.

Excerpted from THE ELLIS ISLAND IMMIGRANT COOKBOOK  
by *Tom Bernardin*

## THE JANTZI FAMILY COMES TO AMERICA

In 1829, Joseph's brother Michael, went to the mayor's house and asked for a certificate of his birth and the death certificates of his parents. Did other members of the family also request these documents and only Michael's have been preserved, or was he the only one to have them?\*

When did Michael and Joseph come to America? Did they come in 1829, or were these certificates obtained in anticipation of migrating sometime later? In a speech to a reunion of the Michael Jantzi family, Ralph Jantzi gave the date of Michael's arrival as June, 1833. Did he conclude that Michael came with his sister Anna and brother-in-law, Michael Zehr?

We do know that Anna and Michael Zehr and Magdalena and Christian Kennel sailed on the Barque Statera from LeHavre, France, arriving in New York on June 19, 1833. They were listed as follows:

Zehr, Michael,	Age 44,	male,	miller,	French
" Anna	" 40	female		
" Michael	" 19	male		
" Christian	" 16	"		
" Anna	" 14	female		
" Georges	" 12	male		
" Jean*	" 10	"		
" Joseph	" 8	"		
" Barbe	" 6	female		
" Catherine	" 4	"		
" Suzanne	" 1	"		
Kennel, Christoph,*	Age 33,	male,	farmer,	French
" Madeline*	" 32	female		
" Barbe	" 9	"		
" Catherine	" 7	"		
" Christoph	" 5	male		
" Madeline*	" 4	female		
" Suzanne	" 3	"		
" Nicholas	" 24	male		
" Jean*	" 1	"		

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\*These had been preserved by the Michael Jantzi family and are now in the Archives of the Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana.

\*Many of the names here appear in their French form ~ Jean is John, Christoph is Christian, Madaline is Magdalena, Pierre is Peter.

The ship's list contains a total of 112 names, but Michael and Joseph are not among them. The Zehr and Kennel families each contain some names we cannot account for. The Zehr family includes George, age 12, and Suzanne, age 1. Were they orphan children which the Zehr's brought with them? The Kennel family list contains Madaline, age 4, and Nicholas, age 24. Were the names of these Zehr and Kennel, or did they have other surnames, and the person who made the list did not bother to record them? The ship list presents one more problem. The destination of these two families was "Ohio." Were they planning to go to Ohio and changed their plans enroute, or did they, or the person recording the information not know the difference between Ohio and Upper New York? "Ohio" may have been used to designate a frontier, wherever that was.

The Zehr's and Kennel's were among the first settlers to follow Kieffer to Lewis County. It is said they were sold the poorest, rockiest land. Michael Zehr settled at the northerly edge of present day Croghan. It is believed they lived in an abandoned Indian shack until they built their log house some distance from the road. A burial ground was started on a knoll behind the house. This spot is now in the middle of a field and is fenced in. There were about 39 graves, but only a few tomb stones have survived. One wonders whether the Amish settlers were aware that Joseph Bonapart, brother of Napoleon, had a 150,000-acre estate, including Lake Bonapart, not far north of their settlement. It is said that Bonapart lived incognito, but with a great deal of pomp, on an estate in New Jersey and had a hunting lodge in New York.

The following spring the second contingent of Jantzi's was ready to leave Bellegrade. The rest of the family (except Michael and Joseph) left LeHavre on the Ship Groton that arrived in New York on June 4, 1834. This list is as follows:

Anne Jansey,	age 22,	F	
John Jansey	" 28	M	Farmer
Eliza "	" 28	F	
Magdaline "	" 1	F	
John Gerber*	" 24	M	
Magdaline "	" 62	F	
Catherine Jansey	" 50	F	
John "	" 19	M	
Joseph "	" 17	M	
Catherine "	" 16	F	
Christian "	" 14	M	
Pierre "	" 12	M	
Nicholas "	" 10	M	
Ferena "	" 6	F	

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\*John Gerber married Magdalena Nafziger in New York, New York. Was she the daughter of Maria Jantzi and Christian Nafziger?

