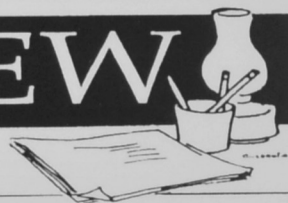


HERITAGE REVIEW



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of \$2.53. The receipt and a sample of the material is attached to the deed of the farm. In the spring of 1896, Phineas and his family moved to North Dakota. The book, *His Protecting Hand*, by Mollie Zook and David Luthy, written in 1973, tells the story of the struggles and trials of “Henner” (Phineas) and his family.

Magdalena (1815-1900) (YR 12537) was married in 1837 to Jacob Schmucker (1812-1896) (SMB1). They lived in Holmes and Wayne County, Ohio. In 1841 they moved from Wayne County to Fulton County, Ohio. On July 5, 1852, they bought 80 acres in German Township, Marshall County (W ½ -NE ¼ - S33-T35-R4) and on August 3, 1853, they bought an adjoining 80-acre tract (E ½ -NE ¼ -S33-T35-R4). Jacobs’ lived just west of Magdalena’s brother Simon across the county line, on the north side of road, where Lee and James Miller live today. Later, the Schmuckers lived with their son Daniel where Isaac Borkholder and Robert Chupps now live on US 6.

Valentine “Felty” (1809-1892) (YR 12532) married Mary Schrock (1818-1883) (SKB71) in 1836. In the fall of 1842, they moved from Holmes County, Ohio to Clinton Township, Elkhart County, Indiana. They settled on 100 acres, located on CR 35, about ¾ mile north of SR 4. In 1845 Felty was ordained a deacon in the Clinton church. In March 1854 he sold the Elkhart County tract, and on May 1, 1854, Felty and Mary bought 160 acres in German Township, Marshall County (NW ¼ - S 21-T35-R4). This was located on Beech Road, about a half mile north of his younger brother Jonas. Felty was a farmer and did some carpenter work. He lived on his farm the rest

of his life. Bishop John Helmuth and son Melvin live there today.

Feltys’ daughter Lydia (1842-1879) was married in 1862 to August Wickey (1839-1922). They were living about ¾ mile north of Feltys in St. Joseph County. Lydia died in March 1879 leaving August with five small children. Lydia’s sister Susanna (1847-1879) was married in 1866 to Simeon Kemp (1848-1922). They lived about 1 ½ mile north of Feltys, also in St. Joseph County. Susanna died about two weeks after her sister Lydia, leaving Simeon with six young children. One of these children was Elizabeth “Lizzie” the main character in the book *The Lord is my Shepherd*. The book relates the death of the two mothers after which the children were put out in other homes for some time. Lizzie had some unpleasant experiences at a home she stayed. The book by Joseph Stoll was published in 1965.

Elias (1808-1884) (YR 12531) was the oldest of the siblings and the last one to move to the Marshall County settlement. He was married in 1831 to Rachel Troyer (1809-1897) (TY 322). Their six children were born in Holmes County. On March 7, 1856, they bought 40 acres in German Township, Marshall County (NW ¼ -SW ¼ -S 21-T34-R4). This tract was located to the south, next to his brother Felty. Their oldest son Tobias and wife Polly were living on an 80-acre tract about ½ mile to the west. In 1869 Elias and Rachel sold their land and moved with some of the children and families to Vernon and Cedar Counties, Missouri. He died there in 1884. Later, Rachel again lived in the Nappanee area.

Elias and his brother Valentine were the carpenters when the first log schoolhouse in German Township was built in 1857. The

Simon and Lydia had 12 children, two of which died young. The youngest son Phineas (1863-1954) married in 1883 to Catherine B. Mullet (1858-1931). They lived on the farm known as the Manass Fannie farm, located on CR 56 west of Nappanee. The father, Simon, was a widower and lived on the farm in a small house. Seemingly, Phineas was not the best manager. The family had many struggles. Simon held the mortgage on the farm. Phineas could not make the payments and owed a number of other people

some money. In 1890 Cornelius M. Hochstetler, son of Manasses, went to everyone that Phineas owed and paid them off with an agreement for immediate possession of the farmland. Phineas reserved the main dwelling house and part of the barn until April 1, 1896. When it came time to deed the farm over to Cornelius, Phineas' wife Catherine refused to sign off until Cornelius bought her material for a new dress. Cornelius went to Hartman Brother's in Nappanee where he bought the material, lining, and thread for a total

Gottfried Wenger

The Story About a Man and the Hill He Lived On

By Wayne R. Miller

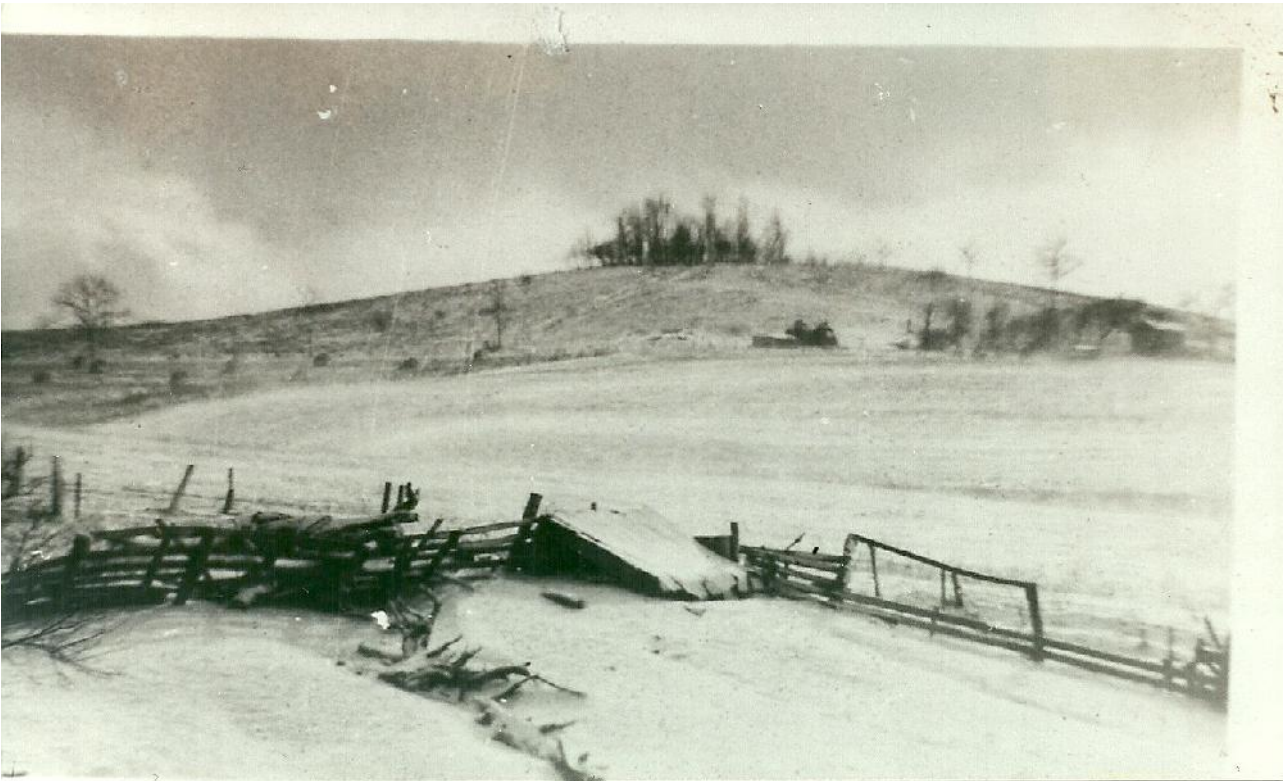
I was raised on an 80-acre farm in Sugarcreek township, Tuscarawas County, Ohio. It was an Amish farm and it sat at the base of a tall hill. On that hill, there was an old cabin, and several other small buildings. An old man lived alone in that cabin. His name was Gottfried Wenger. He mostly kept to himself, guarded by German Shepherd dogs.

As a young child, I heard stories by my father and grandfather, who knew the old man from interactions years ago. Those stories scared

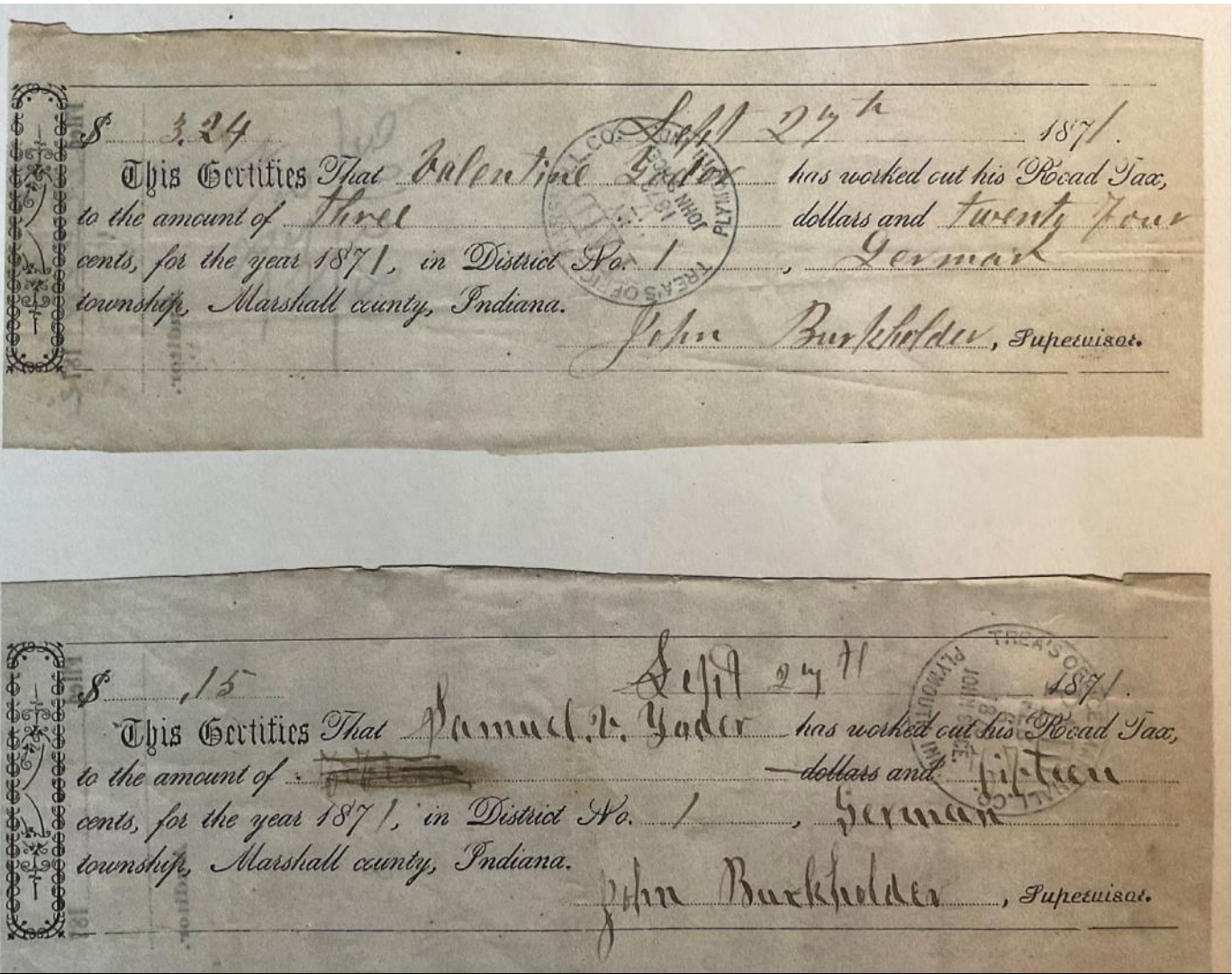
me, and I lived in fear of that hill, the old man, and his big German Shepherds.

