

# German Township Fulton County Ohio History

Published in Northwestern Republican newspaper

January 25, 1877

Read all 3 columns on each page before you advance to the next page

## HISTORY OF GERMAN TOWNSHIP.

German Township, Fulton County, Ohio  
—its Early Settlement—its Organization—  
Incidents, Subsequent Improvements &c.

Its organization, in 1840, then consisted of township 7, north of range 5 east, and the south part of township 8, north of range 5 east. The north line is now some two and a half miles south, and the south line some two miles south of the former line, and the west two miles west of the original line, making fifty-two sections in the township. The first settlement was made in the summer of 1834, by Swiss Germans, who came from Millhausen, a town in Switzerland. They arrived in German township August 22d, and located on what is familiarly known as Lauber's Hill. The colony consisted of five families and some single young men, to-wit: Jacob Bender, his wife and seven children; Christian Lütcher, his wife and four children; George Menster, wife and five children; Jacob Van Gundy, wife and three children; Jacob Kibler, wife and six children. Nicholas King, Henry Roth, Jacob Roth, Christian Reigsocker, Michael Fize, single men; making in all forty souls. These were all the whites that occupied or settled in the township in 1834.

In 1835, Augustus Hull and wife, Peter Wyse wife, and children, Christian Funkhouser, Peter Leithy, Peter Rupp, W. Grisier and family, Christian Beck and family, Nathan, Job and John Borton and mother, Bethuel Borton and wife, Joseph Borton and family, moved from New Jersey, by land, and settled near Bean Creek, or Tiffin River.

In 1836, John Reynolds and his sons, Isaac, Adna and John, from Vermont; Jonathan and Dorsey Barnes and families from Virginia; George Ditto, Seneca Co., Ohio; Joseph Sander, Peter Schad and family, Christian Schad and family, Peter G. Gull and family, Daniel Schad and family, from France.

In 1837, Samuel Burkholder and family, Peter Naufsinger, John Rivnaugh, from Europe; John Lutes, Henry Lutes and family, of Ohio; George Johnson, William

Johnson, Benjamin Lee, from England, and Samuel Gibbons and family, and Joseph Naufsinger, from France.

In 1838, John Wyse, James and Joel Smith and families, Christian Recknor, Peter and Jacob Rupp and families, and Jacob Deppler.

In 1839, Joseph Sander and family, Hugh Fairfield and family, Augustus Clair and family.

In 1840, A. S. Fleet and wife and one child, Joseph Schaf, Fred Crouse and family, Peter Weaver and family, Jacob Lininger and family.

In 1841, John Lininger and family.

In 1842, James Roger and wife, Peter Clopfenstein and family, Anthony T. Mirne and family and J. G. Wilden.

In 1843, Joseph Rupp; 1844, Joel Smucher and family; 1845, Moses Stuteman, Warren McCutchen and family, Peter Grim and family, A. Grim and family; 1846, Jonathan Rogers; 1847, J. A. Walverton, J. P. Flora, with many others without dates.

Mr. Kanife was one of the first settlers, and his son Caleb owns and lives on the farm upon which he first settled.

A. Dally, George Betts, J. W. Roseborough, one of the active men for education in the township, Benjamin Brown, also an active citizen of the township. His farm became the noted headquarters of fine wool sheep of the township. His son, L. W. Brown, resides on and owns the homestead and has become one of the active men of the township; takes a decided stand for education and Sabbath schools; and here we may place the names of J. F. Rogers, George R. Betts, Julius Whitehorn and many others.

### ITS ORGANIZATION.

German township was organized in 1840 by the election of its officers. First Township Clerk elected, S. B. Darby; first Treasurer, Ellis Rogers; Trustees Jonathan Barnes, Samuel Gibbony, Nathan Borton; first Justice of the Peace, S. B. Darby. Mr. Darby's Commission as justice dated May 3d, 1840, signed by Wilson Shannon, Governor of the State. First Postmaster, S. B. Darby; first Constable, Joseph Borton. At

the first election thirteen votes were polled; poll for 1850, 74 votes; poll for 1855, 182; 1860, 271; 1865, 273; 1870, 202; 1875, 279.

