

The following article is reproduced from the Genealogical Aids Bulletin, Volume 15, Issue 2, October, 1985, of the Miami Valley Genealogical Society Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society. It was written by Elizabeth Miller Lane, 631 Delaware Avenue, Dayton, OH 45405.

FRANTZ FAMILIES IN CLARK AND MONTGOMERY COUNTIES (OHIO)

Held in high esteem among Brethren genealogists and others have been the Frantz families who settled in Clark County and in Montgomery County in the early 19th century.

THEIR ORIGIN

These Frantz lines are said to have originated in the Canton of St. Joseph, near Basel, Switzerland, although another reference names St. Jacob. Basel is a city on the Rhine where the German, French and Swiss borders converge.

Three Frantz immigrants who are thought to be brothers arrived in Philadelphia on three different sailing vessels: Michael Frantz on the ship, "Molly," on 30 September 1727; Balser Frantz, 2 October 1727; and Christian Frantz I, five years later, on 11 August 1732. All three settled in Lancaster County, PA.

Michael Frantz, Sr. (1687-1748) was baptized by the Brethren on 29 September 1734 at Conestoga and was commissioned to preach; the following year he was ordained and became the first elder at Conestoga. He had evidently been well educated in Switzerland, for he wrote both poetry and prose, his writings being published by Christopher Sauer, the German printer of Germantown, PA.

Both Christian Frantz I and Balser Frantz joined the Brethren at Conestoga in 1735, the year that Michael Frantz was ordained as an elder. (Christian Frantz I died in 1739, and Balser in 1747.)

CONNECTED FAMILY LINES

Ulrich Zug (Zook) was a grandson of Hans Zaug (born ca1630), the Swiss Anabaptist preacher who was arrested and imprisoned for his preaching. Ulrich and Barbara (Bachman) Zug arrived at Philadelphia on the "James Goodwill" on 27 September 1727. They were Mennonites, joining the Brethren in 1742. In 1748, their daughter, Magdalena, married Michael Frantz, Jr. (1725-1807). He followed in the footsteps of his father by becoming an ordained elder in 1780. Shortly after, Michael and Magdalena (Zug) Frantz moved their family of eight sons and one daughter to Botetourt County, Virginia. (Another Frantz making this move was Christian Frantz II, a first cousin of Michael.)

In the migration to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia was also the John Nicholas Garst family. (John Nicholas had brought his bride to America in 1749, the year before his father, Theobald Garst, came with the rest of the Garst family.)

Four Frantz brothers (Daniel, Christian, Peter, and David) married four Garst sisters (Anna, Mary, Catharine, and Mary Elizabeth), while their sister who may have been named Anna married Jacob Garst (1766-1854), a brother of the four Garst sisters. These alliances created five large families, each set of children being double first cousins to each of the other four sets, something of a record in mutual affinities. Several of these families and the descendants of others located in Clark County, Ohio.

FRANTZ MIGRATIONS TO CLARK COUNTY, OHIO

Perhaps the first of the Frantz family to come to Ohio was one of the older daughters of Christian and Mary (Garst) Frantz: Catherine Frantz (b cal786; d 1841) who had married in 1809 in Virginia George Grisso (1783-1884). George Grissaut had been born in the Alsace-Lorraine. When he was about six years old, his parents left their home in Switzerland to come to America. Carlos Grissaut (Grisso) and his wife died of cholera and were buried at sea. The ship was wrecked by a storm in Chesapeake Bay, but George, and his brother, William, were saved. George grew up in Lancaster County, PA, and William in Roanoke, Virginia. Before leaving for Ohio in 1812, George and Catherine Grisso had been baptized as Brethren at Salem on the Roanoke River. When they settled near Springfield, Ohio, that town had only 15 to 20 log cabins. George Grisso lived a quiet, peaceful family life, dsying in March of his 101st year.

Christian Frantz (1781-1850) came with his wife, Mary, and the rest of his family to Clark County in the spring of 1814, settling three miles west of Springfield. He was chosen as the second bishop, or elder, of the Donnels Creek congregation which held services in private homes or barns. "Elder Christy" preached only in German and wrote only German. He was a man "small of stature, of a very pleasant and genial disposition, and much respected by all." Many sought his advice and counsel. In 1835, his oldest son, Jacob Frantz (1784-1851), built a large barn in which services were held for a number of years; this barn was still standing in 1920 on what was then the Henry Dresher farm. Jacob's two older sons, John and Christian, in 1849 moved to the Eel River community near North Manchester, Indiana. His youngest son, Aaron Frantz (1830-1914), served as an OGBB elder.