I only met him twice in the five and a half years our lives overlapped. He was an 85-year-old, small framed, slightly stooped old man, and I was a 5-year-old boy. On both occasions of our chance encounters, I was with my Grandpa Joe Y. Miller. Once, we met in Sugarcreek at Mishler's grocery store, and once, a quarter mile down our gravel road at the end of his half mile long lane. At each meeting my grandfather extended a friendly, "Hi, Gottfried", and he replied in a similar warm greeting. I remember being a little relieved by his pleasantness.

I don't remember Gottfried ever coming down to our farm in the last years of his life. He had moved to the hill in 1936, so they were



Gottfried's hill, cabin, and outbuildings. circa 1945. The barn is the single-story building to the far left of the cabin. The orchid is just above the cabin. The corn shocks on far left are in our field. It was on the fence line above the shocks that the groundhog hunting accident occurred. Photo credit: Roy J. Miller



Receipt from 1871 recording that Valentine Yoder and son Samuel V. Yoder worked out their share of the road tax cost. Photo credit- Owen Borkholder

neighbors for 22 years. In the first 10 years or after moving, he occasionally helped grandpa with jobs around the farm. He helped husk the corn, buzzsaw the winter firewood, and so on. Grandma sometimes washed his laundry and they picked up groceries in town for him. They bought eggs from him occasionally. He even boarded there at times. I don't know the reason for that.¹ In his later years, he began to raise German Shepherd dogs. I imagine that taking care of puppies and his advancing age caused him to stay home most of the time.

For many years after his death, many of the neighbors, including myself, found Gottfried to be a mystery. The older people had been afraid to visit because of the dogs and the younger people heard his name and the stories from their elders. The cabin was on the highest hill around for many miles. It looked down on six or seven families' houses and farms.

The hill towers over the surrounding countryside of gentle rolling hills and small valleys. The ridges on each side of the hill serve as watershed divides for two streams. The water on the east side of the hill flows into the Broad Run Stream and the water on the west side flows into the East Branch of the Sugarcreek.

For many centuries, this hill and the surrounding ridges and valleys served as hunting grounds for Native Americans. Their villages were about seven miles to the east along the gentle flowing Tuscarawas River and to the south and west on the banks of the Killbuck and Walhonding.

¹ My grandpa, Joe Y. Miller kept diaries from 1934 – 1941 with 1936 missing. The diary also served as a business ledger. Interactions with Gottfried Wenger were listed.

As the dawn of the nineteenth century approached, the hill and its surrounding valleys faced a new challenge. The Native American villages were being pressured by European settlers who were moving west into Ohio. Those settlers began to arrive shortly after 1800. The early ones were mostly looking for fertile farmland. They tended to choose the bottom land along the streams and the gentle sloping hillsides. The tree-covered hill was largely ignored. However, as the settlements grew, the need for a fuel other than wood began to increase. Early settlers had noticed that coal literally jutted out of the hillsides in some places.

The hill contained a secret. It had various seams of coal and clay. Some of these seams were barely under the surface. The coal and clay extended out from the hill into the surrounding ridges on either side. The shallower seams could be mined by early settlers with a simple pick and shovel. They could follow the seam into the hillside creating an underground mine. The coal tailings were piled outside the mine creating a coal hill of debris.

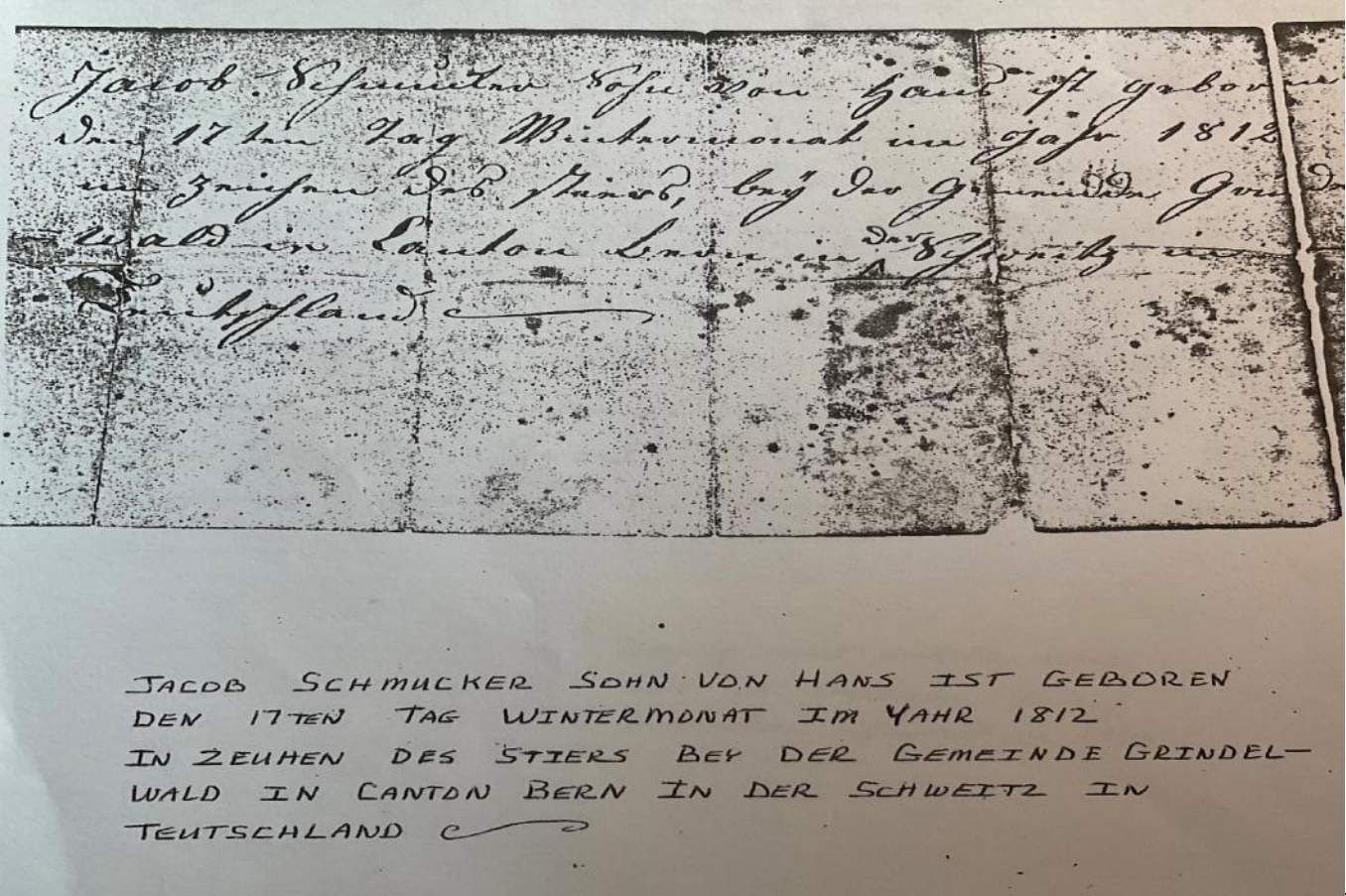
My father could point to several underground, long ago caved in, coal mine entrances on Gottfried's hill. The underground coal mine entrance, just south of the cabin, with its big mound of coal tailings at the entrance, was very visible from our farm. Dad claimed one shaft at the northeast corner of our woods that went into Gottfried's hill still had a small coal car sitting in it. Once as a boy I took a shovel back to the woods to try and open the entrance. Fifteen minutes of

now lives on the Jonas Yoder farm located just west of the intersection of Beech Road and Plymouth-Goshen Trail.

Veronica (1828-1906) (YR 1253d) was married to Mansasses H. Hochstetler (1828-1907) (HS 18h). They came from Tuscarawas County, Ohio and bought 160 acres in Lockes Township, Elkhart County, on January 21, 1851 (NE ¼ S 34-T35-R4). The tract is located east of his brother David Hochstetler who was married to Veronica's sister Susanna. What is now known as the Weldy Amish Cemetery was in the northwest corner of his land in the 1850's. When the railroad surveyors plotted the course of the rail line, it went directly through the doors of the family's home.

So, like his brother David, Manasses had to move his house as well. Marvin C. and Floyd Hochstetler and Samuel Barkman live on this land located on US 6, west of Nappanee. Manasses bought several other tracts of land, but always lived on the tract he bought in 1851.

Simon (1815-1902) (YR 12535) was married to Lydia Hochstetler (1820-1887) (HS 18c), a sister to David and Manasses Hochstetler. They moved from Tuscarawas County, Ohio to Locke Township, Elkhart County, where they bought 320 Acres (South Section) on May 21, 1851 (S ½ -S 34-T35-R4). This tract was just to the south of and adjoined both David and Manassas' tracts.



Translation -- Jacob Schmucker son of Hans was born the 17th of November in the year 1812 in the sign of the Taurus, in the district of Grindelwald in Canton Bern Switzerland in the German lands. Photo credit – Owen Borkholder

In October 1852, when Jonas was 21 years old and single, he moved to Marshall County to start clearing his land. Jonas was a big strong man. He cleared all his land with an axe, chopping down trees 4 ft. in diameter. He boarded with a neighbor for 75 cents per week.

He was married in December 1854 in LaGrange County, Indiana to Magdalena Gary (1827-1858). She died in 1858, six days after the birth of their third child William. William later became a well-known Amish bishop. Jonas married the second time, in 1861, to Anna Kauffman (1835-1918) (KFB 455). Together they had five children. Jonas was a farmer and a teacher for a number of years. In 1859 he was the first teacher in what is known as Weldy School. He also taught at Borkholder School. He walked a great deal and often said that if it is to far to go with the buggy, he would walk. Jonas was highly

respected by all who knew him, a good counselor, and dependable advisor.

In the 1890's there was a controversy among the Amish about windmills, manure spreaders, and hay loaders. Some felt it was inappropriate that the Lord should pump your water, especially on Sunday. When manure spreaders came into the community, there was also opposition. At a church meeting, all the reluctant members finally consented to their use, except one man who insisted that the spreaders must be painted brown before he would agree to have them. At this point Jonas got up and said, "If you use it for what it is intended, it will be brown." Case dismissed.

In 1860 Jonas bought another 80-acre tract to the west of his 160 acres. In 1872 he bought a quarter section which adjoined his other tracts. Bishop Wilbur Kuhns, a great-great grandson,

digging made me realize the impossibility of that effort. Evidence of other mining shafts dug into the east side of the hill were also visible. I often wondered if those mining shafts had caved in as the entrances had.

We searched for arrowheads and other unusual stones in the plowed fields, and along our small creek surrounding the hill. The discovery of items reminded us we were not the first owners who lived on this land. My father usually had a story that related to our "finds."

My grandmother and father told other stories of things that happened on that hill, some even before their time. One story was about a man who had been shot before Gottfried's time. They didn't know the year but were sure it happened before Grandpa bought the farm in 1928. A young man was sitting behind a stump waiting for a groundhog to appear. He was hunting the fence line separating our farm from Gottfried. While he was waiting, he occasionally moved his head looking for the groundhog. It so happened the previous owner of Gottfried's property was also hunting the same fence line for groundhogs. The young man was shot through the head killing him instantly. After Gottfried's death, I hunted groundhogs along that same fence line. Obviously, I never sat behind a stump. The story was a reminder.

There were other stories, told by my grandma, of extreme hardships, real hunger, back to Civil War times. Maybe the stories came from the elderly McBride couple, who lived on the hill, when my young Amish Grandparents first bought

the farm. A few of the stories seemed mixed up, from several events, at different times, and maybe on other hills.