It is very evident that a large per cent. of the electors of German township do not vote with any regularity or take much interest in politics, consequently the small poll.

### INCIDENTS OF THE EARLY SETTLERS.

Their prospects were bright. Most of them owned the land in fee simple, and soil and timber were all one could ask for. The timber was plenty for building, and of the best quality. The soil as rich as gold, and produced in abundance. Wheat, corn and potatoes grew spontaneously wherever they got root, and the husbandman was well paid for his labor. But there were some drawbacks, it is true. Mills were far away, with the exception of Mr. Bird's in the north-west corner of German, and was taken with the territory from German to make Franklin; but the mill was the same, and never have we had a better one for good work than when Mr. Bird was miller himself. But the water failed in dry weather. Mr. Bird built his Mill some time before the organization of the township.

The next nearest mill was at Evansport, ten miles distant. Next was Canandagua, Mich. Then on the Maumee River at Defiance were good mills and also at Gilead, Ohio; but in 1844 George and William Johnson built a saw mill and the next year or two after built a grist mill; this put an end to long trips to mill.

The first ashery was built about the year 1840; Jacob G. Wilden built it in what is now Burlington, and carried on the business extensively, and hired help somewhat

extensively, and soon built a storehouse, sold goods and exchanged them for ashes and every kind of produce, satisfactory to both parties. With the Johnsons' mills and Wilden's ashery and store, the people became almost extravagant. Corn bread and wooden shoes were not sought for; a new era commenced and we began to feel like shouting. The day began to dawn; our roads were getting good and life was pleasant.

Fever and ague were prevalent, as in all the west. In the fall of 1834, two of Mr. Meisters sons died with the disease; these were the first deaths in the township. In 1844 Joseph Borton was killed by a falling tree. April 2, 1836, Christian Stuckey, son of Peter Stuckey, was lost in the woods, and found drowned in Bean Creek, below Johnsons' mills.

The first marriages were Mr. Holt to Miss Reynolds, in 1837; Mr. Ransom Reynolds to Miss Crandall, by Erastus Crandall, J. P. July 28th 1838; David Ely to a Miss Schaffer, in 1837.

First births, Elizabeth Wyse, born October 1837; Lorena Holt, born January 29th, 1838. Mrs. Dantel Spade died in 1838 or '39. Deaths and marriages were few up to 1850.

#### THE FIRST SCHOOL—FIRST MEETING.

The first school, probably, was taught by S. B. Darby, and the pioneer teachers were Milton Zouver, Miss Schnall, Miss Baker, Miss Shipmans, Miss Prettyman, Miss Geesey, and Miss Darby. Ladies' wages for teaching ranged from one to two dollars per week and board. School houses were log cabins. Slabs or puncheons, with legs, were used for seats. Desks were formed by boring holes in the logs and inserting a pin, and nailing a board on the pin. The teachers of that day were as good as they will average at the present, in proportion to the pay.

#### FIRST MEETING HELD.

was undoubtedly in Christian Lauber's house in the fall of 1835, presided over as preacher by Christian Beck, of the Mennonite Church, which church has the largest membership of any in the township today—membership, 265; church property, \$2,500. They pay no salary to preachers. Preachers in charge, Nicholas King, Subordinate ministers, Jacob Naufsingers, Christian Fyrenbarger, Christian Stuckey, John Wyse. Directors, Christian Wyse and Christian Schantz.

In 1838, Lilley Bridge preached as a Missionary of the United Brethren order; the order has an organization of eighteen members; no church; do not pay the preacher anything.

