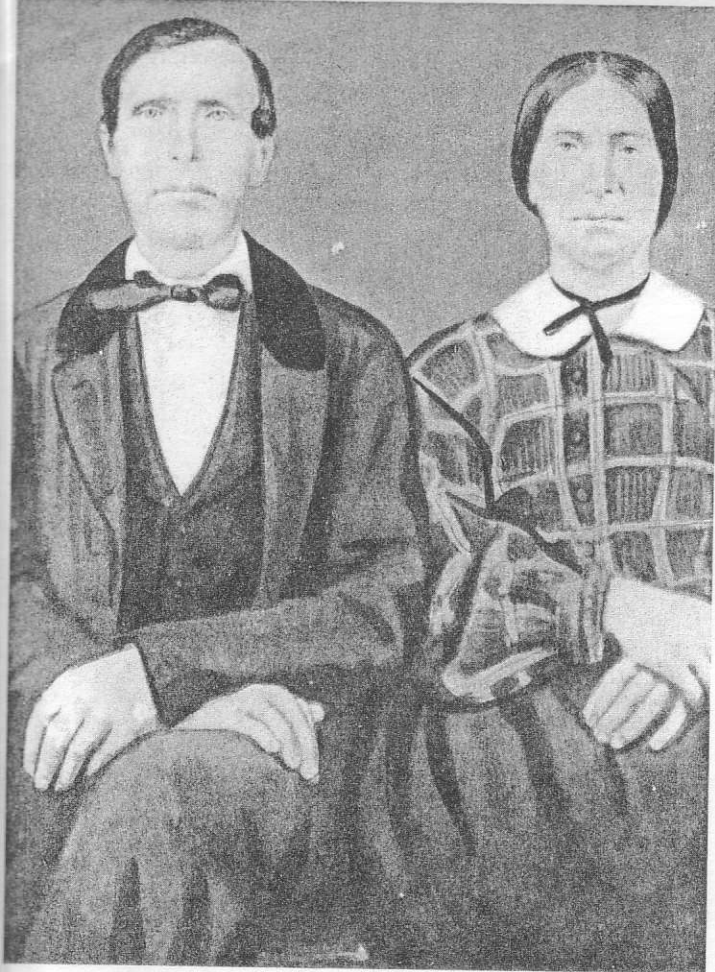


Pater
from
Hesse to Indiana

by Elmer E. Peters, MD



Johannes Peter

and

Katherine Matthews

This couple, born in the old world and united in the new, gave rise to the family Peters.



In 1890 a traveling photographer from Chicago Photo Co. stopped off in St. Peters and took this photo of the little Wissel girls: Eleanor (Nora) age 1 and Emma age 3.

The Peter(s) Family

The author has found that one of life's more humbling experiences is that which faces him at this very moment: Giving cause and reason for accumulating the following words and thoughts. This is meant to be an account of the PETER(S) family which had its origins in the kingdom of Hesse, Germany and presently has many descendants throughout these United States. At the repeated urging of my sons, I am setting forth those accounts told to me by my father (Albert), who in turn heard them from his father (Andrew), somewhat in the manner that tribal history has for countless centuries been told from one generation to the next. I am presenting events and facts as I know them to be even though some of the characters have more than their share of warts. Preparing this piece has been fun. For its shortcomings I have no apologies. However, I am reminded of the following German proverb:

"Der apfel nicht weit von baum abfallen."

(The apple doesn't fall far from the tree)

The first of the family of whom we have knowledge is JOHANNES PETER (pronounced PAY-Ter in German). He was born in, and lived about, the village of GELNHAUSEN, HESSE in 1773. His wife was named EVA and was born in 1774. JOHANNES came to Baltimore, Maryland together with his second son, SEBASTIAN, in August of 1836. No mention is made further of his wife, EVA. At this time, JOHANNES was 63 years which was rather an advanced age to make such a long trip particularly by the uncertain route of the sailing vessels of the time.

July 7, 1832 marked the date that the eldest son of JOHANNES PETER, ANDREW, together with his wife,

BARBARA BERGMAN, and their nine children came to the port of Baltimore, MD. ANDREW had been born in the state of HESSE on April 11, 1792. He married BARBARA BERGMAN approximately four years after their eldest child, JOHANNES PETER, was born (1815). Living in the same small village where he had been born, and in the days when illegitimacy was not kindly accepted, one can only imagine the taunts, the slurs, and the insults, which were directed toward the child, JOHANNES. Perhaps, this lack of complete acceptance may well have played an important part in the family decision to pull up their roots and plant them into this new country, the United States.

At this time, there was a general dissatisfaction among the peasants in Europe enforced by the severe economic times that then prevailed. . The brutal and destructive Napoleonic wars had left a legacy of bitterness, poverty, and a general feeling of hopelessness among the masses. Also, in addition to the above, was the lack of democracy as evidenced by the failure of the revolutions of 1830. An example of the petty irritations that our ancestors had to endure at that time is revealed by the following comment told by my grandfather ANDREW, himself a son of JOHANNES. My grandfather said that when an ordinary citizen was on a street or pathway, he had to step aside, doff his cap, and bow and scrape to any and all passing officials no matter how low the rank of that official. That sort of Teutonic discipline and "ortnung" must have rankled our ancestors quite as much as it would displease us if we had to similarly show deference to the local dog catcher.