Prior to about 1930 there was a road that connected Spooky Hollow Road to Stony Point Road. It was a very narrow one wagon wide road. That road ran just a few hundred feet below Gottfried's cabin. After its closing, the road became lanes to the two farms on the road. One long lane came of Spooky Hollow Road for a three tenth mile to the Emmet Plotner farm and the other long lane came of Stony Point Road to Gottfried's cabin.²

I remember that long lane because it ran along the boundary of our farm. It began about a one fourth mile down the road from our farm. Its entrance was guarded by two giant trees, one oak and one maple. The lane started down a slight decline through a narrow flat field to a creaky old wooden bridge with no side rails. The supports under the bridge were about four feet of stacked field stones with many crevices that held various critters. My father related a story of how he once caught a mink with a trap there. The bridge had a one- to two-foot-deep pool of water under it that also held small fish, like chubs and shiners, even crayfish. The lane continued slightly uphill and ran alongside a neighbor's woods with giant oak trees on the right and a dirt bank on the left that had a colony of groundhogs living there. It passed by what we called our "corner woods", a glen of tall cherry, hickory, and a few maples with a refreshing cold year-round flowing spring coming out of the hill. In the springtime, the area around



Weldy School House from 1902-1993 Photo credit- Owen Borkholder

² The Emmet and Helen Plotner farm was next door to the south. Its previous owners were Sam and Phoebe

Horrisberger. They sold it to Emmet sometime after Sam's death in 1940.

this water was a secret mushroom hunting spot. After passing through a stand of mostly young cherry trees and around a sharp right bend it ended up in front of the cabin. Over the years, after the death of Gottfried, the lane slowly became impassable as nature reclaimed its own.

I remember when Gottfried Wenger died. There is a certain mystery about the date. It was around February 22, 1958. No one really knows if that was the exact day although the year is correct.

This is how the story was told and retold by my father and the neighbors. The weather had been very cold for days. One morning, Emmet Plotner, noticed there wasn't any smoke coming out of Gottfried's chimney. This caused concern, so Emmet went to check and found him dead. The sheriff was called. The story goes that the sheriff, after getting part ways up the slippery old lane, had to walk the last couple hundred yards. Guns were drawn as they encountered the snarling

German shepherd dogs who guarded the cabin. They were forced to shoot the two dogs to get into the cabin. They found a horrific sight inside. Gottfried was in bed deceased. He had been dead for a least several days. The rodents and animals had begun to eat at his flesh as his body cavity was open.

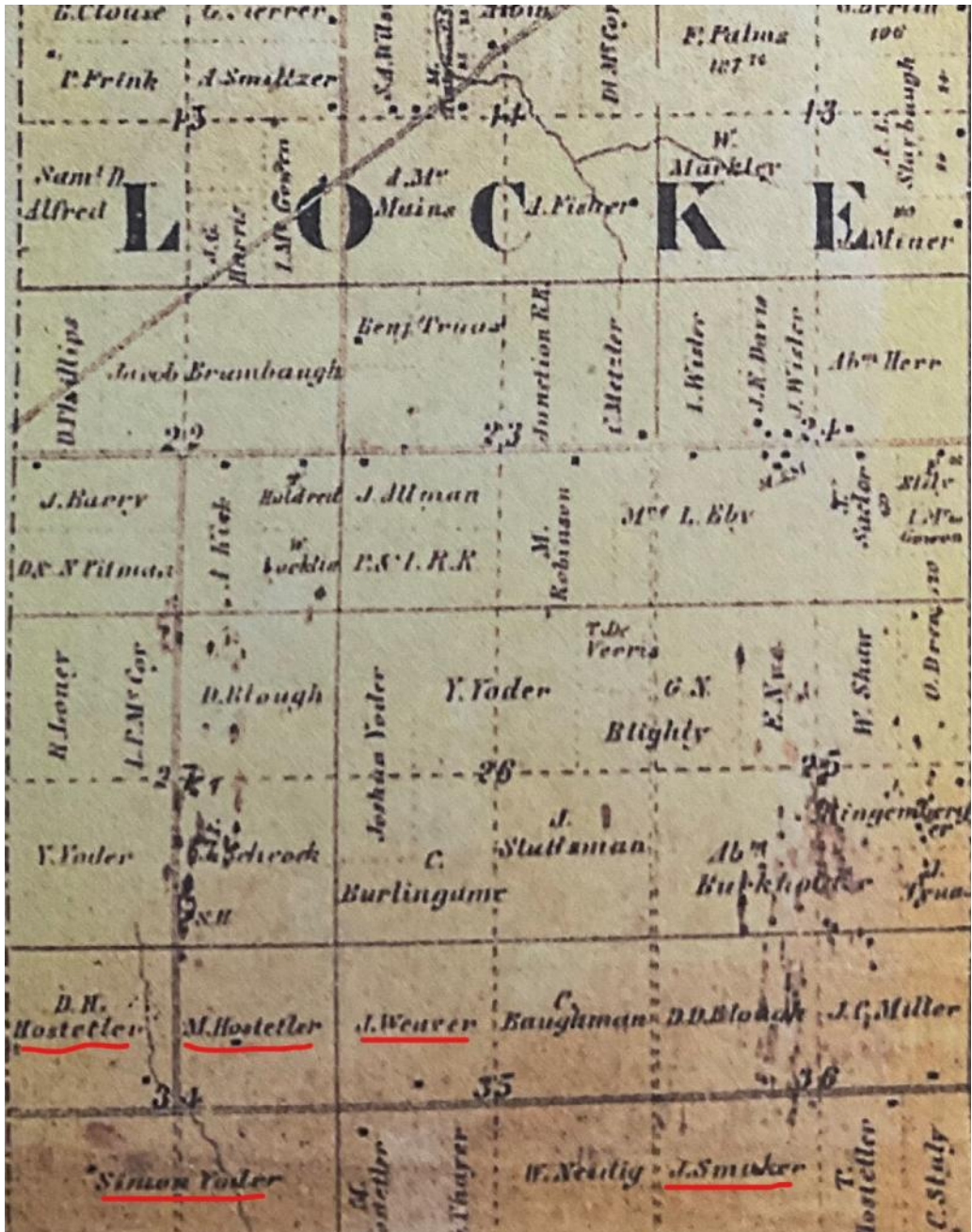
I remember we watched from the farm with binoculars as officials arrived and the body was removed, even though it was too far to see much detail.

Despite the dogs, the rats were plentiful up there. After the dogs and food was removed, the rats moved down to our barn. We had quite a battle with them.

I do remember the neighbors rummaged through the leftover things in the cabin. I don't know that anyone from the family came to claim anything. There wasn't really anything of value to take. We went to the old cabin as well. I remember



The author and a view of the hill and cabin. Ca. 1965. The cabin roof had caved in and would shortly be torn down. The hillside is starting to reforest itself. Photo credit: Roy J. Miller



1861 Locke township plat records. Note the marked landowners. Israel Yoder owned the J. Weaver Tract from 1841-1853. Jacob Schmucker owend the marked tract, but lived in Marshall County, adjacent to the D. H. Hochstetler tract. Photo credit Owen Burkholder

Newton County, John followed them there. He joined the Amish church and married Lovina in 1880. It is from John and Lovina, that all the Amish with the last name of Anderson originate.

Jonas (1831-1924) (YR 1253e) single, 19 years old, bought 160 acres in German Township, Marshall County on July 29,1850 (NE ¼ -S29-T35-R4). In the summer of 1850 Jonas came to Indiana by canal boat on the Wabash & Erie Canal, via Fort Wayne to Logansport. From there he walked northeast towards Bremen (about 55 miles) carrying a bag of clothes and an ax. He paid \$400.00 for 160 acres of land, located northeast of Bremen. For his return trip to Ohio, he walked to South Bend (about 15 miles), bought a canoe, carried it back to Bremen, where he put it in the Yellow River. He paddled down the Yellow River to a spot a bit southwest of Plymouth, from where the river goes almost directly west. At this point he was within 10 miles of the

Tippecanoe River. Most likely he walked overland, then floated down the Tippecanoe to where it empties into the Wabash River, close to Lafayette. Here he was near the Wabash & Erie Canal, heading east-northeast to Ohio.

Joseph Yoder, but his single brother Israel applied for a patent on 160 acres of land in Locke Township, Elkhart County as early as 1841.⁴

Following is a brief outline of Joseph Yoder’s siblings who moved to Indiana and were a part of the Marshall County settlement:

Israel (1817-1886) (YR 12538) single, 24 years old applied for a patent on 160 acres in Locke Township, Elkhart County (NW ¼ -S 35-T35-R4) on October 22,1841. He probably lived on his land as a single man. In 1845, he married Veronica Yoder (1825-1905) (YR 23b21) of Wayne County, Ohio. Soon after his marriage he was living in LaGrange County. This may have been because the Marshall County church was not yet established. He did not sell his Locke Township tract until December 8,1853. In 1860, he moved from LaGrange County to Wayne County, Ohio. Israel does have descendants in the Nappanee area through his son Yost, but there are no known Amish descendants.

Susanna (1821-1886) (YR 1253a) married David H. Hochstetler (1818-1885) (HS 18b). They moved from Holmes County, Ohio to German Township, Marshall County in 1849. On November 1, 1848, David applied for patents on two 80-acre tracts in Scott Township, Kosciusko County. (E ½ -SW ¼ -SI-T34-R4 & W ½ -SE ¼ -S2-T34-R4). On April 5,1849, he bought 60 acres in German Township, Marshall County (Part- E ½ -NE ¼ -S 33-T35-R4). This is where the Hochstetler’s lived when the 1850 census was taken. On September 25,1849, he purchased 160 acres in Locke Township, Elkhart County (NW ¼

-S34-T35-R4). This tract adjoined his 60-acre Marshall County tract. In August 1850 he sold the original 60-acre tract and then resided on the 160-acre tract until 1876.

In the middle 1850’s David was ordained a minister and in 1859 as the first bishop in the Marshall County church. He served until 1876 when David, Susanna, and children along some other families in the area moved southwest to the new Newton County, Indiana settlement. He also served as the first bishop in the Newton County settlement.

When the railroad came through in 1874, David had to move his house. It was either on the railroad right-of -way, or just on the south side of the tracks. In 1872 David had built a big barn which was located on the north side of the tracks. This barn is still standing and has a 16”x16”x90’ long hand-hewn beam that extends the full length of the barn. This property is located on US 6 2 ½ miles west of Nappanee. Calvin Bontrager lives there now.

While the railroad was being built, some of the workers boarded at the Hochstetler home. One of them, Augustus Walbus, originally from Demark, left his native land at the age of 21 to escape military service. When he arrived in America, he went to Chicago, and took a job working for the B & O Railroad. He adopted the name John Anderson, which sounded more American (his foreman’s name was Anderson). While boarding at the Hochstetler home he fell in love with David’s daughter Lovina. Several years later, when the Hochstetler family moved to

we were there one evening soon after dark with a flashlight. We were downstairs in the kitchen and shining the flashlight behind the counters, we saw the rats scrambling to get into the crevices in the wall. The picture of that in my mind is as clear as if it had happened yesterday.

It was about six years after Gottfried’s death. One Saturday, a school friend from Sugarcreek came out to play. We were two eleven-year-old boys. After telling him the story about the German Shepherds shot by the sheriff and the animals supposedly eating his flesh, we decided to walk up and visit the spooky cabin. We chose to go in the closed door on the upper side to the main floor of the cabin. As we approached the entrance on our tiptoes and were just about to

open the door, it opened on its own! We both turned and took off running as fast as we could. After about a hundred feet, we stopped and watched the door to see if anyone came out after us. After a few more minutes of building up our courage, we decided to sneak back to the door again. As we peeped inside, we could see the bed still there with some old covers. Behind the bed was the chimney. A shed blacksnake skin was hanging from the opening for the stovepipe. Things were scattered about the floor. Nobody was around. So why did the door open when we were about four feet away? There was an old wood plank lying on the ground. The bottom of the door was wedged on it. When we stepped on the plank, it sank and released the door.



The hill in 2021 with the tower and high-tension electric lines visible. The clay mining is in our field adjoining the hill. The field on the left just above the partially visible mining wall are where the corn shocks stood in the 1945 photo. Our farm buildings are just out of the photo on the bottom right. The cabin was on the right side of the hill just inside the tree line. Photo credit: Wayne R. Miller

⁴ Wayne R. Miller, “The Pioneer Joseph Yoder Family of Sugarcreek Township, Tuscarawas County, OH,” *Heritage Review*, Vol 27, page 2, Sept. 2019.