Traveling ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Austin Coleman, McEnder Capp. First quarterly meeting was held in German in 1837; John Jones was presiding elder. First English meeting held in the township was in the house of John Reynolds; Henry Lutes conducted the exercises. In 1837 Henry Lutes was authorized to preach. In 1838, at Defiance, Joel Smith was licensed to preach.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, at Burlington, was the first organized English church in the township. Its church property is valued at \$600; Membership, 37; Salary, \$150; John Poucher in charge. Trustees, J. F. Rogers, J. W. Roseborough, Henry Pike, L. W. Brown. The M. E. Church at Archbald has property valued at \$1,800; membership ten; John Poucher in charge; salary \$100. Lutheran church at Archbald; property valued at \$1,000; membership, 40; salary, \$200; Trustees, Henry Gool, John Pinkey; Joseph Harvau, minister. German Reform at Archbald; salary, \$400; pastor, John Neafoff; Trustees, V. Theobald, M. Beurer, Jacob Zico; membership, 75; value of church property, \$2,325. Catholic Church at Archbald; Priest, Andrew Delbeare; Trustees, A. T. Moune and Peter Grim; membership, 120; salary, \$700; cost of church property, \$4,000. Baptist Church at Lauber's Hill; Minister, Andrew Brown; Deacon Adam Imthurn; membership, 55; church property, \$600. New Mennonite Church; property, \$1,500; membership, 45; Minister in charge, Benedict Meister;

Trustees, Jacob Bender, Christian Allion. New German Baptist Church; property, \$1,000; membership, 100; no salary; Minister, Sebastian Lipe and Michael Tyler. Lutheran brick church; property, \$4,000; members, 34; Minister, R. Krapf; Trustees, Fred Kraup, Jacob Lininger, Fred Schultzer; salary, \$550. Besides these several organizations that have church property, there are quite a number that do not, such as the Holdermanites, Free Methodists, United Brethren, &c.

And as to our schools and school-houses German has done nobly. Her houses are a credit to the township; her school officers pay liberal wages and try to get the best; their enumeration amounts to seven hundred and seventy pupils, their Districts number eleven; their total expenses were \$3,538.19 for 1875; about the average expenses for education in German. Their churches are well built and well attended. Their Sunday Schools are ornaments to society, and truly denote a christian community.

First meeting house, Catholic, erected near the center of the township. First School House was built on the State road, between Burlington and Bean Creek; it served for meeting and school house for a number of years.

#### ARTESIAN WELLS.

Some time in 1843 or 1844, from scarcity of water, Mr. J. G. Wildin commenced digging a well to get water to supply his ashery; after digging some forty feet in the blue clay and no signs of water, he caused the well to be curbed with a substantial frame work, or at least I thought so; he reached the hard-pan, as it is called, and at this point found some water and a strong supply of gas; the water raised some inches in the bottom of the well, and the gas blown profusely, the auger refused to take to the hard-pan and consequently one hand could play it like a top. At this point of time I visited the well, went to the bottom, saw a Mr. Beck turning the auger and standing in the water half leg deep, and the gas rushing up through the water making a great bubbling. Feeling somewhat uneasy I ascended and when up felt like keeping out of that place. The next morning we heard something like a cannon, and soon heard that Mr. Wilden's well had blown up—I lived one and one half miles from the well—I visited the place soon, found the frame work of the well in bad condition. Mr. Wilden was very badly burned in the face and injured otherwise. Messrs. Philander and Othello Church were somewhat injured; one thrown on the top of the ashery, and Othello coming down lit on some fixings over the well and escaped from injury. Soon after James Smith bored for water to

the hard-pan; found plenty of gas but no water to any amount and abandoned the well. Mr. Smith passing the well with a light in the evening ignited the gas and made a warm time until it was put out. After this Solomon Rogers confined the gas in boxing or tubing, and at evening would ignite it for diversion: it would make a beautiful light illuminating the town beautifully. Soon after this it became a common occurrence to get gas wells with water and without water, the strongest fountains were got with the least gas. Mr. Quillet got a very strong gas and water fountain; it would throw a stream of water and gravel as high as the tallest trees, and some stones that resembled stone coal. Mr. Joseph Schad struck gas very strong; it would boil a five pail kettle full of water in fifteen minutes; it burned one time three weeks steady; in case of sickness in his family, it being close to his house, he did not have any other light. Christian Schad; gas was so strong that it made a blaze as large as a large brush heap, and it made such a light that one could see to read a quarter of a mile from the well in the night. Joseph Clair struck the gas in force; it made lively times; it threw stone and water one hundred feet high; it threw one stone that fell several rods from the well, that weighed twenty-two pounds. Fountains, or fountain wells, are quite common in the township at present.