Other passengers on the Groton, who were probably Amish and also related to the Jantzi's, were the Joseph Farni and Simon Hirschy families. This Jantzi list also leaves us with some problems. When we first saw Joseph, age 17, listed under Catherine, we assumed it was the Joseph of our story, but who was John listed immediately above him? In June, 1834, Joseph should have been 21 years of age and Michael 24. Were the John and Joseph listed here Jantzi cousins, or were they Catherine's sons by a previous marriage, and did they have other surnames? We do not know who 22-year old Anne Jansey was, but she may have been a cousin. John Jansey, age 28, was obviously Joseph's older brother who was married to Elizabeth Gerber. John Gerber-1, then must have been Elizabeth's brother, and Magdaline, age 62, their mother. Catherine Jansey, age 50, was the step-mother of the older Jantzi children and the mother of the younger ones--Catherine down to Ferena (Freni or Veronica), and perhaps also of John and Joseph, ages 19 and 17.

Exactly when Joseph and Michael arrived in America is a mystery. Obviously, they did not come on the same ship as the rest of the family. Since they were eligible for military service, they may not have been able to get permits to leave the country, and may have slipped out under cover, arriving in America by a different route than the rest of the family.

A number of parcels of land in Lewis County were registered in Catherine Jantzi's name. This was probably the widowed mother of the Jantzi clan. It is believed that Maria Jantzi and her husband, Christian Nafziger also came to Lewis County, although we have no record of their arrival. Michael and Anna (Jantzi) Zehr remained in New York, and Michael became a minister and bishop in the Amish Mennonite Congregation. Peter and Nicholas Yancey also made their home in northern New York. Catherine, who appeared as 16 years of age on the 1834 ship list probably died unmarried in 1877<sup>a2</sup>. We have no further record of Christian (age 14 in 1834) and Freni (age 6 in 1834) although a Jantzi descendant thinks Christian may have gone to Wisconsin.

Joseph and Michael were looking for land, but even more critical for them was the need to find suitable wives. There was little prospect of finding marriageable young women among their families who had migrated to upper New York. No doubt they knew about the settlement in Canada and soon found the way to the German Block. They may have found work with Christian

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\_1. John Gerber married Magdalena Nafziger in New York, New York. Was she the daughter of Maria Jantzi and Christian Nafziger?

a2. Her death date was recorded by the Michael Jantzi family, but we do not know where she lived or where she died.

Boshart who needed masculine help, because his own sons were still very young. At any rate, the Jantzi brothers found the Boshart sisters. In August 1834, Michael married Maria, and the following May, Joseph married Catherine. They must have spoken well of their wives, for five years later their nephew, Michael Zehr, came and married Maria and Catherine's younger sister, Barbara.

Michael and Maria remained on the Boshart farm. Maria's brother Christian, took up the trade of shoemaking and never married. Their brother Joseph married much later in life and had no children. In 1982, this farm was owned by John Nafziger, a descendant of Michael.

It is quite likely that Catherine Jantzi, the widow, at some point came to Canada. In 1861, a Catherine Jantzi died at the age of 71 years in Wellesley. The John Jantzi family has the story that one of the mothers, either Jantzi or Gerber, was blind by the time they decided to leave New York State. She was not very happy about the prospect of moving again and wondered why they couldn't stay where they were. They took her outdoors and with her cane showed her the large rocks. They wanted better land. She is said to have exclaimed, "Oh, if I were only back in the Old Country again!"

There continued to be movement between the two settlements--Waterloo County and Lewis County--in spite of the more than 300 miles which separated them. Those who stayed in Lewis County prospered in spite of the rocks. Lumbering and related industries engaged the energies of some. Industry and hard work makes even the desert and rocks to bloom.

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## *Florida Farmer ~ Lester C. Yancey*

*This story is of a man totally dedicated to God. He loved, honored and served God in all area of his life. He felt being a Christian, was his first and the most important calling in his life. It took precedence in his life; in his relationship to his wife and family, and in his professional life as a farmer. It brought him to love the soil he farmed. For sixty years God permitted him to remain on this earth, and do what he loved, which was tend the soil, witnessing of his love for God and for his fellow man, before calling him home to his reward in Heaven, where eternal life awaited him.*