The cabin deteriorated as the years went by. It was deemed unsafe for the cattle that the neighbors were running on the land and was pushed down in the mid 1960's.

That was the story of the old man, the hill, and how I remembered it as a boy.

The Story from the Historical Records

Gottfried Wenger was born January 18, 1875, near Bern, Switzerland. Twelve days later on January 31, he was baptized by the local Reformed Church. His parents were John and Elizabeth (Schneider) Wenger. John was a shoemaker. Gottfried was the second child. His mother died when he was about 2 ½ years old. His father remarried in 1878 to Katharina Roethlisberger. Together they had five more children.

The Wenger family lived about forty-five miles south of the Amish church, called Basel-Holee, in Basel, Switzerland. The Basel Amish church had Wenger families and at times Wenger leadership. While it might be easy to assume Gottfried’s family had cousins who were Amish, the genealogy is too incomplete to make that connection with any degree of certainty.

The family of five immigrated to the United States in 1881. They moved to a very rural part of Randolph County, West Virginia. A group of Swiss settlers had bought a large tract of land to start a Swiss colony. They advertised widely for Swiss people. They sold individual tracts to families and started a town named Helvetia where skilled Swiss tradesman could practice their crafts. Gottfried’s father could fit in as a shoemaker.

Today the town is still a unique Swiss village and a tourist attraction.

The census of 1900 shows Gottfried, 25 years old, was living in Webster Valley, Webster, West Virginia with his older brother, John, and younger sister, Rosa, age 15.³ They were boarding with a timber company. It was common at the time for timber companies to provide housing for their help. You worked from dawn till dusk, for low wages, with very little money left over after deductions were made for your housing and meals. Rosa would have helped with the cooking. Conditions were very harsh by today’s standards.

By 1910, Gottfried, who was now 36 years old was living in Randolph County, West Virginia and boarding with the William F. Ross family, who were also in the timber business. There had seven other boarders working there as well. His brother John and sister Rosa had moved on. Tragedy stalked the Wenger family in 1916. Gottfried’s sister Elizabeth passed away, on March 28, at age 37. His parents were ill as well. His father prepared and filed a will on April 3. It read in part:

*I, John Wenger, of Randolph County and state of West Virginia, give to my daughter, Lena Wenger Geyer the sum of two hundred dollars (\$200).
I give my daughter, Mary Wenger, the sum of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150).
I give my daughter, Rosa Wenger Hefner, the sum of one hundred dollars (\$100).
I give to Hazel Morrison, the daughter of my deceased daughter, Lizzie Wenger Morrison, the sum of one hundred ten dollars (\$110).*

Daniel Yoder
Born: 1777 Pennsylvania
Died: 1854 Tuscarawas Co., OH
Father: John Yoder (1753-1821)
Mother: Magdalena Stutzman (1753-1825)
Spouse: Barbara Yoder (1788-1870)
Married: Abt 1807, Somerset Co., PA

The Children of Daniel and Barbara

- 1 Elias Yoder (1808-1884)

2 Valentine Yoder (1809 -1892)

3 Elizabeth Yoder (1810-

4 Catherine Yoder (1811-1886)

5 Simon Yoder (1813-1902)

6 Adam Yoder (1814-1820)

7 Magdalena Yoder (1815-1900)

8 Israel Yoder (1817 -1886)

9 Sarah Yoder (1819-

10 Susanna Yoder (1821 -1886)

11 Isaac Yoder (1823-Abt.1830)

12 Joseph Yoder (1825-1897)

13 Veronica Yoder (1828-1906)

14 Jonas Yoder (1831-1924)

Spouse

- Rachel Troyer (1809-1897)

Mary Schrock (1818-1883)

Peter Hershberger (d. 1838)

Rudolph Ringenberg (1817-?)

Emanuel Hershberger (1811-1884)

Lydia Hochstetler (1820-1887)

Died about six years of age

Jacob Schmucker (1812-1896)

Veronica Yoder (1825-1905)

David H. Hochstetler (1818-1885)

Died about seven years of age

Susanna Hochstetler (1830-1899)

Manasses Hochstetler (1828-1907)

Magdalene Gary (1827-1858)

Anna Kauffman (1835-1918)

Henry Hochstetler
Born: 1773 Berks Co., PA
Died: 1846 Holmes Co., OH
Father: John Hochstetler (1730 - 1805)
Mother: Catherine Hertzler (1731 - 1800)
Spouse: Barbara Schrock (Abt 1775 - Abt 1815)
Married: Abt 1794

Children of Henry and Barbara

- 1 Jonathan Hochstetler (1796-1871)

2 Catherine Hochstetler (1798-1861)

3 Veronica Hochstetler (1800-1870)

4 Elizabeth Hochstetler (1801-1869)

5 Barbara Hochstetler (1803-1886)

6 Henry Hochstetler (1805-1888)

7 Rachel Hochstetler (1808-1866)

8 Adam Hochstetler (1811-1882)

9 John Hochstetler (1814-1886)

Children of Henry and Sarah

- 1 Moses H. Hochstetler (1817-1896)

2 David H. Hochstetler (1818-1885)

3 Lydia Hochstetler (1820-1887)

4 Leah Hochstetler (1821-1898)

5 Noah H. Hochstetler (1823-1903)

6 Sarah Hochstetler (1824-1868)

7 Samuel Hochstetler (1826-1875)

8 Manasses Hochstetler (1828-1907)

9 Susanna Hochstetler (1830-1899)

10 Mary Hochstetler (1833-1907)

³ The census records were accessed using familysearch.org

Pioneer Joseph Yoder’s Siblings
Who moved to Indiana

Owen E. Borkholder¹

Editor’s Note – *In the previous issue (Vol. 27, September 2019) of the Heritage Review, Wayne R. Miller had an article on the Pioneer Joseph Yoder family of Sugarcreek Township, Ohio. This edition’s article was sparked by the Pioneer Joseph Yoder article. Joseph Yoder moved to Indiana from OH, and then moved back to Ohio. The Pioneer Yoder families mentioned below are the children of Daniel and Barbara Yoder who had moved to Sugarcreek in 1812 from Somerset County, Pennsylvania. The genealogical information included begins with Daniel and Barbara Yoder who had fourteen children. We have also included the genealogical information for Henry and Barbara Hochstetler and Henry’s second wife Sarah Yoder. Henry had nine children with Barbara, who died about 1815, and ten children with Sarah. As Borkholder mentions there was considerable intermarriage between the two families. The numerals in parentheses are the Gingerich-Kreider numbers for the individuals.*²

Many of the early Amish settlers in the Marshall County Indiana settlement originated from two pioneer Amish families. Those two families are Daniel (YR 1253) and Barbara (YR 2361) Yoder; and Henry Hochstetler (HS18) and Barbara Schrock (SK13), and Henry’s second wife

¹ The author of this article is a descendant of both Susanna and Magdalena. His wife Carolyn is a descendant of both Valentine and Jonas. They reside at 7363 W 1300 N Nappanee, IN 46550.

Sarah Yoder (YR2355).³ Four of the Yoder siblings married into the Hochstetler family. Eight of the Yoder siblings and six of the Hochstetler siblings were early landowners in the Marshall County settlement. Seemingly these settlers were quite thrifty. All but one owned a quarter section of land or more.

In 1840 the first Amish bought land in what was known as the Marshall County settlement, now known as the Nappanee settlement. The town of Nappanee was not platted until 1874 when B&O Railroad came through from Sandusky, Ohio to Chicago. The early settlers lived near each other in the area where the Marshall, Elkhart, Kosciusko, and St. Joseph counties connect.

There were no ministers among the early settlers. Thus, the Marshall County church was not organized until 1853 by Bishops Levi Miller of Holmes County, Ohio and Joseph Miller of LaGrange County, Indiana. Prior to this, the Amish families of the area frequently attended church services in the Clinton District, east of Goshen. This was about a 25-mile journey one-way. They traveled by wagon, horseback, or walked.

As a single man, Pioneer Joseph Yoder (1825-1897) (YR 1253c) lived in Indiana for a brief time where he worked at the carpenter trade. It is not known if this was in the Elkhart-LaGrange County settlement or the Marshall County settlement. I do not have land records for

²Hugh F. Gingerich and Rachel W. Kreider, *Amish and Amish Mennonite Genealogies* (Gordonville, PA: Pequa Bruderschaft Library, 2007).

³ Henry’s second wife, Sarah Yoder was a first cousin to Daniel’s wife, Barbara.

*In consideration of the fact that my son, Gottfried Wenger, has received from me certain financial assistance for which he has never fully reimbursed me, I now give to my son, Gottfried Wenger, the sum on one dollar (\$1.00).*⁴

His other son Charles also received \$1.00 for the same reasons as Gottfried. Any leftover money from the estate went to his daughter Lena. The eldest son, John, is not mentioned. He had died earlier. Gottfried’s stepmother, Katharina, died three days after the will was filed on April 6th. His father passed away three months later in July.

The deaths of his three family members may have been one of the reasons for Gottfried to

leave the area and move to Tuscarawas County, Ohio. In 1917, the probable date of his move, there were sixteen Wenger households in Tuscarawas County.⁵ While it seems probable at least one of the sixteen Wenger families was a close relative to Gottfried, a close link has proven elusive. Gottfried was listed in the directory as a farm hand working for Rudy Winkler Sr. of Rt. 1, Dover. By 1918, during World War 1, he had been required to register for the draft. He gave his address as Canal Dover (Dover, Ohio). The census of 1920 also places Gottfried Wenger in Dover Township. It showed he owned a home which had a mortgage on it. He was 44 years old and single. He was a coal miner by trade and worked for others.



The hill from the south in 2021. The Plotner farm was at the far upper right of photo at the base of hill/ridge. The William Silvius farm, currently Edwin Yoder, is in front. Photo credit: Wayne R. Miller

⁴ Familysearch.org

⁵ Tuscarawas County Rural Directory, 1917.

In 1925, he ran an ad in the *Daily Times* newspaper in New Philadelphia, Ohio, listing several household items for sale including a surrey and buggy harness. He was living in Dover Township on Crooked Run Road just west of Dover-New Philadelphia.

Gottfried, age 54, was counted twice in the 1930 census. That means he was counted in Dover Township and moved to Sugarcreek Township and was counted again. He owned a property, worth \$800, which was not a farm. He is listed as married, having married at age 51. He worked as a laborer on a farm.

In the second 1930 census record, he was living in Sugarcreek Township as a boarder with the Edwin and Hazel Halderman family. He was employed in the Halderman coal mine. Gottfried was the truck driver for the mine. He did not have electric or a radio, even though the government was making a major effort to electrify the country. Gottfried was listed as 54 years old. His marital status was listed as widowed. He had married Mary Porter, at 51 years old, and she had died by the time he was 54.⁶

The Daily Times, dated November 24, 1930, lists a default judgement on a real estate mortgage for \$655.28. The suit was filed in Common Pleas court by F.W. Andrews. The death of his wife and losing his property most likely forced him to move to the Halderman tenant house. The Halderman mine was a little northeast of Ragersville in the vicinity of the Willowbrook Coal Company tipple.

⁶ Mary Porter is listed as his deceased widow in the legal notice regarding his estate, August 23, 1958, *The Sugarcreek Budget*. Otherwise, little is known about her.

The fifteen and four tenth-acre hill had a fairly long list of occupants. I have deeds for the property dating back to the 1880s. The 1875 map atlas doesn't show a separate property of fifteen acres. The property was a part of a one hundred forty-nine-acre farm owned by Emanuel Schrock, son of Amish immigrant Andrew and "Indian Sally" Schrock. Emanuel's oldest son Benjamin Schrock married Mary Silvius, daughter of Joseph Silvius, who owned several neighboring farms. Mary's brother William ended up owning one of the farms immediately to the west of the fifteen-acre tract (Levi/Edwin Yoder farm). He also owned a part of the adjoining farm which included this fifteen-acre tract.

