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By

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Although not the first people of Germanic descent to inhabit the territory of Monroe County, the first organized party to arrive was the *Tisher/Fankhauser/Marti/Nispeli/ Tschappatt* party in September 1819. They had originally intended to settle farther south, on the Kanawha River, but were persuaded by the German-speaking Pennsylvania and Maryland natives from Belmont County, Henry *Schwepe* and George *Goetz,* to take government lands in the northeastern corner of Monroe County near Jacon *Bare's* landing, now Hannibal, Ohio. Christian *Ruegsegger* soon joined them. Another intertwined with those of this party is *Maienknecht,* since Jacob *Tisher's* son John married Philippina *Maienknecht,* and Jacob *Maienknecht* married Jacob *Tisher's* daughter Maria. Later on, Jacob *Tisher* became one of the first German-speaking Methodist circuit riders in the Pittsburgh conference. His party came from Canton Bern, Switzerland: the *Tschappatt*s from Bözingen near Biel, the *Marti*s from Freimettingen near Oberdiessbach, the *Fankhauser*s from Trub in the Emmanthal (the river valley noted for the Swiss cheese which is even today a specialty of Monroe County), and the *Tisher*s from southeastern Canton Bern.

The second major party of German-speaking settlers in Monroe County settled in the Miltonsburg area (Malaga Township) from about 1831 through 1839. Although they did not come all at once, it is still correct to speak of a mass migration, as they all came from the same few neighboring towns in Germany. Some of their names (most of which are still found in Monroe County), are *Becker, Bintz, Brubach, Buckio, Christmann, Feiock, Feldner, Fliehmann, Jacky, Kiltzer, Kindelberger, Matz, Neuhard, Pfalzgraf, Schaub, Schenk, Schneider,* and *Weber.* They came from the villages

of Schönau, Rumbach, Wilgartswiesen, Vorderweidenthal, Hinterweidenthal, Petersbächl, Spirkelbach, and surrounding places. A typical page of the Rumbach baptism books for the year 1781 (the earliest ones extant are from 1780) contains the following names: *Bintz, Brubach, Brüny, Bley, Jaccy, Kindelberger, Kern, Neuhardt, Schneider,* and *Schnitter.* More than 50 years later, seven of these ten surnames appear again—in the Miltonsburg, Ohio church books. These villages are located in the same section of the Palatinate (*Pfalz*) near the French border, in the County of Dahn. They were true Palatines (from the Palatinate) rather than generic "Palatines" (as lumped together in the early ship lists and still used to indicate German-speaking immigrants in general).

Some of these Monroe County settlers have unmistakably Swiss names, such as *Schaub* and *Jacky.* These may have come down the Rhine around 1653, a relatively peaceful time following the Peace of Westphalia, and the time of the peasants' revolts against the cities in Switzerland. Others undoubtedly came from France, Huguenots forced to flee France as the result of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Still others came to help fill the need for skilled craftsmen—carpenters, stonemasons, smiths—to rebuild a devastated and depopulated Palatinate. Others may have come as a religious refuge.

By the 1830's the population of the Palatinate was growing faster than the ability of the land to support it. With these economic conditions and with the desire to spare their sons from further wars, many settlers from this section of the Palatinate emigrated to a remarkably similar *Landschaft* in Ohio, an area also having rolling hills, forests, green valleys, also located near a major river (the Ohio), a rural, as yet unopened land. By this time Pennsylvania was mostly settled. The flat land in Ohio had already been bought from the land offices. This Miltonsburg-Lewisville area was settled, in addition to the Protestants mentioned before, by Catholics with names such as *Benninghaus, Beidenharn, Burkhart, December, Haren, Howiler, Nauer, Oblinger, Paulus, Ries-*

beck, Singer, Weisend, Yunkas, and *Zwick,* as well as by other Protestants; from Hessen (near Melsungen): *Claus, Freitag, Landefeld, Niebch, Riemenschneider,* and *Tumeyer:* Hannover: *Just* and *Steinhoff;* Saxony (near Plauen in the Vogtland): *Hillig, Kahrig,* and *Schebele;* Westphalia (Küsperlin, Kreis Tecklenburg); *Wittenbrook;* Württemberg (east of Stuttgart); *Rapp* and *Schäfer;* Canton Bern, Switzerland (the Wangen/Aarwangen area): *Egger, Müller, Segesser;* and from Alsace (near Wörth): *Kuhn, Nippert, Pfalzgraf,* and *Stephan.*