*His life is, and was, a living testimony of how God can work through the life of one person dedicated to him. He had a testimony of what God had done in his life wherever he went. It might be to witness to a sales person from whom he was purchasing a tractor part, or it might be a stranger who came to his farm looking for employment. Or, it could be a person in a foreign country while on a Mission Trip. The person might be a man on the street with a simple education, or it might be a person who wrote the letters, PhD behind their name. He treated each with respect but always left a witness of his own faith and offered them the opportunity to know the God he loved and served. He always shared God's love for them and that He came to save them.*

*Each day began with bible reading and prayer at breakfast, as he led his family in worship before the meal began. That was where he drew his strength from, as he walked out the door of his house each morning, to meet the challenges of his farming business and in dealing with different people in various walks of life. He committed many bible verses to memory and would quote from them as the opportunities presented themselves to him throughout the day.*

*Raised in a Christian home he was taken to church, beginning as a little boy, where he learned the bible stories. Their home was in upstate New York, near the edge of the Adirondack Mountains and near the Black River. This is an area of extreme cold weather in the winter. It was this cold and severe life, that he lived while growing up, that made him decide he wanted to move to a state where the weather was more temperate.*

*This desire for a warmer climate, took him west at the age of twenty-one years. He remained on his parents farm until that age, to help them and was promised by them, that they would help him with financing when he found where he wanted to begin his own farming career. He had been "frozen" to their dairy farm during the years of 1941-1945, which were the WWII years. His parents were true to their promise. In the year of 1949 he married and found a small farm, in Florida, that they would begin their life together on.*

*During that first year of married life on this small, five acre truck farm, he found it would not provide adequate income for his developing family. A daughter joined their family in 1950, and he began to search for a larger piece of real estate to farm on. Florida was just beginning to develop, and embrace, newer farming techniques and he wanted to have a part in that development. He felt he needed a larger piece of land to farm on, in order to begin to put into practice, ideas formulating in his mind, to advance his farming methods into the future. Virgin land was available and he searched to find a suitable place. Coming from a background of dairy farming he leaned in that direction. His parents were going to help us, and his father leaned toward beef farming, as dairy farming was not very far advanced in Florida yet. So this then*

*became their joint search.*

*A large tract of land, 1,250 acres, located out in the east county area became available in 1951. It was purchased with his parents providing the money for the down payment, and becoming our partners in this new venture. Some beef cattle were purchased and the venture became a reality. Shortly after our purchase of 160 head of beef cows the beef cattle prices fell rapidly. At this time he and his father began some correspondence relating to the possibility of changing the farm operation to dairy farming and phasing out the beef cattle operation until those prices rose at a later time.*

*This was accomplished. A contract to produce and deliver, 100 gallons of milk per day, was signed with a local bottling and marketing company in the Spring of 1953. On December 23, 1953, our first milk began flowing from our farm. Eight gallons was produced that day from our first 16 dairy cows. It would continue to produce this, highly perishable, food product, through many stages and development, until April 1992 when the last of the dairy cattle were sold at a two day public auction. At this same time a large percentage of the farming equipment was sold. This income paid off the mortgage on the farm which was held by our local Production Credit Assnociation. We had been a member of that local financial cooperative for about 35 years. We had an excellent rating with them and were never late with a payment, nor ever missed a payment. He would have been proud of that day when the farm was now mortgage free.*

*When first purachased, to properly begin to farm this virgin land we had to make it possible to use the former lake bottom; a rich, organic muck land. To do so we had to build a dike around the northern edge of the farm, diverting the water and sending it down steam via Ogleby Creek to the Myakka River. In 1954, working under the direction of the U.S. Soil Conservation Corps, the first dike was formed with a pumping station at the low point. The dike diverted the water from a 10,000 acre watershed area from filling the lake bottom. This station now pumped only the rain water that fell into this former lake, not any of the watershed area water. So we now had control of that north of us. A few years later, another dike was built that encircled the former lake, cutting off the water that drained into it from the watershed area behind the farm, on the south side. Over the years we had various wildlife species on the farm as a result of the canals and dikes. Among the wildlife were alligators, some of whom our sons used to catch, and later release, after playing tricks with them on their sisters and our farm secretary!*

*In 1960, hurricane Donna, came through our area, after crossing Haiti, Cuba and the Caribbean islands. The eye of the storm passed within 5 miles of us. Dawn of that day revealed damage to buildings and equipment, and also, to the real estate. A hole was formed in the first dike built and allowed water from the north of the farm to pour into the lake bottom and inundating the crops planted there. A small boat with a 5 hp motor provided the only means of transportation to the pumping station. It took 30 days of around the clock pumping to remove the water from the land. By this time the crops and pasture grasses growing there were all destoryed and had to be replanted.*