From Baltimore, ANDREW PETER took his wife and nine children to Bedford County in Pennsylvania. A copy of his application for naturalization dated and signed on August 30,

1835 is on record in the courthouse there. A copy of his signature in which he renounces allegiance to the king of Hesse in favor of the United States is in my possession. The real reason for this migration to the "Dutch" country of Pennsylvania is unknown. It is likely that they went there either to join up with distant relatives or friends from the "old country." Since these German settlers were largely from Hesse, and since Hessians formed a sizable portion of the British armies during our American Revolution, it is difficult to escape the speculation that perhaps some of the PETER(S) ancestors were a part of that army. An interesting thought indeed!

Sometime later, ANDREW and his large family took a flatboat, probably at Pittsburgh, and disembarked in Cincinnati. When these immigrants arrived in Cincinnati, they found a bustling river town largely hemmed in between what is now Fifth Street and the Ohio river. This so called bottoms district housed the business and commercial life of the city and contained many fine homes as well. My grandfather, ANDY, often related the family tale that when his people came to Cincinnati, a forty acre field of corn immediately north of the present Fountain Square was being offered for sale at the very considerable price of \$100.00 per acre. This was obviously too dear for these largely impecunious folk who can be forgiven for not anticipating the eventual worth of that land. At any rate, we lose track of this pioneer father and his family until we learn of their migration to Franklin County in southeastern Indiana. There, on the rolling clay hills, they settled down, their long journey beginning in Hesse, Germany, and requiring almost four years, was now over.

The very first abode of these people in Franklin County is unknown to us. The Recorder's office at Brookville reveals

that ANDREW PETER did purchase a 30 acre tract of land in November of 1838. This tract contained an improvement in the form of a cabin. This site is located on present Orchard Road on land now owned by William Hertel. The sale price is recorded as \$225.00. On January 23, 1841, ANDREW purchased a 1/2 acre lot, improved with a log house, for which he paid the sum of \$100.00. This ANDREW was to become my GREAT GREAT grandfather.

ANDREW'S son, JOHN PETER, he who was the unfortunate child born out of wedlock in 1815, purchased a 40 acre piece of land in Highland township of Franklin county. This site was but several miles distant from the father's. This transaction took place on September 14, 1839 and the amount of money involved was \$100.00. No doubt this was generally considered to be raw, unimproved, uninviting, and undesirable. It was here that JOHN, the eldest son of ANDREW, and the writer's great grandfather brought his bride, erected, their cabin and began rearing their brood.

In order to better understand these ancestors of ours, it must be remembered that these folk were strangers in this new and hostile land. They were bound together by a common heritage (German) and religion (Catholic) and from that they drew strength. Initially, these people who tenaciously clung to their religion, met at one another's homes where prayers were said and where an occasional circuit riding priest came to say mass. This was no more than a temporary arrangement, and soon a great effort was made to erect an edifice to serve the local religious needs. This planning and working together resulted in the erection of a church at St. Peter's in 1837. It was hardly an imposing building, made of the materials readily at hand: field stone and logs. Heat was supplied the building by means of fireplaces.

The church became the center of the lives of these people. Here the people gathered to hear the Word as well as the gossips of the day. Here, too, people visited and established life-long friendships. It is less than surprising to learn that here frequently young people met, became engaged, and married. And it was here that JOHNASSES, the eldest son of ANDREW, met the girl, KATHERINE MATTHIAS (MATHIEU IN FRENCH) whom he eventually married and who mothered their brood of eleven children.

KATHERINE MATTHIAS was the only child of a widowed lady from the province of Alsace-Lorraine. These people were apparently of mixed racial origin with a strong hint of Mongolian strain in their blood. The unusually high cheek bones and the somewhat slanted eyes that are commonly present in generation after generation would seem to attest to that. At any rate, these MATTHIAS ladies were bilingual and culturally mixed and apparently felt at home with either the German or French who surrounded them. The mother, too, had become disenchanted with her native land and suffered from the same feelings of hopelessness that generally pervaded among the petty bourgeoisie and peasants.

Mother MATTHIAS had been widowed early when her husband died as a result of wartime exposures. He had been a minor officer in the mighty French army of 500,000 men that Napoleon had taken with him to conquer Russia. History tells of Napoleon's defeat before Moscow and how his once magnificent army of half a million men had been reduced to a pitifully small band of 25,000 that finally made its way back to France. The husband, KATHERINE'S father, was one of those few who returned albeit a weakened, sick, and broken man. He did not long survive, and his young

wife became a widow with only her daughter, who was destined to become my great-grandmother, to offer her solace.

My father, ALBERT, her great-grandson, told me how the widow MATTHIAS and her young daughter decided to emigrate to that promised land: America. They sold their possessions and transferred their wealth into gold which they proceeded to bring with them to the new and unknown country somewhere across the forbidding seas. These two women did not wish to travel alone; so, they joined a male cousin who also was of mind to leave the old country for the new. The three set out on board a sailing vessel bound for the port of New York. The trip was largely uneventful until, when within the sight of land, the vessel was struck by a "great storm" (hurricane?) that blew them far out to sea and off course. After the storm, there came a "great calm" and the vessel and its passengers lay motionless in the water for days. Eventually, food and water became scarce and their physical sufferings were added to their mounting anxieties. A number of the passengers grew sick and some of them died, and their bodies were confined to the Atlantic waters over which they idly sat. After days, the winds picked up, and the ship and its weakened and sorry looking passengers and crew made port at Baltimore.