Drusilla was Benjamin Schrock's sister. She married Daniel Weiss. I believe they bought the 15 acres of William Silvius soon after they married in 1878. They would have built the house and outbuildings. The cabin wasn't as well built as many of the area farmhouses. It was relatively small with the kitchen in the walkout basement and two small bedrooms and a living room upstairs. The Weiss family, who had three small children, sold it in 1887 to Jacob and Lizzie Ludy for \$770. I believe the Ludy family were the first to begin mining the coal on the hill. They sold it in 1893 to John Ludy for \$1,200. In 1901, Joseph and Mary Snyder bought the hill. Neither Joseph nor Mary could write their name. In 1912, they sold the hill to Lucy A. McBride for \$800.

It was during the time that Lemuel and Lucy McBride owned the hill that the groundhog hunting accident happened which was mentioned

4.6 Sophia Kläy b. February 28, 1863 Holmes County, Ohio d. April 2, 1949
Holmes County, Ohio m. November 3, 1887 Douglas W Umstead

5. **Jacob Kläy** b. May 8, 1831 Walkringen d. July 11, 1862 Nashville, Tennessee
m. May 7, 1857 Holmes County, Ohio, **Verena Iseli** b. November 30, 1836
Grosshöchstetten d. March 5, 1915 Holmes County, Ohio; dau. of Christian Iseli and
Margaretha Bühlmann

Children Of Jacob and Verena:

5.1 William F Clay b. August 17, 1858 Holmes County, Ohio d. April 29, 1932
Holmes County, Ohio m. August 29, 1887 Susanna Conrad

5.2 Henry Christopher Clay b. March 30, 1860 Holmes County, Ohio d. December 2,
1926 Holmes County, Ohio m. (1) January 1, 1884 Mary Swoveland (2) April 9, 1895
Dora Conrad



Hinterschwendi, Walkringen; the Swiss region where the Klines lived in 1852 prior to immigration to Ohio.

Benedict Kläy b. March 31, 1782 Walkringen, Bern, Switzerland d. January 14, 1841 Walkringen; son of Christian Kläy and Elisabeth Lenz
m. April 8, 1820 Walkringen, Bern, Switzerland
Anna Stettler b. May 25, 1798 Walkringen, Bern, Switzerland d. January 19, 1832 Walkringen; dau. of Jacob Stettler and Verena Müller.

Children of Benedict and Anna:

- 1. Johannes Kläy b. June 17, 1820 Walkringen d. March 13, 1898 Vechigen
m. March 3, 1843 Walkringen, Elisabeth Kühni b. August 13, 1821 d. April 1, 1882;
dau. of Hans Ulrich Kühni and Elisabeth Eichenberger
- 2. Anna Kläy b. September 7, 1822 Walkringen d. November 28, 1882 Bern
m. (1) July 3, 1841 Rüderswil, Jacob Aebi b. December 22, 1813 Lauperswil
d. October 16, 1843 Walkringen; son of Johannes Aebi and Anna Barbara Schmid
m. (2) June 28, 1850 Biglen, Niklaus Hofer b. October 6, 1819 Biglen d. May 6, 1902 Bern; son of Magdalena Hofer
- 3. Christian Kläy b. November 19, 1824 Walkringen
m. October 28, 1848 Walkringen, Maria Wälti b. August 16, 1824 d. March 16, 1854;
dau. of Magdalena Gasser, widow of Christian Wälti
- 4. **Benedict Kläy** b. January 19, 1829 Walkringen d. August 28, 1904 Holmes County, Ohio. m. February 1, 1850 Langnau, **Anna Barbara Utz** b. July 14, 1826 Sumiswald d. January 7, 1908 Holmes County, Ohio; dau. of Andreas Utz and Elisabeth Hügli

Children of Benedict and Anna Barbara:

- 4.1 Elisabeth Kläy b. February 6, 1852 Walkringen d. 1932 Lagrange County, Indiana
m. November 22, 1874 Daniel S Weaver
- 4.2 Lydia Kläy b. October 25, 1853 Holmes County Ohio d. October 25, 1942
Holmes County, Ohio m. January 11, 1875 Daniel Crilow
- 4.3 Mary Kläy b. May 18, 1856 Holmes County, Ohio d. July 26, 1925 Newton
County, Indiana m. (1) November 9, 1877 Benjamin Hochstetler (2) February 2, 1918
Simon Chupp
- 4.4 Christian Kläy b. October 15, 1858 Holmes County, Ohio d. April 25, 1941
Miami County, Indiana m. (1) September 17, 1882 Catherine Hershberger (2)
January 3, 1891 Margaret Wagoner
- 4.5 Edward Kläy b. March 14, 1860 Holmes County, Ohio d. February 2, 1952
Holmes County, Ohio m. December 3, 1882 Sarah Gingerich

earlier. Henry Rody owned our farm at the time of the accident. Lemuel and Lucy were poor, honest, hard-working people – the type upon whose backs this country was built.⁷ The accident happened on July 8, 1925. The *Holmes County Hub* newspaper, Millersburg, Ohio, reported the incident in its July 16th edition.

**Mistaken for Groundhog
Beach City Boy is Shot Through the Head and Instantly Killed**

While hunting groundhogs Wednesday evening of last week, Alger Reed, 22, residing near Beach City was instantly killed when accidentally shot by C.L. McBride, another hunter, who seeing Reed’s head move in the tall grass in which he was hidden. Coroner J.F. Lewis Thursday morning pronounced the shooting accidental. Reed was killed on his 22nd birthday. He was to have been married within a few weeks.

The victim of the shooting had spent the day at the home of his sweetheart, Mary Hudson, of Shanesville. Wednesday afternoon he had told her he wanted to go groundhog hunting, but decided to wait until her father, Irvin Hudson, came home from work. At 5pm Wednesday, Reed and Hudson left for the Henry Rody farm where they had previously seen some groundhogs. They hid themselves in some tall timothy hay near a fence and waited a little distance from a groundhog hole for their quarry to appear, sitting with their backs to the fence. Reed wore a dark grey cap, much the color of a groundhog. Hudson was partially hidden behind a walnut tree.

⁷ I have six of Lemuel’s school books from the 1870s. His beautiful handwritten signature graces the inside cover of three of them.

McBride, who lives on the farm adjoining the Rody place, was also hunting groundhogs, but did not know Reed and Hudson were similarly engaged. He was on the opposite of the fence from Reed and Hudson.

Henry Rody, who unknowingly witnessed the tragedy from his barn, saw McBride take aim from three different angles, thinking he saw a groundhog moving in the fence. The bullet, from a 32-caliber muzzle loading rifle entered the back of Reed’s head and passed almost through his head. Reed sank back in the grass without uttering a sound. McBride, who is in ill health, is nearly crazed by the accidental shooting. After the shooting, McBride and Hudson rushed to the side of Reed, who was already dead.

The victim was a graduate of the 1921 class of the Beach City high school and had spent two years at Wooster College. He was employed as an expert mechanic in the Brewster shops. He was a member of the United Brethren church and the K. of P. Lodge in Beach City.

Lemuel and Lucy McBride lived on the hill when Joe Y. Miller bought the farm in 1928. They lived there, into their eighties, until Lemuel died in 1936. Upon his death, Lucy sold the property to Gottfried Wenger for \$300. The purchase happened in the middle of the Great Depression when most people struggled to earn enough to sustain themselves.

Gottfried tried “farming” to make a living. He had some chickens, occasionally hogs, a garden, some fruit trees, and possibly a cow. He

hired himself out as a day laborer on the neighboring farms.

Gottfried is first mentioned in my Grandpa’s diary on Dec. 11 1937. I do not have a diary for 1936. In the diaries of Joe Y. Miller for 1938, 1939 and 1940 Gottfried occasionally helped Joe work on the farm.The following lists appear in Joe Y. Millers’ 1937 and 1938 diaries:

We owe Gottfried for the eggs:

May 2 60 cents @ 20 cents a dozen -3 dozen
May 9 50 cents @ 20 cents a dozen - 2 ½ dozen
May 16 47 cents @ 19 ½ cents a dozen - 2 ½ dozen

What we paid for Gottfried:

Grocery, corn, meal, salt, 23 cents
Grocery, oats, corn meal, lard, 73 cents
3 loaf bread. 2 loaf bread
2 loaf bread, 1 loaf bread
paid groceries 1.00
paid groceries 35 cents
paid groceries 09 cents
corn meal 18 cents

Washed for Gottfried:

Mar 21 Once
Mar 28 “
Apr 11 “
Apr 18 “
Apr 25 “
May 2 “
May 9 “
May 16 “
July 4 “

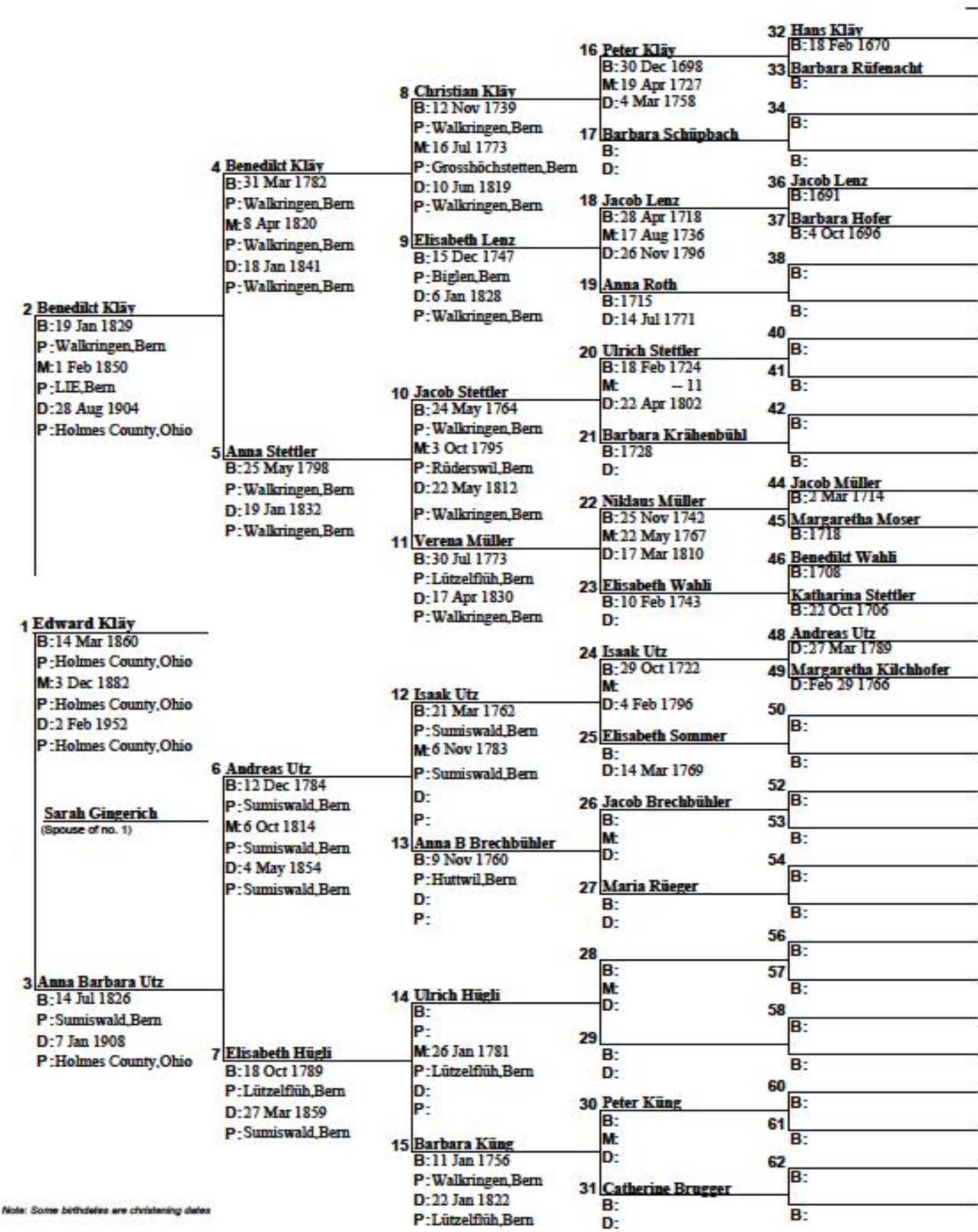
⁸ All the advertisements referenced are from the *Sugarcreek Budget* newspaper, Sugarcreek, Ohio. He also ran the same ads in the Dover-New Philadelphia newspaper.