Little is known by the compiler about the children of Christian Frantz, Jr. (born cal789), younger brother of Jacob (above), or of their sisters, Elizabeth and Anna, who married, repectively, Jacob Clinger and John Lesh. I would like to have a listing of their children and their granchildren. The youngest daughter, Salome, was married to Abraham Miller and moved to Allen County, Ohio. Information about her line would complete my genealogical index for Christian Frantz (1781-1850). His daughter, Mary Frantz (1793-1876), became the second wife of John Brubaker who had eight children by his first wife, Phoebe Harter; Mary not only cared for her step-children, but had nine more children of her own.

An older brother of Elder Christy, Daniel Frantz (1763-1843), also brought his family to Clark County about 1816. His oldest daughter, Anna, had married Peter Heck in Botetourt County, VA; the Heck family came about the same time and acquired 300 acres just east of where New Carlisle, OH, is. Daniel's daughter, Catherine, married her first cousin once removed, Benjamin Ream (1789-1863), and had 12 children. The oldest Ream daughter, Anna, became the second wife of David Funderburg (1808-1888) and the mother of his eight children. I lack data on the other Ream children.

Through his sons, Benjamin, John, Joel, Daniel Jr., and Samuel, Daniel had many more descendants bearing the Frantz surname than did Christian, his brother. I am seeking more complete listings of all of their children and grandchildren.

In The Studebaker Family in America 1736-1976, neither the parentage of Nancy Frantz (1825-1902) who married Samuel Steele Studebaker and became the mother of his 16 children, nor of Jacob Frantz (1824-1914), who married Samuel's sister, Phoebe Studebaker, were identified. Both were among the 12 children of Benjamin and Elizabeth (Flory) Frantz, Benjamin being a son of Daniel Frantz (1763-1843). Daniel had 11 children by his first wife, Anna Garst (1764-1821) and four by his second wife Magdalena (1784-1866). I am interested in having a complete listing of all of their children and grandchildren.

David Frantz (1768-1815) died in Virginia, but his widow, Mary Elizabeth, migrated to Ohio with her children and her second husband, Leonard Houtz. This family also contributed to the large number of Frantz descendants in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Kansas. I am also interested in definitive listings of the third and fourth generations in this family.

The fourth brother, Peter Frantz who married Catharine Garst, had only a single son, Nicholas Frantz (1797-1874), who came to Clark County in 1826, settling in the same general area as his uncles. He was, of course, a double first cousin to each set of his Frantz cousins. Following in the family tradition of service to the church, Nicholas also became a minister and elder in the Donnels Creek church.

Nicholas Frantz had married Catharine Crist on 2 March, 1819 in Virginia. Their oldest daughters (Susan, Catharine, and Elizabeth) ranged from six to two years old on the long trip to Ohio. Five more daughters, Magdalene, Salome (Sally), Anna, Rebecca, and Mary were born in Ohio before 1841, when this Frantz family, with two teams of oxen and wagons, moved to a farm two miles west of North Manchester, Indiana. A daughter, Phoebe, was born there. Nicholas was remembered as "a small, quiet, precise man who used English readily in his forceful sermons." His wife was said to be "a large, strong, energetic, free-spoken person." Nicholas Frantz was quite a craftsman, building a cupboard for each of his eight daughters who married. This line is difficult to work out Frantz ancestry, because three of the daughters (Susan, Catharine, and Rebecca) each married a John Frantz, the three men being variously known as "Big John," "Red John" and "Black John."

FRANTZ FAMILY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, OHIO

As the following chart shows, Henry Frantz (1773-1840), who settled in Montgomery County with his large family of 9 children, was a second cousin once removed of the Ohio pioneers, Christian and Daniel Frantz, and a third cousin to Nicholas Frantz. Henry Frantz was a great-grandson of Christian Frantz I (1685-1789) through the latter's son, Christian Frantz II (1706-1783), and his grandson, Christian Frantz III (1743-1783). Henry Frantz married ca 1797 in Botetourt County, VA, Mary Kinzie (1777-1847), daughter of Christian Kinzie, Sr. Their children married into Eikenberry, Shock, Neff, Myers, Whitehead, Spitler, Rodabaugh, and Stauffer families. My genealogical index is not complete for a number of these Henry Frantz lines.

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Elizabeth Miller Lane is the compiler of EARLY BRETHREN FAMILIES AND THEIR ASSOCIATES IN THE MIAMI VALLEY (OHIO), an unpublished genealogical index.

This from Elig Miller Lane
and is somewhat controversial.
(LE + Hazel comparing notes 2/28/88.)

ORIGIN OF THE FRANTZ FAMILIES IN THE MIAMI VALLEY, OHIO

Chart Prepared by
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11 November 1934