In a third migration, new German-speaking settlers began arriving in northeastern Monroe County, joining the Swiss who were already there, some of them relatives of the 1819 group who had received letters with good reports from the new "Switzerland of Ohio," and others simply a part of the wave of settlers immigrating from German lands in this period who decided to stop in Monroe County. By 1830 the names *Luthy, Hubacher, Keller, Imhoff, Lemley, Bigler, Suter, Burki, Yost,* and *Krebs* appear in the county. *Koerner, Krebs, Ruff, Schäfer, Schindler, Yenny,* and *Zimmerly* were in Switzerland Township by 1840; *Bauer, Bruny, Luthy,* and *Walter* in Ohio Township. During the 1840's there was heavy immigration into these townships, and a spillover into others. The peak of this wave of immigration came in 1846 and 1847. Arrivals during this period include *Bauer, Jennewein, Blattler, Hubacher, Kieffer, Schnegg, Steiner,* and *Zingg* in Switzerland Township; *Bachmann, Eisenbarth, Gasser, Gotherd, Kassermann, Kreps, Lehmann, Lude, Luikart, Moser, Niemann, Riethmiller, Riggenbach, Rufener, Schupbach, Stalder, Winkler,* and *Yaussy* in Ohio Township; and *Affolter, Alemann, Fuchs, Grossenbacher, Keller, Roth, Schnell, Tubach,* and *Witschey* in Green Township. Adams Township and Benton Township yield few names that are familiar today in Monroe County; apparently they moved on. *Abersold, Breck, Swetgart, Frank, Friedli, Grodhans, Kroft, Pfender,* and *Schwing* were in Adams Township; *Gagel, Hillger, Minder, Ragel,* and *Tegtmire* in Benton Township. More recognizable Monroe County names

appeared in Salem Township: *Anschutz, Arn, Ebert, Ensinger, Feisley, Kinzig, Kurtzmann, Mehl, Yost,* and *Zink,* to name a few. In other townships there is a scattering: *Faggert* and *Rosenlieb* in Jackson Township, *Yintz* and *Kaiser* in Seneca Township, *Geyer* and *Wilhelm* in Franklin Township.

In the late 1840's and the 1850's a variety of German-speaking settlers came to Woodsfield, the county seat, with their trades and crafts—carpenters, shoemakers, stone-masons, cabinetmakers, cordwainers, merchants, and tailors. In this category were names such as *Beck, Braun, Burebacher, Butz, Haffler, Helbling, Kittel, Koontz, Krans, Schäfer, Schall, Schumacher, Schütz, Staurer, Rosenberg, Wagenheimer, Xavier* and *Zanger,* some of which are still prominent in Woodsfield, others of which moved on.

By and large, the German migration to Monroe County followed the statistical pattern of the U.S. in general up to this point. But by the 1860's the bulk of immigration to Monroe County was over. Compare this with the figures nationwide—787,000 in the 1860's; 718,000 in the 1870's; 1,452,000 in the 1880's; 505,000 in the 1890's. Why did immigration to Monroe County slow down? Mainly because the tillable soil was already taken. Just as Pennsylvania had filled up, so had southeastern Ohio. Most settlers were now going to large cities—to Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Chicago, Milwaukee—as factory workers, craftsmen, merchants. The medium-sized towns such as Chillicothe or Marietta also experienced continuing growth in the latter third of the century in their German colonies. But small towns such as Woodsfield did not have enough population in the German communities to sustain themselves through *Vereinsleben,* German social life. The rural communities in Monroe County kept the German heritage strong through use of the language in schools and churches, through intermarriage, and through groups such as the German Farmers Mutual Insurance Association.

There are therefore three main categories of Monroe County Germanic immigrations: 1) the rural Swiss who

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