Gottfried owe us Board \$2.00. Used my team of horses to drag out logs \$1.00.
3- loaves bread & groceries 1.00
2- loaves bread & groceries 35cts
1- loaf bread & groceries Paid 2.00
2-Corn meal 18cts

In winter of 1939, he advertised a new, heavy, cast-iron laundry stove with a sixteen-inch fire bowl and large side feed door for a quick sale at \$10. He also listed a good three horsepower White gasoline engine for sale.⁸

The United States census of 1940, records Gottfried, age 64, as a farmer with an eighth-grade education. The country is just coming out of the Great Depression of the 1930s. Many people were still very poor and barely making enough to live on. Gottfried would have been a part of that group. In 1941, he advertised some walnut trees to sell for furniture veneering. He also advertised walnut, ash, maple and dogwood trees for transplanting. Joe Y. used his team of horses to drag the logs out for him.

In 1945, he advertised to buy a medium sized mule. He was also looking for an open buggy with a harness in good condition at a reasonable price. The following summer, he had a black draft mare for sale. The mare was between 12 -15 years old and weighed about 1300-1500 pounds. He was willing to trade it for a butchering beef or some pullet chickens. Two years later, in 1947, he was again advertising for a horse he wanted to buy. He needed a low, blocky built horse around 1000 -1200 pounds. The horse can’t



America in 1851, with five children from her first marriage.¹⁵

In 1860, Jacob and Verena moved to Goshen, Indiana. In 1861, during the Civil War, Jacob volunteered for military service. He served in the 41st Indiana Regiment/2nd Cavalry company H.^{16 17} No mention is found of either Jacob or Verena in the 1860 census. Verena’s brother Gottfried also served in the same regiment and company as Jacob. However, we do know that Jacob died on July 11, 1862, in Nashville, Tennessee, of chronic diarrhea.

Jacob’s brother-in-law Gottfried deserted the army on February 1, 1863. He married Helena Frey on March 26, 1863, in Floyd County, Indiana, across the Ohio River from Louisville, Kentucky. Their regiment had formed in Indianapolis, traveled south through Louisville, Kentucky enroute to Camp Wickliffe near Hodgenville, Kentucky. Perhaps Gottfried had met Helena on that journey. On March 10, 1863, President Lincoln released a proclamation of amnesty for all soldiers who deserted their post, on the condition they returned by April 1.¹⁸ After his wedding, Gottfried likely returned to his post, as his charge of desertion was removed. It appears Gottfried took advantage of the President’s offer.

Jacob Clay’s widow Verena, often called Francis or Frenica, returned to Holmes County with her two sons. She applied for a pension as the widow of a Civil War veteran, which was

approved. She lived with her son William Clay in Berlin until her death in 1915.

So, was Jacob Clay the younger brother of Benedict Kläy? A case can certainly be made with circumstantial evidence. Other Swiss Kläy/Clay persons have not been found in Holmes County. Benedict’s brother Jacob, born in 1831, would have been five years older than his wife Verena Iseli. Her father, Christian Iseli, was christened in Walkringen, so their families could have been acquainted before their emigration. Unfortunately, Jacob was not recorded in any US census, and no death certificate was issued.

Like other Amish families, the Kline family can trace their ancestors to Canton Bern, Switzerland. Benedict Kläy and his young family left Switzerland for new opportunities in America, but in the 1870s poverty forced their children to live among their Amish neighbors. This had a lasting impact on their lives, as four of the children are known to have been members of the Amish or Mennonite Church. Benedict’s brother Jacob married to Verena Iseli and started a family but died serving in the Civil War. Despite the tragedies the two brothers faced, their progeny reared families of the own and became respected members of their communities.

be ill natured, stiff, or lame. The following summer, 1948, he had a horse for sale which he said was, “too big for me!” The horse could be used as a single, or be the right, or left horse in a team. If it wasn’t sold by the 15th, it would be at the Sugarcreek Livestock auction the following Monday. It is hard to know by looking at these advertisements, which appeared about once every summer, whether he was trading horses, or simply had trouble finding an animal which he could handle as a man in his early seventies.

In December 1948, he had a five-month-old baby beef for sale. It had been run with a Guernsey cow for three-months and had since been fed on good hay. “It would make mighty good eating for someone,” he proudly proclaimed. That summer, he also had the pasture on his hill for rent. He states it would be suitable for two-three cows “who are on vacation” waiting to become fresh again with calves.

February of 1950 was the first time he ran an ad to sell dogs. He had two twelve-month-old female German Shepherd puppies for sale. He marketed them as good farm dogs ready to be trained and as nice pets for boys and girls. He followed that ad with one in the spring of 1951. There he listed a nice selection of black long-haired English Shepherd and Collie dogs as well as, six yellow Shepherd pups. Later that summer, he advertised, he had another six black Shepherd pups for sale. It appears he was rapidly expanding his dog business. Three months later they weren’t all sold so he ran a “last chance for some real farm dogs” ad.

Gottfried was involved in a horse and buggy accident in June 1952 when he was 77 years old. The horse he was driving became

frightened at a passing truck and upset the buggy. The buggy was nearly demolished. He was dragged along a barbed wire fence by the side of the road. He suffered severe lacerations and bruises around the shoulders and back. He was picked up by an ambulance and treated in Sugarcreek by a doctor.

A month after the buggy accident, he advertised some nice brown Shepherd pups. One black English Shepherd pup had nice brown feet, brown eye spots, and “a brown candidate bow tie on his chest.”

It is interesting to note how Gottfried describes where he lived in his ads. The post office hadn’t issued house numbers at that time, so it was more difficult for people to find the exact location. His address was simply Route 2, Sugarcreek, Ohio. In most of the earlier ads he listed his location as midway on the Barrs Mill-Winfield Road. Once, in 1946, he added, “at little oak.” There was an oak tree at the entrance of his lane which eventually grew to a very large size. Sometimes he added near No. 7 School. Occasionally, he added ½ mile from Burkey Cheese Factory. In 1951 he began to add, “by high power line.” It was around that time that a high-power electric line tower was built on the top of his hill (See photos). It could be seen for several miles and provided an easy way to find his home.

On April 2, 1953, he ran an ad listing nineteen dogs for sale. It included German Shepherds, English Shepherds, Pomeranians, and part Collies of various colors. He listed the reason for getting rid of all his dogs as moving to town. I believe Gottfried, who was 78 years old, planned to move in with his sister Rosa. She had married Samuel Hefner in 1904 and they had lived in

¹⁵ <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:27PP-R2Z> (Accessed August 30, 2021).

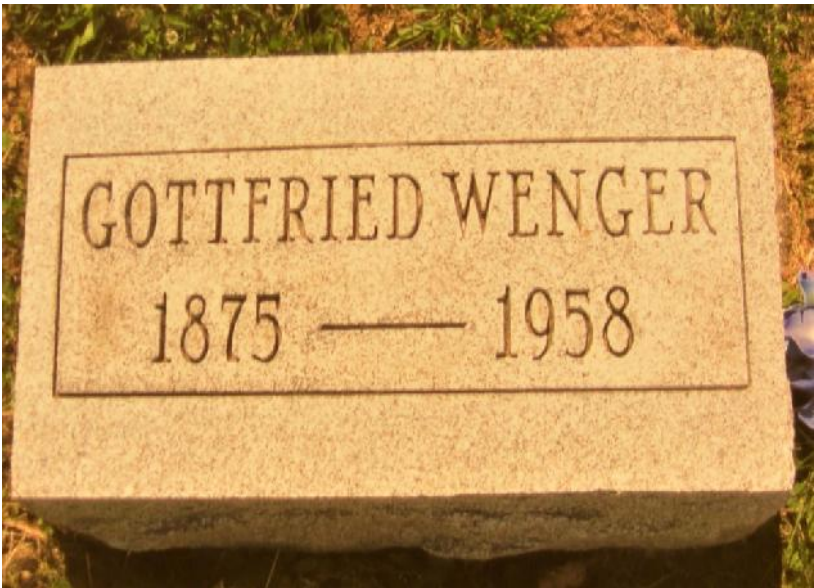
¹⁶ <https://www.fold3.com/image/230641097> (Accessed September 2, 2021).

¹⁷ Henry C Clay Obituary, Holmes County Farmer December 15, 1926.

¹⁸ *New York Times*, March 11, 1863.

South Dakota. In 1941, her husband passed away and sometime after that she moved into the area. However, prior to his move, Rosa decided to move to West Virginia to take care of her sick mother-in-law. Gottfried never moved to town. Later that year, he was again advertising dogs and pups for sale at his Route 2, Sugarcreek address. He continued to advertise pups throughout 1954. In 1955, he finally got around to selling the large stove and bed left in his care by his sister when she moved to West Virginia.

The Plotner farm and buildings, which bordered the hill to the South, were the closest of any of the neighbors to Gottfried’s cabin. Each day Emmet hauled his milk to the cheese house in Sugarcreek. Gottfried would hitch a ride to town with him in his later years. While Emmet was unloading his milk, Gottfried would hurry over to



Gottfried Wenger gravestone at Union Hill Cemetery, 1 mile East of Sugarcreek, Ohio.
Mishler’s grocery store for a few supplies, ride back with Emmet, and carry the groceries over the back field and up the hill to his cabin.⁹

⁹ Conversation with Glen Plotner, son of Emmet. 2021

The advertisements in the newspaper stopped after 1955. By that time, the hill had 6 Amish farms either bordering or within easy walking distance. In addition, it had three English farms at the same distance. The nineteen dogs, some which were quite fierce, forced at least one English neighbor to carry his shotgun with him while working his fields close to the hill. Pressure was put on the local authorities to take action. Consequently, Gottfried was forced to get rid of all his dogs except for two guard dogs. Losing his dogs was very hard on him. He would complain of his loss to the Plotner family on his occasional visits.¹⁰ It was during this period of 1956-1957 that I met Gottfried on two occasions as mentioned earlier.

Gottfried, now in his early-mid-eighties, found himself in a difficult situation facing more hardships. Hardships were normal for him. His entire life had been hardships. His days in the rugged hills of West Virginia. The hard life working for the timber companies earning next to nothing after room and board were deducted from his paycheck. The jobs, either as a farm hand or for mining companies as a coal digger or hauler were also hard dirty labor on low wages. His move to Ohio resulted in a brief marriage and grief on his loss. His financial endeavors resulted in bankruptcies and judgments against him. His last move to the hill, at age 61, brought 25 years of stability, although earning enough to survive continued to be a struggle.

¹⁰ Conversation with Glen Plotner, 2021

Anna Barbara on July 2, 1825. Census records indicate daughter Elizabeth born between 1851 and 1853, either in Switzerland or America. Family genealogies list her birthdate as February 15, 1852.¹³

So, is Benedict Kline of Berlin, Ohio the Benedict Klay of Walkringen, Switzerland? Discrepancies exist for both Benedict and Anna Barbara’s birthdates, but not vast differences. The only major problem is the *Hungarian* ship list. Maria Klag[y] is listed rather than Anna Barbara, and Benedict’s age was incorrect by seven years. Errors certainly are not uncommon on ship lists. Perhaps Maria was a relative and Anna Barbara was simply omitted?

One note about the name Kline and its variants in Switzerland. Most likely the name changed from Kläy to Kline and Klay/Clay when the families emigrated to America. Many family names changed during this process as immigrants worked to integrate into a different language and culture. It is also true that many ship lists, and other historical documents include alterations to names since the language barrier often existed in the process. Agents for the shipping companies and governments often spelled what they heard phonetically, rather than focus on precise spellings.