The next morning when it came time to gather their meager belongings and disembark, the two women searched in vain for the missing cousin. The two, by now thoroughly frightened women, went to their trunk to procure their gold from the "strong box" which had been stored in the bottom of the trunk. When the lid of the strong box was opened, the women, to their dismay, found it to be empty of its gold. The trusting women had allowed their cousin to possess a second key, and the gold had proved to

be too great a temptation for him. Very likely this missing cousin had bribed some seaman to assist him in his clandestine actions. The writer has several times wondered what happened to this despicable relative; surely, his ill gotten gains neither did him good or last very long.

At any rate, here we find these two foreign women in a strange land unable to either speak or read the language of the new country. How these two fared, the adventures they encountered, one can only imagine. Certainly they must have been terribly frightened and bewildered; yet, out of the depth of their despair came the realization that there was to be no turning back and going on to their destiny was the only course open to them. How, why, or when these two came to Cincinnati we have never heard. And it is equally unknown why they ever found themselves in the Franklin county community of St. Peter. We can only conjecture that in their conversations with other recently arrived immigrants, they learned of this small and raw community where the inhabitants were both German in culture and Catholic in religion. It was at the newly built church in St. Peter that the young JOHN PETER, son of ANDREW, met and married KATHERINE MATTHIAS. The circumstances of their meeting and their courtship were never revealed to me. No doubt, it was a short courtship. My father, ALBERT, who was something of an iconoclast rather than a romanticist dismissed it all by saying: "my grandfather needed a wife; my grandmother needed a husband, each was available; so, they married." The date of their nuptials is unknown; the records at St. Peter's church for that period are unaccountably missing.

JOHN PETER moved his wife and her widowed mother into their log cabin situated on the land that he had purchased in 1839. The original log cabin has long since disap-

peared. My father, ALBERT, told me that when he saw it in the late 1920's, it had fallen-into ruin consisting of no more than a mass of rotting logs whose distinguishing features had long since disappeared. However, ANDY, the father of ALBERT had said that the cabin had consisted of one large room downstairs with a dirt floor and a ladder leading to the upstairs where the older boys slept.

The single room, heated by a stone fireplace and sporting its compacted clay floor, was the center of life for the family. The family ate, lived, and often slept here. And here it was that the widowed grandmother MATTHIAS, worn out by her hard life of work, disappointments, and deprivation, died. The year was 1851 and the time was night. Her daughter, KATHERINE, and son-in-law, JOHN, washed her lifeless body and tenderly prepared it for burial. The two older boys, SEBASTIAN and HENRY, were armed with torches, both to light their way and to serve as a protection against attacks by wild animals. The boys were given instructions to announce the grandmother's death to a near neighbor who also happened to be a casket maker. Although late at night, this near neighbor set about making a suitable casket for the deceased.

Next morning, the casket maker brought the box over to the PETER'S family and the deceased was laid therein. The neighbors gathered that day to offer their prayers and respect for the dead and the surviving family. The following day, the family and friends escorted the deceased to the church for a final burial service and internment in the church yard. My grandfather, ANDY, being but four years of age, was permitted to ride on the casket-bearing wagon; no doubt, this unusual circumstance in the life of one so young caused him to recall the event so vividly in later years.

As was common with the pioneer family, the marriage of JOHN and KATHERINE PETER produced many children. Their first born was named SEBASTIAN and he saw the light of day on September 7, 1841. He was baptized the next day after his birth. Sponsors were his uncle and aunt: SEBASTIAN and MARIA EVA PETER. This child, SEBASTIAN was not destined for long life. I have a picture of him taken in his youth. His was a face of strong features with unusually prominent cheek bones. The portrait gives the impression of a young man of strong character looking straight out at the viewer. His somber face was framed by a strong, thick shock of long black hair. SEBASTIAN was the first of this brood to leave home. As it so often has happened in the history of the human race, it was the lure of gold that took this young man away from home and family. It was (Civil) war-time. This unfortunate conflict had broken out and SEBASTIAN heard of the need for strong young laborers in the fledgling steel mills of Pittsburgh. So, he packed his belongings and made his way eastward.

SEBASTIAN worked hard and lived in a most frugal manner, and he must have been impressed by the bustle of this new industrial city. After a period of time, he accumulated what seemed to him to be a considerable sum of money; so, having achieved his goal, he quit his job. Then he transferred his property and money into gold which he secreted in a kind of money belt that he wore under his clothing and next to his body. I have been told that this money belt was not removed until SEBASTIAN arrived home in Franklin county.

Naturally cautious by nature and trusting no one, SEBASTIAN set out for his family's home with his tidy sum of gold hidden beneath his clothing. He was said to have

walked the entire distance from Pittsburgh both to avoid the proximity of strangers (the fear of robbery was very real) and to save the fare money. He further conserved his funds by avoiding taverns and sleeping with farm families. Instead, he slept in the woods, sometime in hollow logs, or on straw stacks. Somewhere on the way home, he drank contaminated water from either a stream or well, and this was to prove his undoing. Shortly after returning home, SEBASTIAN took ill with a high fever and a resulting delirium. In a few days (April 21, 1863) he lay dead of the dreaded typhoid fever. He was buried in the church cemetery at Oldenburg, Indiana, a youth of but 21 years with promise unfulfilled.