*A few years later, another storm caused a break in the rim ditch dike on the south side of the farm, again flooding the lake bottom. That time an opening was cut in the north dike and the water permitted to flow, by gravity, out and down river before we began the pumping process. This was a much less costly endeavor. These were the only two times that the dikes were*

*breached, thus flooding the farm land. We were thankful it didn't happen often. It entailed lots of time and energy, as well as financial drain, to rid that area of the water and it's damage.*

*Over the years we had two barns that burned down. The first one occurred during our early years of owning the farm and was the result of a couple of boys playing with matches around the hay in the equipment barn. It was the only time we had all of the equipment stored in the building! We lost it all and had to begin to purchase new tractors. The second one was due to improperly cured hay being placed in the barn, by a sub-contractor, and causing a combustion fire with no way to save any of the hay. Thankfully no cattle were lost in the fire. The building was never rebuilt.*

*In May 1992, because the Farm Credit refused to renew the mortgage on the farm for Darla, following Lester's death in 1986, and after the public auction of cattle and equipment, the farm was leased to another dairy operator. The lessee built a new, and more modern, dairy barn beside of our older style one. He then moved his cattle to the new facilities. This relationship with him continued for six years until his son, who was managing this dairy for his father, no longer wished to continue employment with his father. The son wanted to begin operating on his own dairy.*

*On January 5, 2000, the farm was sold. The family that bought it had been in the dairy business in the past, in the nearby county, but had developed their farm, into a housing development beginning in 1982. Their plans for our farm was to put a sod and tree farm on it. Then in July 2005, they sold the property to another family.*

*Over the 50+ years of operation, the farm had seen many exciting events take place. Sunday school classes had Halloween parties in the hay barn and hay rides on a trailer pulled by a tractor, followed by a bon fire with refreshments. The youth from our church made tunnels through the hay several years and had good fellowship doing this. We had seven international students who came and worked on the farm for six months at a time. Each lived with us as a family, and went to church with us on Sunday's to worship. We provided employment for eight young men who came to escape the economic plight of Haiti. We, housed and entertained 5 young men from 3 different countries one Christmas through our church participation. These were college students whose college dorms were closed over the holiday season.*

*He served on Work Teams and Witnessing Teams around the world under the auspices of Men For Missions, International, an arm of OMS International, Inc. His heart was broken often for a lost world. The cover of his bible has the marks on it when used by one lady in Haiti, in 1965, to kneel upon, as she accepted Christ as her saviour. The stones made the imprint as she knelt upon it.*

*After the hurricane Flora came across the island of Haiti, and devastated that country, we became involved in helping with the rebuilding of churches and schools there, along with building a small hospital/clinic. The farm provided financial aid to many in Haiti over 21 years while he lived, and he was a Charter member of the Christian Fellowship Mission, Inc., a layman's group of men who dedicated themselves to assisting their Haitian brothers and sisters. That organization has now celebrated 46 years of service this year.*

*As we journey on through life we continue to be amazed at what God can accomplish through the life of one dedicated person. Just as a stone thrown into the water, creates ripples that are never ending, so the life of Lester continues to produce ripples going ever outward through the lives of those that his life touched.*

Wind Through The Leaves Of Time

~ *One dedicated life.* ~



## **THE REYN FAMILY HISTORY**

The Reyn family came from Alsace-Lorraine, a historical region in northeastern France. This region was long contested by French and German rulers. Today it is famous for its beautiful wine growing countryside.

A French possession from the 1600's, Alsace-Lorraine was acquired by Germany in 1871 after the Franco-Prussian War. It was restored to France in 1919 after World War I. In World War II, France was defeated by Germany in 1940, and again relinquished the region. In 1945 it was restored to France, and has remained so ever since then.

Our Grandmother Mary (or Meary) Christman Reyn was born in Hellimer, France on 11/14/1859. She married Theodore Reyn on 6/28/1880. The above history shows that the Alsace-Lorraine region was in German control from 1871 to 1919. We've been told that when the Germans were in control they made everyone speak, read and write in German. Hence, our French grandparents were forced to speak German. That explains why the two family Bibles that Grandmother Mary brought to the U.S., were written in German.