#### FIRST STORE AND TAVERN.

The first store was kept by Montgomery H. Fitch, in a town laid out by George Eaton, on the west bank of Tiffin River, and named Edinburgh. Michael Gish built and run a tavern in said town. Mr. Aberight here owned and run the first harness shop. Mr. Case opened the first Tailor shop; Milton Sawyer opened the first cabinet shop, all in Edinburgh. From 1838 to 1842 Edinburgh was an active place, but is no more a town.

Next came Burlington, in 1844, and was a live town until 1856, or until the Air Line R. R. got to running, and since that time

Burlington has been losing in business and population; it now has one store and a P. O.; one church; one lawyer; one school house. The most of the lots laid out have become farming land. James Smith and Jonathan Rogers both built taverns and run them some time in Burlington. Jacob Lipe built a large tavern a little out of the village east, but all have been turned into dwelling houses. Jacob G. Wildin was the first merchant in Burlington, R. P. Hollington and John Lutz were also merchants. P. Bourquin, L. W. Brown, and several others, have sold goods in Burlington. I. K. Carpenter was the first resident doctor, in 1844. He was a Thompsonian; Dr. Blaker was the second; Dr. Wm. Winterstene was the third; Dr. Schaezler the 4th; Dr. Murbach the 5th, who is a resident and practicing at Archbald at the present time.

A Mr. Jacob Noftzinger owned a wagon shop and run it very successfully a number of years, he sold to a Mr. Wm. Graham. There was a steam saw mill owned and run several years close to Burlington by Packard, Lipe & Pettycord, which mill and owners have entirely disappeared.

#### ARCHBALD

Is a compound word, composed of Arch and Bald, names of two of the engineers of the R. R. First Division by Haywood & Ditto; second Addition by Wentzler, Schnetzler & Deppler. Archbald has four churches, one schoolhouse, four dry goods stores, two hardware stores, eight saloons, three wagon shops, three smith shops, two meat markets, one depot, two saw mills, one tannery, one harness and saddler's shop, one tailor-shop, one jewellery store, two Doctors, two Lawyers, one millinery store, three Ministers, three shoemakers and shoe shops. Among the merchants A. Elibias & Schafer were the prominent among the pioneers. Messrs. Impham, Hart, Albert Heuffer, Schumacher, Bourquin, Vernier, Bredt and Levi are and have been the live ones. Mr. Jno. Stone, Jacob Vernier and Theobald are the hardware merchants. Of the saw mill men, Messrs. Whitehorns and Wentzlers are the active ones. Archbald has one lock-up, one fire engine and an organized fire company, and it is a live place for business—second only to Wauseon in Fulton County.

#### PETTISVILLE.

A railroad town, four miles east of Archbald, is a place of some business. Of churches there are two—Disciple and German Reform; saloons, two; business places, seven; cabinet shops, one; physicians, two; intelligence office, one; one grist mill and one saw mill.

Of the places of business Archbald, Pettisville and Burlington are the towns.

German township in 1834 had a population of forty souls; in 1870 had a population of 2,323. No real estate or chattles taxable in 1834; real estate in 1870 \$561,337.00. In 1876 the Assessor returned \$186,595 of chattle property. The population at present is about 2,500. In 1834 there was no place of public worship but a log cabin. In 1876 it had twelve commodious churches, and well attended by earnest christians and members, ranging from two hundred and sixty-five to ten at each church, and some organized churches that worship in private or school houses. Has eleven commodious school houses, with 770 pupils, and has a large population of honest and industrious people. As to agriculture, good land and good buildings, it is second to none. Her professional men are on a par with any. Her preachers number 18, lawyers 2, doctors 3, and her school teachers to any amount.

There are many things omitted, and some errors, but not intentionally. Several cases of being lost for a few hours in the woods might be narrated, but there was but one happened that resulted in the loss of life, and taking it all in all there was about as much sunshine as shade in the pioneer life of German township.

F.

**Northwestern  
Republican,  
Jan 25, 1877  
Fulton County  
Wauseon, OH**