A second son, born on December 6, 1842, was given the baptismal name of HENRY after his uncle and baptismal sponsor: HENRY and JUNIALA PETER. HENRY, too, was destined for a short life. He married a CATHERINE STAHLMAN from whom he had a single child, a son christened FRANK. This child was but four years of age when HENRY expired. FRANK eventually located in the Greensburg, IN community and some of his descendants are said to yet live in that area. ALBERT had a tale to relate concerning one of those descendants of FRANK. This relative was said to have been deficient in mathematical skills so severe that there came a time when this cousin confused his funds with those of his employer. At the time of his trial for embezzlement, an understanding judge sentenced him to a couple years of incarceration so that he might take a kind of post graduate course in elementary education.

A third son, J. NICHOLAS, was born on April 17, 1844. Like his siblings, he was baptized in the St. PETER church. Sponsors were NICHOLAS WAGNER and EVA REIPBER-

GER. Date of this event was May 28, 1844. NICK, as he became known, was the possessor of a winning personality and was credited with the ability to make and keep friends easily. He married MARY ANN NEUMANN and to this couple a total of twelve children was born. All of the dozen lived to maturity. This family was rich only in the fertility of the parents. ALBERT told me of their efforts to gain a livelihood from a rather poorly producing farm about eight miles east of Brookville and just north of present Indiana Highway # 252. He related that in their frugality, the family brewed an ersatz (imitation) coffee made from the roasted grains of rye and wheat. And when it came time for the mother to give birth, NICK, her husband, served as midwife. His results were good: twelve live births out of twelve pregnancies. Many a modern obstetrician could well envy that record.

Now permit me to relate a couple of incidents that are still painful to contemplate even after the ninety plus years that have since gone by. The dreaded small pox struck the neighborhood in 1903 and some of the family became infected. Given the rudimentary medical norms of that day, the only effective means of treatment was containment. Thus the afflicted family was quarantined; that is to say that no intercourse between the infected family and the outside world was permitted. Unfortunately, the mother MARY ANN, became ill and died. A neighbor upon receiving knowledge of this sad event, delivered a casket to the farmyard. Nick took the casket inside and tenderly laid his dead spouse inside. Then after what must have been tearful good-byes, the now filled casket was put into the farmhouse yard where it was picked up by neighbors and taken to the church in Brookville for final service. Burial was in St. Michael's cemetery with none of the immediate family allowed to be present because of the quarantine.

A second incident, that strikes us as being unfair as well as bitter, concerned two daughters born to NICK and MARY ANN. These daughters were given the baptismal names of ROSE and DOROTHY. They had joined the religious community of Sisters of St. Francis located in Oldenburg, Indiana. One of them was but a child of 13 or so when she left her home. Because of the strictness of the Sisters group, the rules did not permit them to ever return home during the lifetime of the mother. And when that mother expired as outlined previously, the fear of the contagiousness of the small pox infection prevented them from seeing their mother again, even in death.

Children continued to be born to JOHN and KATHERINE with almost predictable regularity. Whereas a large family today might well be considered an economic liability, in the early days of our nation, a house filled with children was believed to be an economic necessity. The men of that day took seriously, and put into practice, the biblical admonition to "go forth and multiply." It was said that if a man fathered fewer than a half dozen offspring his virility was open to question.

A fourth child, a son, born on November 1, 1845, was named ANDREW, either after the original immigrant-grandfather or after his godfather, ANDREW STAHLMAN. MARIE SCHMIT was the godmother. Little ANDREW died before his second birthday from unknown causes and lies buried in an unmarked grave in the church cemetery at St. Peter's.

On July 19, 1847, a fifth child and the fifth son was born. he was baptized the next day and his godparents were ANDREW and ELIZABETH STAHLMAN. This child was also given the name ANDREW and was destined to become my

grandfather. ANDY, affectionately known to his family as "PA", was anecdotal by nature, and it is due largely to his family tales that I have been able to trace the family story herein presented.

As the children grew, they were put to work to help the family in the never ending battle of life; producing enough food and fuel for the growing family. Improvements were added to the home. Pa recalled the addition of a loose plank floor to the downstairs room. This proved to be a mixed blessing to the boys. On the positive side, the planking offered a good place to play (shoot) their home-made marbles or pellets. On the other hand, the planks were loosely laid and the cracks sometimes permitted an errant marble to fall through to the ground beneath. Then it became the task of the players to move the furniture, lift up the planks, and retrieve the lost marble.

Although the children had little formal education (PA had the sum of two months), book learning was not completely neglected. We have been told that the father gathered the children about the table during the winter nights and there, in the flickering light of a home-made candle, he introduced his offspring to the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Some effort was made to teach the children something of French, but no English was spoken. German remained the principal language of the family as it was indeed with the local church and neighborhood.

Pa told us that in those early days, there were few fences. Those that existed were almost always made of the materials at hand. Sometimes, stone was used; however, the most common material available was wood. Thus the rail fences, most commonly made of split walnut or other hardwoods were to be found about the home and outbuildings of every

farm. However, the pastures and uncut woodlands were frequently unfenced. Thus, families allowed their hogs to run wild through the woods where they could fatten on roots, acorns, hickory, beech and other nuts. The sows had earlier been marked, either in the ear or the tail, so that each of the farm neighbors had a distinctive marking on these adult hogs. Then before the onset of winter, neighbors gathered together and had a primitive type of hog-roundup. The adults could easily be identified by their individual markings. And the young pigs usually followed their individual mothers. Unattached pigs were divided among these neighbors taking part of the roundup. Each farmer had a few cattle important in the supply of milk, leather, meat and frequently, for labor. Oxen were commonly seen in those days and many persons considered them superior to horses for much of the heavy farm work. PA PETERS told us frequently of his having worked oxen on both his father's farm and those of other farmers.