Despite these discrepancies the evidence is overwhelming. While the reported birthdates from American sources do not match exactly, they are close. Their reported time of immigration in the *Bürgerregister* provides important evidence, including the date of their emigration and the birth

¹³ *Descendants of Edward B. & Sarah (Gingerich) Kline* (Schlabach Printers, 2003), 7.



Benedict Kläy

of daughter Elisabeth. The account of the emigration by a fellow traveler John Schonauer also strengthens the case.

Another person of interest is Jacob Kläy, the younger brother of Benedict. A Jacob Klay was on the *Hungarian* passenger list with Benedict. In 1857, Jacob Clay married Frenica Iseli in Holmes County, Ohio. Verena (or Frenica) was the daughter of Christian Iseli and Margaret Bühlmann.¹⁴ Christian Iseli died on May 20, 1844, in Canton Fribourg, Switzerland. Margaret remarried to John Hirsbrunner and emigrated to

¹⁴ While not much is recorded about the Iseli family, this is the best estimate of who Frenica was.

Havre, France. High winds on the North Sea left everyone in the party seasick.

The Swiss emigres had to wait in Le Havre ten days for the next New York-bound ship. They boarded the double-decked boat, *Hungarian*, and arrived with 584 passengers on the East River in New York. There they left the ocean-going ship and went up the Hudson River to Albany by river boat. From Albany, they took the railroad to Buffalo, and from there to Cleveland, Ohio, by steamboat. After the short Great Lakes journey, they travelled on the Ohio and Erie Canal to Navarre, Ohio. The final leg of the journey was from Navarre to Winesburg, Ohio by horse and wagon. Their journey took fifty-eight days from March 20 to May 16, 1852.¹¹



Journey from Bern, Switzerland to Le Havre, France.

They witnessed some “very strange” things while travelling. A hotelkeeper whetted his knife on the sole of his boot before cutting the meat. He then gave each person their piece “with his hand.”

Another person used bedsheets for their tablecloth. Schonauer was surprised to see cattle grazing on green pastures in Rotterdam by March 28. He complained that hotelkeepers and ticket agents swarmed the ship upon its arrival in New York to swindle their money. Some lost up to forty dollars.

Schonauer recorded the names of several fellow Swiss travelers, including Benedict Clay. He reported that those passengers he named all settled in eastern Holmes County, except for Nicholas Deidinger who settled in the western part of Holmes County. The passenger list of the

Hungarian listed three persons with the surname Klag: Benedict, age 30, Maria, age 24, and Jacob, age 20.¹² Klag is a misspelling of Klay, but their ages and the name Maria do not match Benedict and Anna Barbara. In spite of these discrepancies, which are often the case in early records, this appears to be the same Benedict that settled in Berlin.

The United States census from 1860 and 1900 listed approximate birth years for both Benedict and Anna Barbara between 1824 to 1830. The 1900 census was the only census to include both month and year of birth: Benedict in February, 1829 and Anna Barbara in March, 1826. The year of their immigration was listed as 1852 in the same census. According to their shared tombstone near Bunker Hill, Ohio, Benedict was born February 12, 1830, and

His last days found him deprived of his beloved dogs the dogs whom he so loved, but who also created fear among the neighbors. Those neighbors, who might have wanted to help him, but they never quite figured out how to do it because of the dogs. So, with a little help from the state, he managed to survive, alone on the hill, guarded by his two faithful German Shepherds.

One cold February morning, one of those neighbors, Emmet, noticed there was no smoke coming out of the chimney of his dilapidated cabin. He knew something was wrong. Approaching the cabin, he called out Gottfried’s name loudly above the barking of the guard dogs, with no answer. Upon opening the door, he found a horrific site, the deceased body, mutilated by animals. It was a site he didn’t allow his children



The East side of the hill with the tower visible above the trees in 2021. Photo credit: Wayne R. Miller

to see.

The Daily Reporter newspaper ran an article dated, February 27, 1958, with the headline:

2 Dogs Guard Sugarcreek Man’s Body
Guarded by his two German Shepherd dogs, the body of Gottfried Wenger, 86, was found in his home on Rd.2, about 2 miles northeast of here, this morning at 9 by a neighbor, Emmet Plotner. Mr. Wenger apparently had been dead for several days. Coroner Philip Doughten is investigating the cause of his death. Wenger is survived by a brother and two sisters, Charles Wenger of Accident, Md., Mrs. Mary Unarth of Erie, Pa, and Mrs Rose Hefner of Pickens, W Va. Services will be Saturday at 10:30 a.m. in the Lingler Funeral home with the Rev. Linwood Ensnunger of the

¹¹ Holmes County Farmer April 3, 1902.

¹² <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:2753-NDC> : 20 February 2021

Sugarcreek Free Methodist Church officiating.

Burial will be in Union Hill Cemetery. There will be no calling hours.

Clyde E. Lingler, the Sugarcreek funeral director, was the administrator of his estate. The real estate was appraised at \$750. There weren’t any household goods of any value. The property was heavily encumbered to the Division of Aid for the Aged in Columbus, Ohio. The debts exceeded the value of the estate.

The farm was put up for public auction October 30th, 1958. Joe Y. acted as an agent for the coal company to buy the property for them. This disappointed some people. It was before the coal companies were required to reclaim and restore coal stripped land to its original contour.¹¹ In the meantime, the land was leased by the neighbors to run cattle. The crumbling old cabin and barn became a safety issue and they pushed it down in the mid-1960s.

During the 1970s the coal company either owned or had leases to strip mine the farms surrounding the hill. They moved their giant shovel across the ridges of our farm mining the coal. The shovel continued onto the hill digging a deep trench across the west and east sides to strip it of its coal. After the coal company was finished mining and it was reclaimed, neighboring farmers, Abe and Susan Yoder, bought the hill and in 2010 sold it to

¹¹ In 1965 major changes were made to the strip mining laws in Ohio. By the 1970s, when the hill was strip mined, the law required the land be restored to its original contour.

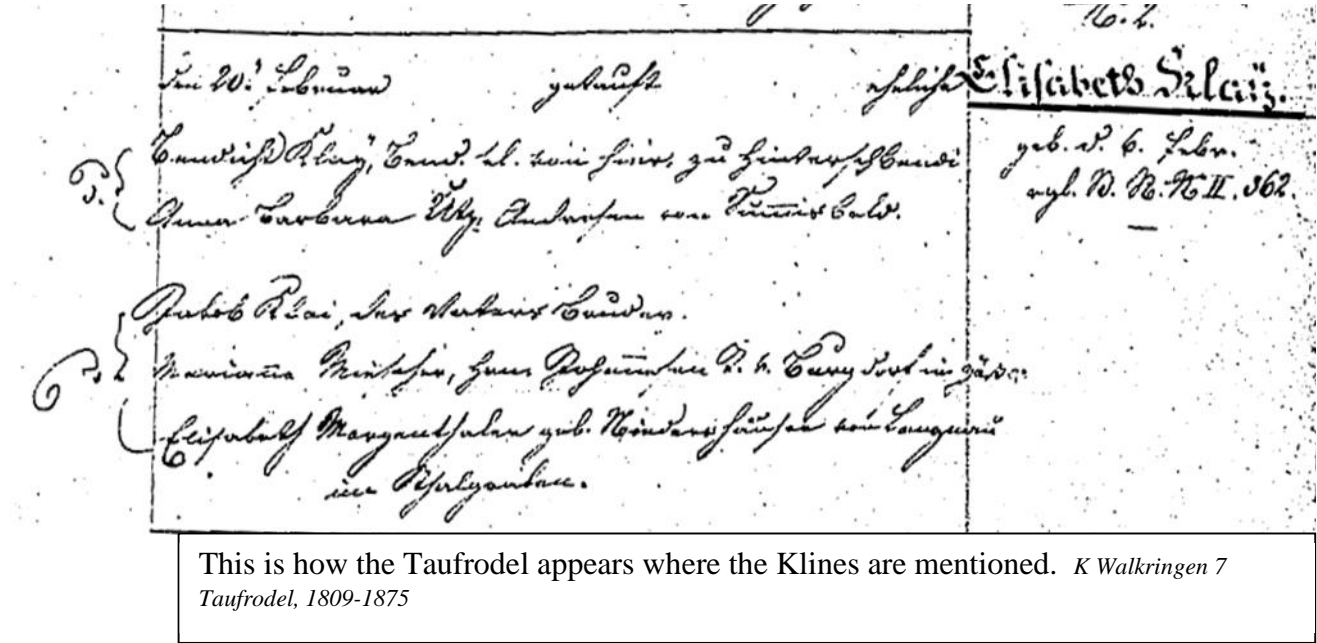
their son Mose. In 2021, both families have a home at the base of the hill.

Our farm was sold in 2004 to Belden Brick Company. It had been in the family for 76 years. Belden sold the buildings and about 8 of the 80 acres to a neighbor who rents the houses out. The rest was kept by Belden as a mining site for clay to use in the production of bricks. It was still being mined in 2021.

Conclusion

I see the hill frequently today. I see it when I drive to my home, when I fuel my vehicles at the local gas station, and when I head east on State Route 39 from Sugarcreek. Each glimpse takes my memories to its past and the people who tried to survive up there. I have only told the story of one of those people.

I now realize the fears of my childhood were partially unfounded. The dogs were real, and I would be afraid of them today. But the old man and the hill weren’t something to fear. I would want to get to know Gottfried and hear his side of the story. What did he think of his neighbors? Would he have accepted more help or was he content as things were? But it is not to be. I believe a story half told is better than a story never told.



Switzerland. Anna Barbara Utz was born in Sumiswald on July 14, 1826. A son was born to Benedict and Anna Barbara on January 20, 1851 but lived for only five days. A daughter Elisabeth was born February 6, 1852, in Walkringen. No subsequent children were recorded for the couple.

The next record we have of the family is when the *bürgerregister*, or civil register of Walkringen, recorded Benedict and Anna Barbara Kläy and their daughter Elisabeth. The entry includes their birthdates, their parents, and the date and place of marriage. Most importantly, it notes that the Kläy family emigrated to America on March 20, 1852. This is an essential record in this family’s history. How do those dates coincide with the information of the above-mentioned Benedict Kline of Holmes County?

One other source that helps give shape to the Kline Family history is the *taufschein*, or baptism record, of their son Edward Kline in 1864 when Edward was four years old.⁹ This was

⁹ *Descendants of Edward B. & Sarah (Gingerich) Kline* (Schlabach Printers, 2003), 21.

obviously not in an Amish or Mennonite Church considering that child baptism was not a part of their beliefs. More likely Edward was baptized in the Reformed or Lutheran Church. The baptismal record documented his parents as Benedict Klein and Anna Barbara Utz. Edward’s obituary and death record agree with this.

Another clue in the puzzle of the Kline family is from John Schonauer, a Holmes County resident. In 1902, Schonauer submitted an account of his journey to America in the local newspaper, *The Holmes County Farmer*. A party of about sixty persons, including Schonauer, left Switzerland on March 20, 1852.¹⁰ After travelling to Basel they were informed that they would not take the direct route via Paris to the harbor in Le Havre, France. Instead, they followed the Rhine River north by railroad and steamboat through Mannheim and Cologne, Germany, until they arrived in Rotterdam. They remained in Rotterdam several days until a steamboat took them to Le

¹⁰ Schonauer wrote 1854, but the ship list confirms the year 1852.

March 7, 1874 (see map).⁴ By 1880, Benedict and Anna Barbara were living alone on their three acres in Berlin Township. Four of their six children were living in Howard County, Indiana, and two were married. According to family tradition, most of the children had been “boarded out” to local Amish homes in the 1870s because of financial hardships wrought by Benedict’s drinking. This practice was not unique to the Kline family as families struggled to raise children in difficult times caused by hardships or death.