Grandma Mary taught school in Hellimer, France. Grandpa Theodore was a miller by trade. Grandma's father's name was Peter Christman. He is buried in the Reyn plot in the Huron Cemetery in Wolcott, N.Y. His wife is buried in St. Stephens Catholic Cemetery in Croghan, NY, where she lived at the time of her death, having remarried following Grandpa's death.

Hellimer, where Grandma Mary was born, got married, and taught school, is located 30 miles from the city of Metz, in the state (department) of Moselle, in the Lorraine region of NE France.

According to the Reyn Family Bible, our name was not Reyn, but Rienia (German) or Rienie (French). Our family name was shortened to Reyn by Theodore Reyn, Sr.'s Uncle William Rienia. He settled in Lowville, NY. Other family members went to California. Our family settled in the house by the Mill Pond, Dayton Mills, North Huron, NY.

In the Reyn Family Bible that Suzanne Salisbury Miller has there is a lengthy death notice of Peter Christman, our Great Grandfather, and it tells a lot about the family. We are starting now with this definite information to track our roots.

Joan M. Reyn Davis  
9/5/2000



REYN FAMILY HISTORY UPDATES FROM MARY ZEHR LEHMAN

Grandmother MARY CHRISTMAN REYN came to the US in the summer of 1885. She was on the boat for 14 days and 14 nights. She brought her three young children, all born in France, with her. They were Marie (Age 4), Louise (Age 2), and Theodore (age less than 1 year). She also brought her elderly parents Peter and Margaret Christman, and Lena Reyn, sister to our Grandpa Theodore. Lena had gotten pregnant by a German soldier and she brought her illegitimate son Edward with her. Grandma also brought a feather bed on the boat with her.

Grandfather THEODORE REYN journeyed to the US in the fall of 1884, many months prior to Grandma Mary making the trip. Their son, Theodore, was born on 9/7/1884, so Grandpa probably traveled to the US after his birth. Grandpa was supposed to meet Grandma Mary at Ellis Island when she arrived. However, he did not get word in time to get there. Since Grandma could speak both French and German someone took them into their home until Grandpa got there for them. I'd say our Grandma Mary was one amazingly strong, gutsy lady to successfully complete the trip.

Grandma Mary's obituary said the family first resided in Lewis County, then in Clyde, NY, and finally in North Huron, NY. We know that Christian was born in 1891 in Castorland, NY, in Lewis County. Leona was born in 1893 in Lyons, NY in Wayne County. And Pearl, Claude and Bertha were born in North Huron, NY in Wayne County.

Grandma Mary's parents were Peter and Margaret (Schere) Christman. Great-Grandma Margaret died in 1890 and is buried in the Catholic Cemetery in Croghan, NY. Great-Grandpa Peter was born November 1817 and died May 23, 1904 at age 86 and is buried in the Huron Evergreen Cemetery, in Huron, NY.

Grandma Mary had two brothers, Joseph and Nicholas, who came to the US. Joseph and Nicholas died 3 weeks apart of quick consumption (TB). They were both married and owned farms on the Black River Flats, that may be near Castorland. Joseph Christman married May Feisthamel on November 29, 1888. Nicholas Christman married Mary Nortz. There were two daughters but we don't know whom they belonged to. Mielle had an unusual disease whereby she grew very large. The other daughter was Louise.

Grandpa Theodore died in 1903 of Bright's disease, a kidney ailment. Grandma Mary probably did mid-wife work after he died. She married Arvine Hill on April 18, 1912. Grandma Mary Reyn Hill died of heart failure (CHD) on 5/14/1926 at age 66. She died at Aunt Leona Gillette's home on Williams St., Wolcott, NY. She is buried in the Reyn family section of the Huron Evergreen Cemetery. All her children are buried in Huron Cemetery, except Pearl Reyn Zehr, who is buried at the First Mennonite Church Cemetery, New Bremen, Lewis County, NY.

This is a direct quote from her obituary, "Mrs. Hill was born when Alsace-Lorraine was a part of France. Then in 1871, it was shifted to Germany; but she lived to see her native province restored to France by the World War I, and rejoiced greatly in the transfer.