The land, though the topsoil was thin, was fertile and produced good crops. In those pioneer days, 40 bushels of wheat to the acre was not unknown. Corn was also in good production. The chief problem with growing corn occurred in the fall season. The ripening corn proved too tempting for the numerous raccoons and the even more numerous squirrels. Pa said that the boys in the family had a special designated task. Working in pairs, they took turns walking up and down the small fields, all the time making loud noises by means of slapping two broad pallets of wood together. It was hoped that the resulting unpleasant noises would serve to frighten the thieving animals away so that the losses to them could be held to a minimum.

PA was also a witness to the once ubiquitous, and now extinct, passenger pigeon. PA related that he had observed

flocks so great that in passing overhead the sun would be darkened as by a passing cloud. Also, he noted, that when these pigeons would alight on a large tree limb, often, that limb would crack and break under the sheer weight of the hundreds of birds on that limb.

By the time PA (ANDY) was born (1847), the large wild animals had all been killed or driven elsewhere. Black bear, cougar, and buffalo were all gone and remained only in the tales that the "old-timers" related to the young. However, deer and wild turkeys were still plentiful.

Along with raising crops and tending domestic animals, there remained the very formidable task of clearing more of the virgin woodlands so that more crop land would be available. During the year, as time permitted, the father and the older boys would cut the virgin timber. PA said that often this meant cutting trees that were four feet or more in diameter and from 75 to 100 feet tall. All of this cutting and clearing, it must be remembered, was done manually except for the considerable help afforded by the use of oxen to pull the heavy logs.

Felling trees by our ancestors was no mean feat and certainly not without danger to life and limb. Modern woodsmen have all the better of it what with chain saws, bulldozers, dynamite, etc. Following the felling of the trees, the limbs were trimmed off and the large logs cut into manageable lengths. Then, in the winter time, when other work had slackened off, neighbors would gather together and with their combined help, these logs were "rolled" into huge piles and burned. Sometimes these fires would smolder for a couple of weeks before the mass was reduced to hot ashes. Many years later, when good timber was already becoming scarce in this area, my father, ALBERT, asked PA why they had to

"waste" all of that good timber. The old man had a practical answer: "We had to eat", he said, "and we couldn't grow food and have the trees too."

The parade of infants continued: Fewer than two years after the birth of ANDY, a sixth son was born: On May 18, 1849. He was christened FRANZ (Francis) and he was baptized at St. Peter's church the next day. His sponsors were FRANZ and AGATHA BAUER. According to all accounts, FRANZ or FRANK was slow in moving and equally slow in his mental processes. Being afflicted with the "slows" led to his nickname: "Lightening Peters" and the locals ever afterward referred to FRANK by that sobriquet. A multitude of stories were built around FRANK until he became something of a local legend. One such tale that comes to mind was the time that he had been engaged to trim a large tree. In his thoughtlessness, FRANK sawed off a limb on which he was sitting with disastrous results. Both FRANK and the severed limb struck the ground below.

FRANK married MARY SENEFELD and a number of children was born to them. This couple served as baptismal sponsors to my father, ALBERT, in 1890. Many years later, when FRANK had expired and my parents went to pay their respects to the deceased and his family, ALBERT, expressed his sympathies to the widow, his aunt MARY. Her response, in German, was something of a classic: "Now," she said, "perhaps things will go better." Unfortunately, I am unable to relate whether or not conditions did indeed improve.

After having six sons consecutively, it must have been a pleasure for KATHERINE to learn that her seventh child was a daughter. She was born May 11, 1851 and christened ANNA MARGARET. The baptism took place two days later

and the sponsors were ADAM and ANNA PETER. Although married three times, ANNA MARGARET known as aunt MAG, expired childless in 1915. Her last husband was named ANDREW MOSTER and he survived her for many years. I remember his as a thin, tottering, old man with huge handlebar mustaches the kind of which were worn by the emperor FRANZ JOSEF of Austro-Hungary.

A seventh son, baptized GEORGE, was born on January 12, 1853. He was taken to St. Peter's church for the ceremony two days later. GEORGE PETER and REGINA DING served as baptismal sponsors. This little fellow was not destined for long life. As a little child, he was in the woods with his elders who were going about burning brush piles. His childhood curiosity prevailed over family warnings and he walked too close to the blaze, his clothing caught fire, he was severely burned and he shortly died. This was but another page of sadness in the life book of JOHN and KATHERINE PETER. It can be believed when her daughter-in-law, my grandmother, stated that KATHERINE in her lifetime had shed a "wash tub filled with tears."

Sometime after the death of this child GEORGE, the family sold their land and purchased a farm in Salt Creek township of Franklin county. This farm is located about three miles from Peppertown and about five miles from the town of Oldenburg. Changing home locations did not appear to bring about improvement in the fortunes of JOHN and KATHERINE. A grinding poverty seemed to be their permanent lot. Even the more simple things had to be done the hard way. When JOHN, the husband and father, wished to obtain flour for the family's kitchen, he would throw a couple sacks of wheat across his horse, then mounting his horse, he would ride more than ten miles to Spear's mill in

Brookville which was located just east of the present swimming pool. There the wheat was ground and the resulting flour divided equally with the miller as his fee for milling the wheat. The narrow dirt road on which this family lived consisted of many ups and downs. The site of the cabin is still known as "Peters Hill" although no one by that name has lived at that location in more than a century.