Benedict and his wife also received some aid from their community. In January 1896, their house was destroyed by fire, including most of its contents. The fire originated in the small smokehouse attached to the house. Being poor and without insurance, they certainly were “a fit object [for] charity.”⁵ By February 20, people of the Berlin vicinity helped clear the ruins and build another home in its place. Any misgivings for this poor man, who had been unable to support his family, did not deter the local community from helping him in his plight.

These adversities led to Benedict’s teen-aged son Edward, being “boarded out” to the David D. Troyer home.⁶ This must have been an influential time as Edward himself became a member of the Amish church. In 1882 he married Sarah Gingerich, an Amish girl and the daughter of Joseph and Barbara Gingerich. The well-known Amish bishop “Glay” Moses J. Miller married the couple.⁷ This union was blessed with eleven

children, all of which lived to adulthood. Thus, the Kline surname can be found among the Amish of Holmes County today.

Yet their story also extends back to Switzerland. Where in Switzerland did Benedict Kline and Anna Barbara Utz originate? Who were their parents? Did Benedict or Anna Barbara have any siblings or other family in Ohio? These questions have remained unanswered for many years. Previous attempts by researchers have been futile.

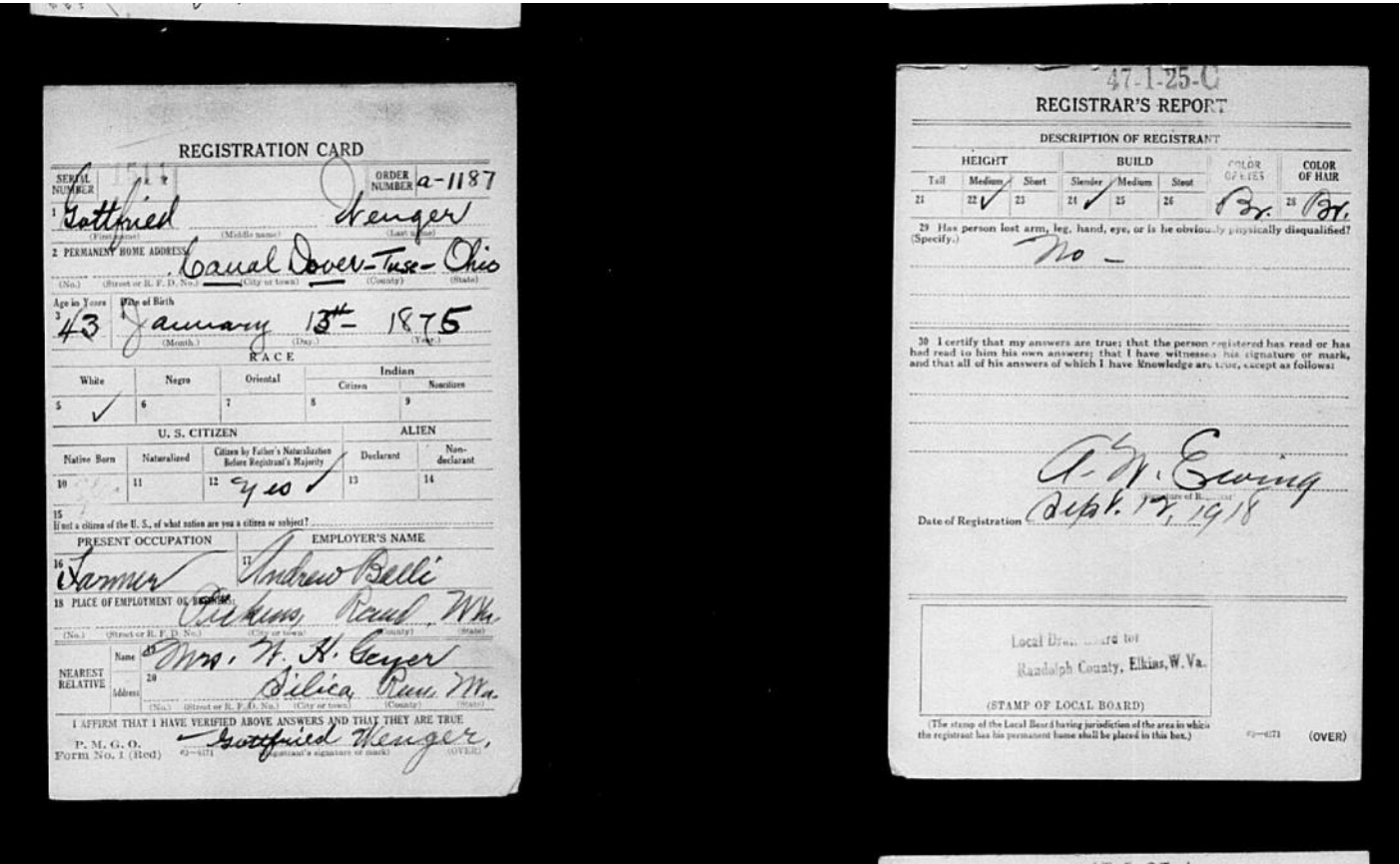
Little has been known about this part of the Kline family until the author’s own connection with another part of the family who still live in Switzerland today. The breakthrough was the discovery of the family tree of Walter Kläy, a resident of Zurich, Switzerland. Walter developed an interest in his own family history and began to collect any information on the Kläy family of Walkringen. He generously shared his findings on *Geneanet*, a genealogy website. The source for most of Kläy’s information was from *kirchenbücher*, or baptism, marriage, and death records kept by Swiss parishes or churches.⁸ These records are an incredible wealth for family historians and researchers.

Walter’s family tree included a Benedict born January 19, 1829, in Walkringen, Switzerland. He was the son of Benedict Kläy and Anna Stettler. Walkringen is east of the larger Swiss city of Bern. Benedict married Anna Barbara Utz on February 1, 1850, in Langnau,

Appendix



The baptism record of Gottfried Wenger, born January 18th, christened January 31st, 1875, in Thierachern, Switzerland.



The Draft Registration Card for Gottfried Wenger. Note that the card is from WV but his address is for Tuscarawas County. Most likely it is in the transitional period immediately after his move to Ohio.

⁴ Christian Roth (1829-1909) and Rosina Lederach (1843-1909) relocated to the Swiss settlement in Helvetica, Randolph County, West Virginia.
⁵ *Holmes County Farmer*, January 9, 1896
⁶ Leroy Beachy, *Unser Leit: The Story of the Amish*, Vol. 2 (Millersburg, OH: Goodly Heritage Books, 2015), 156.

⁷ *Holmes County Republican*, January 25, 1883. Bishop Moses J. Miller (1811-1896), called “Glay” Mose.
⁸ <https://gw.geneanet.org/walterklaey> (Accessed September 10, 2021).

WILL OF JOHN WENGER.

I, John Wenger, of Randolph County and State of West Virginia, make this my last will and testament, hereby revoking all former wills made by me, and direct the payment of my just debts.

I give, devise and bequesth to my daughter, Lena Wenger Geyer the sum of Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00).

I give, devise and bequeath to my daughter, Mary Wenger, or her heirs, the sum of One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$150.00)

I give, devise and bequeath to my daughter, Rosa Wenger Hefner, the sum of One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00)

I give, devise and bequeath to Hazel Morrison, the daughter of my deceased daughter, Lizzie Wenger Morrison, the sum of One Hundred Ten Dollars (\$110.00) and to each of the

other children of my daughter, Lizzie Wenger Morrison namely: Harry Morrison, Mabel Morrison Helen Morrison and Williard Morrison, to each the sum of Ten Dollars (\$10.00).

In consideration of the fact that my son, Gottfried Wenger, has received from me certain financial assistance for which he has never fully reimbursed me, I now give, devise and bequeath to my son, Gottfried Wenger, the sum of One Dollar (\$1.00)

In consideration of the fact that my son, Charles Wenger, has received from me certain financial assistance for which he has never executed a promissory note or other evidence of debt, I now, give, devise and bequeath to my son, Charles Wenger, the sum of One Dollar (\$1.00).

And all other property of every kind and description, after the bequests heretofore made, I give, devise and bequeath to my daughter; Lena Wenger Geyer.

I appoint Alexander W. Ewing, of Pickens, West Virginia, my executor of this my will.

Witness my signature this the 3, day of April, 1916.

John Wenger.

Sealed, published and declared by John Wenger as and for his last will and testament, in the presence of us, who in his presence, at his request and in the presence of one another, have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses this the 3, day of April, 1916.

Robert Andregg.

Mrs. F. N. Rader.

State of West Virginia,

Randolph County Clerk's Office: August, 7, 1916.

A paper writing bearing date on the 3, day of April, 1916, purporting to be the last will and testament of John Wenger, deceased, last a resident of this county, was this day presented to the undersigned Clerk of said Court for probate, and was duly proven by the oaths of Robert Andregg and Mrs. F. N. Rader the subscribing witnesses thereto; it is therefore ordered that the said paper writing be admitted to probate as and for the last will and testament of said decedent and duly recorded and filed.

Teste: Thaddeus Pitt, Clerk.

The Kline Family and their Amish Connections

Adam Hershberger

The Kline family’s connection to the Amish of Holmes County was forged through much pain and suffering in the late 1800s. Their journey to America and their connection to the Amish church is different than many other local Amish families. In the last year new discoveries in their family history have opened a window into this family, their history, and their ties to the Amish church. It all begins with a Swiss immigrant, Benedict Kline, and his wife Anna Barbara.

In 1884, Benedict Kline and wife Anna Barbara (Utz) were residents of Berlin township, Holmes County, Ohio. Both were born in Switzerland and had emigrated to America. According to a local newspaper, Benedict “occasionally swallows too much liquor, and when intoxicated becomes noisy and abusive.”¹ This made Benedict a ready victim for mistreatment or pranks, or even susceptible for being arrested for swearing. One such prank is recorded in the same local newspaper when “some party” had filled Benedict’s pipe with powder. The writer stated, “there is nothing pleasant in a trick of that kind.”²

It appears that this penchant for trouble led to Benedict’s involvement in a fight in 1882 between the local towns of Millersburg and Berlin. Charley Marchand of Millersburg held Benedict by his legs and made him walk on his hands. Since it is recorded that Benedict was a man of some strength, he struggled and escaped from

¹ Holmes County Farmer, February 21, 1884.

² Holmes County Farmer, July 31, 1890.

1875 Holmes County Plat Map



Marchand’s grasp. He then picked up and threw a half-brick lying beside the town pump into his opponent’s face, dislocating Marchand’s jaw. A brawl broke out and the men of Berlin prevailed and drove the Millersburg men out of town. This brawl was later named the Millersburg-Berlin fight.³

Benedict’s addiction to alcohol brought many hardships for the Kline family. In 1870 the family was living in Walnut Creek Township. They purchased three acres of land in Berlin Township from Christian and Rosina Roth on

³ Oscar R Miller, Sesquicentennial History of the Berlin Community (Berlin, OH, 1967), 26.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE OHIO AMISH LIBRARY

- Lowry, James ed. with David J. Rempel Smucker and John L. Ruth. *Hans Landis: Swiss Anabaptist Martyr and Seventeenth Century Documents*. Millersburg OH, Ohio Amish Library, 2003.
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BOOKS OF LOCAL INTEREST AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE THROUGH THE OHIO AMISH LIBRARY

- Beachy, Leroy. *Cemetery Directory of the Amish Community in Eastern Holmes and Adjoining Counties in Ohio*. Berlin OH: Leroy Beachy, 1975.
- Beachy, Leroy. *Unser Leit: The Story of the Amish*. 2 vol. Berlin OH: Goodly Heritage Books, 2011.
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- Yoder, Emmanuel. *Begebenheiten fon Holmes County Deiner fon 200 Yohr: 1808-2008*. Sugarcreek, OH, Schlabach Printers, 2009.
- Yoder, Henry A. *Amish Obituaries of Holmes County, OH and Vicinity: 1857-2010*. Fredericksburg, OH. Holmes Printing, 2011.
- Yoder, Marcus A. *Cathedrals, Castles, & Caves: The Origins of the Anabaptist Faith*. Winesburg, OH. JPV Press, 2018.

**We have a variety of genealogical, family histories and books of local interest available for purchase.*