A second daughter, christened FRANCES, was born June 17, 1855. In her youth, FRANCES was courted by LAWRENCE SPAETH. However, nothing came of this courtship as the parents objected to LAWRENCE as not meeting the standards that they had envisioned for their daughter. Being of a mind to obey her parents, FRANCES agreed not to see LAWRENCE again. LAWRENCE eventually married another woman, who, however died some years later without surviving children. Sometime after, LAWRENCE again sought the company of FRANCES. By this time, her father had died and the surviving mother offered little or no opposition to the proposed union, and the two were married. Eventually they became the parents of six children. With the birth of her last child, FRANCES contracted the dreaded child-bed fever and died leaving her infant son, OTTO. The date was December 13, 1895. LAWRENCE failed to distinguish himself as a farmer. Marriage, however, must have strongly appealed to him as once again he remarried. LAWRENCE'S chief claim to a dubious fame was the location of his death. It was always said that Uncle LAWRENCE had fallen dead on a Cincinnati street. The truth was somewhat different as ALBERT was to learn much later: LAWRENCE had been a customer of a Georgia street (Cincinnati) bordello, and while partaking of the fruits of the establishment, his heart failed him and he died suddenly. To my knowledge, the immediate family has never

learned the truth of this incident, and I shall not be the first to inform them.

A tenth child, a daughter, was born on January 26, 1856. She was given the baptismal name of KATHERINE. She was destined to outlive all of her siblings. She married a MR. FERDINAND BURKHART, a German immigrant. This family had a total of ten children all of whom were sons except for the last child. AGNES. AUNT KATE, as my father addressed her, expired in 1934 and rests in St. Michael's cemetery. Her husband, FERD, is buried by her side. FERD was a man of more than usual interests in books and community affairs. At one time he was a county official for a couple of terms. Once, when ALBERT was a child, FERD presented him with a book, a most unusual gift among this class of German immigrants in Franklin country. Perhaps he perceived some bookish inclinations in the recesses of this child's psyche.

Late in his life, FERD was afflicted with a most unusual condition that was not understood by either his doctors or family. He took to his bed and stayed there for more than ten years until death released him from this affliction. I recall that he did not seem to communicate well with either his family or his neighbors; in fact some visitors had the distinct impression that he would have preferred to be left alone. More than sixty years later, his grand-daughter, herself about 75 years of age at that time, revealed the true story of his mysterious condition. It seems that old FERD had made amorous advances to one of his daughter-in laws. She spurned his advances and then told her husband of the old man's impropriety. In order to escape the wrath of his son and the embarrassment of the situation, FERD feigned loss of mental and physical prowess. And he kept up this cha-

rade until his death: truly, he was a prisoner of his own making.

In 1863, when young ANDY was about 16 years of age, the Civil War, which up to that time had seemed remote, touched the lives of the PETER(S) family. In that year, General John Morgan conducted a Confederate raid into southern Indiana, and his main force headed eastward and just south of the Franklin county border. There were some stragglers who came as close as Oldenburg, St. Mary's. and Trenton and caused considerable mischief. Great alarm came to the inhabitants and those folk who possessed "valuables" often buried them somewhere in the woods. Within days the raiders had crossed the border into Ohio and this phase of excitement had passed. The next great concern came about with the announcement of the Draft Act of 1863. The family, especially KATHERINE, was totally opposed to her family's involvement as she had memories of her father's suffering and early death resulting from the Napoleonic campaign in Russia. When ANDY became sixteen years old, in 1863, he sought to gain his parents' permission to join the Union army. Parental permission was required because of his age; however, KATHERINE refused to sign any such papers. However, a compromise was reached between the parents and son: It was agreed that should the father, JOHANNES, find his name on the draft list, then young ANDY would be permitted to take the father's place as a substitute. In 1863, naming a substitute was considered a legal and honorable course to follow. To conclude this episode, allow me to relate that the father's name was never called and the son was therefore, never to wear the uniform of a soldier. A couple of years later, when ANDY had reached the age of 18 and could volunteer without the need of parental permission, the war had come to a conclusion.

The increases in the family of JOHNNES and KATHERINE continued to outpace the productivity of the land. The result of this growing imbalance brought about the economic necessity for the older children to take leave of the friendly hearth of home. Soon after reaching the age of 18, ANDY went to live with his older brother, NICHOLAS and wife, who were farming a few miles away in western Franklin county. He assisted in the myriad tasks of primitive farming: plowing, growing of crops and their harvesting, cutting of wood for fuel, care of the livestock, etc. Some months later, most probably because of lack of capital, ANDY gave up on farming forever and soon moved to the village of Prescott (Shelby county) where he apprenticed himself to a wagon maker. At that time, wagons were not massed produced. They were usually the product of one man producing and assembling each part in the fashion of the craftsman of another era. The finished wagon could truly be called the product of a single artisan.

A few miles from PA'S employment was the catholic church of St. Vincent, where PA attended to his religious duties. It was there that he met a young blond girl, MARY RUNNEBOHM, who was later to become his wife and the mother of his eleven children, and, not incidentally, my grandmother. MARY RUNNEBOHM (PETERS) was the eldest child of MARY ELIZABETH MEYROSE and HENRY ANTHONY RUNNEBOHM. She was born in Franklin county in June of 1854. Her maternal grandfather, BERNARD MEYROSE, was from Oldenburg, Germany and is credited with co-platting the picturesque village of Oldenburg named for their favorite city in old Germany.

HENRY ANTHONY RUNNEBOHM and his wife MARY began their lives together on a hilly farm along Pipe

creek in Franklin county. They attended the little church of St. Mayr's of the Rock. Grandfather RUNNEBOHM was not content with farming those rugged hills along Pipe creek from which the rich top soil had already begun to erode. Through contacts he had maintained with an old friend, a MR. ROELL, he heard of the established catholic community of St. Vincents in Shelby county and of the rich agricultural soil surrounding the area. Accordingly, he made an inspection trip and discovered that much of the land was swampy. But, he learned that community plans were in the making for the construction of drainage ditching. He thereupon purchased an 80 acre tract of land which even today is in the possession of one of his descendants bearing the family name. After selling his Franklin county holdings, he moved his considerable brood to the new farm where he lived until his death in 1910.

The final child, a daughter, was born to JOHN and KATHERINE on February 17, 1861. She was christened MARY C. and married CHARLES JOERG. JOERG is the German version of "George". "Aunt Mary" was a friendly soul, and I remember visiting her with my mother many times when I was a preschooler. She always offered me a small glass of wine and a cookie as refreshment. By occupation she was a seamstress and, I'm told, she largely earned the family living. Her husband was said to have been plagued with chronic back troubles. To their everlasting credit, this couple took the infant son of her deceased sister, FRANCES SPAETH, and reared him as their very own. This unfortunate youth was to suffer a most tragic death. While driving a team of horses, he came to a railroad crossing approximately 1/2 mile south of Brookville. He paused to allow an approaching train to pass. For some unknown reason, perhaps it was the loud whistle of the train, the

horses became frightened, panicked, and ran headlong directly into the path of the oncoming engine. Needless to say, the wagon and its load were demolished and young OTTO and his team were killed. The father and mother (GEORGE) were deeply hurt by this tragedy.

Children came easily and often to ANDY (PA) and MARY (MA) as they were affectionately known to their children and grandchildren. Their first born, JOHN, arrived on October 28, 1873. Because poverty was the ever present companion of MA and PA, the older children were forced to leave home early in life in order to make room for the little ones who followed with great regularity. At the age of twelve, JOHN moved to Brookville and stayed with a relative. He quickly was put to work driving a one horse delivery cart that carried coal to the various house holds. There was no communication between this little boy and his parents. One day, some weeks later, PA and MA came to Brookville to visit their son. The child, JOHN was at work and his face was streaked and smudged with the coal dust that was the identifying mark of his occupation. When JOHN happily spied his parents, his home-sickness overcame him, a flood of tears welled up in his eyes and washed little gullies down his blackened cheeks. The parents, too, joined in this tearful, yet happy, reunion.

After a time, JOHN migrated to Cincinnati and took a job in a saloon. He lived in a most frugal manner and managed to save money, regardless of how little he earned. For a time, JOHN, was making seven dollars weekly. When he announced to his boss and saloon owner that he was soon to marry, the boss, feeling sorry for him, raised his salary to eight dollars weekly. As an example of his frugality and self-denial, JOHN walked five miles to and from work daily

in order to avoid the ten cent car fare. Eventually JOHN and KATE, his spouse, had saved the considerable sum of \$2,000 which they secreted on their persons as they did not trust banks and their frequent failures, and with the absence of depositor's safe guards at the time, this lack of trust doesn't seem so unreasonable. In time, this couple purchased a saloon in Norwood, Ohio and with industry and continued frugality eventually became persons of considerable substance.

JOHN PETER(S) outlived his good wife, aunt KATE KAVLAGE, by a couple of years, and he died in 1956 filled with respect of family and community. This couple was survived by all nine of their children.

The next child, a daughter, was born to MA and PA in 1875 and christened KATHERINE. As a young woman, she sought work in Cincinnati. There she met Mr. FRED SHEPMAN and they were married. FRED was said to have come from a mercantile family that owned a large department store in Evansville, IN. To this union were born two sons: PAUL who died in childhood and ARNOLD who lived to the age of ninety only to die as a result of an automobile accident. FRED died early in life, and his widow, aunt KATE, together with her surviving son, ARNOLD, moved back to Brookville to live with MA and PA for the support, food, and shelter which they could provide. In the absence of widow's benefits, this was the only course open to the widow and her orphaned son. Later in life, aunt KATE married a widower, MR. FRED FANGMAN, who also had a young son. ARNOLD was delighted that his mother's marriage brought him a brother (FREDDIE) to replace his deceased brother, PAUL. KATE survived both her husbands and expired suddenly in 1955.

JOHANNES PETER

CATHERINE MATTHEWS 32-33
(MATTHIAS)

BORN: 4-05-1819
Gelhausen, Hessen, Germany

BORN: 1815
Lorraine, France

MARRIED: 1-04-1841
St. Peter's Catholic Church
St. Peters, Franklin Co. IN

OCCUPATION: Farmer

DIED: 9-29-1877
AGE: 58
BURIAL: Oldenburg, IN

DIED: 10-01-1881
AGE: 66
BURIAL: Oldenburg, IN

CHILDREN	BORN-DIED	BIRTHPLACE	SPOUSE	MARRIED
Sebastian	1841-1863	Franklin Co. IN		
HENRY	1842-1872	"	CATHERINE STALLMAN	2-25-1868
John Nicholas	1844-1908	"	Anna Mary Neumann	
Andrew	1847-1927	"	Mary Runnebahr	
Francis A.	1849-1917	"		
Margaret	1851-1915	"	Francis Burkhardt	
George	1853-1854	"		
* Catherine	1856-1934	"	Ferdinand Burkhardt	11-16-1880
Francesca	1855-1895	"	Francis Spaeth	
Mary	1861-1922	"	Charles Joerg	

JOHN immigrated from Germany via Baltimore MD in May 1836, to Pittsburg PA for 5 months, then to Cincinnati OH, until September 1837, then to Franklin Co. IN, with his parents, JOHN, SR. and EVA. On his Application for Naturalization (see Exhibit I) he renounced allegiance to William, Keurfest of Hesgen.

On 12-08-1840 JOHN & CATHERINE were granted a marriage license, and on 1-10-1841 they were married by Father Ferneding, the original Pastor of St. Peter's Church.

In 1850, they lived in Highland Twp., near St. Peters IN with a "Barbery Peter", shown as age 77 on the census records (possibly JOHN'S mother, EVA, who would have been 77 that year).

In 1860 & 1870 they lived in Butler Twp., near Oldenburg IN.

Ref:

Franklin Co. IN Probate Court Book 4, Page 39

Franklin Co. IN Marriages 1839-1845 (pg. 66)

1850 Highland Census (H287)

1860 Butler Twp. Census (H462)

1870 Butler Twp. Census (H188)

JOHANNES PETER "SR"

EVA

64-65

BORN: 1773
Gelhausen, Hessen, Germany

BORN: 1774
Hessen, Germany

MARRIED:
Germany

OCCUPATION: Farmer

DIED: 1849
AGE: 75
BURIAL: Franklin Co. IN

DIED:
AGE:
BURIAL: Franklin Co. IN

CHILDREN	BORN-DIED	BIRTHPLACE	SPOUSE	MARRIED
Sebastian	1806	Germany		
Maria	1810	"		
Catherine	1816	"		
* JOHN	1819-1877	Germany	CATHERINE MATTHEWS	1-04-1841
Henry	1821	"		

The following is from the Naturalization Records referenced below:

"...that he was born in the County of Gelhausen in the Dukedom of Hesse in the year 1773, that he is about 65 years of age, that he left said kingdom in May, 1836, and landed at Baltimore in the United States of America in August, 1836, and from there he came to and arrived at Pittsburg in the State of Pennsylvania in September 1836 and from there he came to the county of Franklin in the State of Indiana in September, 1837....."

The Abstract of Passengers referenced below listed the family members shown above.

Ref:

Quarterly Abstract of Passengers arriving Baltimore, 1834-1837 (Allen Co. IN Library)
Franklin Co. IN Citizenship/Naturalization Records, Book 2, Page 117, Dated Jan 22, 1838

Aug 23 August Term A.D. 1842

In the Matter of } Application for Naturalization
John Peter an alien }

Comes John Peter an alien and makes application to be admitted to the right of a citizen of the United States, and produced to the Court and filed his Declaration and oath of Intention as follows To wit
"That of Indiana Franklin County 3rd Sec

Personally appeared before me Robert John Clerk of the Circuit Court of said county, John Peter to his being duly sworn on oath makes the following Declaration and Report to wit. That he was born on the 5th day of April 1819 in Frankfurt in Rhenish in Germany under the Allegiance of William King of Prussia. That he emigrated from thence to Baltimore in the State of Maryland in May 1836 with his parents being then about 17 years of age that with his parents he went immediately to Pittsburg in the State of Pennsylvania where they remained five months and then removed to Cincinnati where he remained until the 1st of September in the year 1837 when he came into the County of Franklin and State of Indiana where he now resides and which is his intended place of settlement and the said John Peter further declares that it is his bona fide intention to become a citizen of the United States and to renounce forever all Allegiance and fidelity to every Prince, Potentate, State or Sovereignty whatever and particularly to William King of Prussia of whom he is a subject
Sworn & subscribed to before me this 23rd day of August 1842 Robert John Clerk

Which Report being examined

by the Court, and it appearing to the satisfaction of the Court upon the testimony of John Peter sen^r and John Schlicht that the said John Peter arrived in the United States when he was under eighteen years old and that he has resided in the United States five years at least, and within the State of Indiana at least one year last past, and that during that time he has behaved as a man of good Moral Character Attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States, and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the Citizens of the same. Whereupon the said John Peter was duly sworn in open Court that he will support the Constitution of the United States and that he doth forever renounce and abjure all Allegiance and fidelity to every foreign Prince Potentate State or Sovereignty, and particularly to William King of Prussia

42 State of Indiana
Franklin County

Set it Reminded

that on the 22^d day of January 1838 personally
appeared before Robert John Clerk of the Probate
and Circuit Court in and for the County
of Franklin aforesaid John Peter a white
and makes the following report and declaration
to wit "That he was born in the County of
Gelnhausen in the Duchedom of Hesse in the
Year 1773 that he is about 65 years of age
that he left said Kingdom in May 1834
and landed at Baltimore on the State of
Maryland in the United States of America
in August 1836, and from thence he came
to and arrived at Pittsburg on the State
of Pennsylvania in September 1836 and
from thence he came to the County of Franklin
in the State of Indiana in September of
1837 when he has ever since and now does
reside and he on oath declares that it is
his bonafide intention to become a citizen of
The United States of America and to renounce
forever all allegiance and fidelity to any for-
eign Prince Potentate State or Sovereign what-
ever and particularly to William King of
Saxe of Hesse

Sworn & Subscribed to this
23^d day of Jan 1838 by the
said John Peter
Robert John Clerk
By J. B. Linder Notary

John Peter

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