

120. WENGER / WINGER

ORIGIN

Wenger is a Swiss name -- a person from Wengen, a village high in the Swiss Alps between Interlaken and the Jungfrau. The meaning of the name is "slope in winter" -- very descriptive of this location. (1) (See End Notes)

A large extended Mennonite Wenger family settled in Pennsylvania in the 18th century. A number of Wenger/Winger families migrated to Canada.

The Amish Mennonite Christian Wenger, who migrated to Canada in 1835, was born November 2, 1799 in or near Basel, Switzerland. His parents, Johannes Wenger and Katharina Zimmermann, were married in 1796 in Margarethen, near Basel. Christian married Anne Marie, daughter of Nicholas Roth and Anna Shantz, in Bourgfelden, Alsace, in 1830. Three children were born to them in Birsfelden, on the east side of Basel during the next three years. (2)

THE CHRISTIAN WENGER FAMILY COMES TO CANADA

Christian and Anne Marie (known as Mary) left Le Havre, France, on the Ship *Normandie*, arriving in New York on April 10, 1835. With them were their three children and Mary's parents and unmarried siblings. No doubt, they came directly to Wilmot Township in Canada where Amish Mennonites from Germany, Alsace and Switzerland had been settling for more than ten years. The central part of Wilmot Township was quite thickly settled, but Canada Company lands in the Huron Tract, to the west of Wilmot were being offered for sale or lease.

It is quite likely that the Roth and Wenger families were hosted by the settlers already in Wilmot for the rest of the year, and probably the Wenger's fourth child, Nicholas, was born there.

On May 31, 1836, "Widow Christian" (probably a misspelling of Wenger, Christian) took out a lease agreement on Lot 10, Concession III, South Easthope Township. In 1844, the lease was transferred to Nicholas Roth, Christian's brother-in-law. On July 26, 1836, Christian Wenger's father-in-law Nicholas Roth, took out a lease on Lot 9.

On the same day that Christian Wenger (if he was, indeed, "Widow Christian") signed the lease for Lot 10, Concession 3, John Glegg Senior signed one for Lot 22, Concession II. The same month that the lease on lot 10 was transferred to Nicholas Roth, the lease on Lot 22 was transferred to Christian "Winger" (the usual spelling in these transactions). However, Christian had already made a lease agreement for Lot 23, Concession II in September of 1843.

Lots 22 and 23 are about five miles from the lots chosen by Mary's parents, brothers and brother-in-law. It is somewhat of a puzzle why Christian and Mary took their family so far from the concentration of the Amish Mennonite community. It is doubtful whether there was much if any difference in the quality of the land. All of it was rich, level land -- perhaps a little too level for good drainage -- but it was quite uniform throughout the township.

The Canada Company records would suggest that Joseph, Magdalena (Lena) and Catherine were probably born on Lot 10 and Barbara, Benedict and Mary on Lot 23 (or 22). Several assessment and census records

WENGER / WINGER

were made in the Huron District in the 1840s. The first one, made in 1842 already listed Christian Wenger on Lot 22 with 35 acres cleared. They had two oxen, three cows, and two horned cattle. They were assessed for the value of 67 pounds. Perhaps John Glegg and Christian Wenger had met the day they signed their initial leases, and perhaps Glegg had invited Wenger to occupy the lot which he was leasing. It is sometimes difficult to sort out the business dealings of these early settlers.

We next meet Christian Wenger when he advertised both "farms" for sale on November 1, 1850 in the *Deutscher Canadier*, a newspaper published in Berlin (now Kitchener). Lot 22 had 70 acres cleared and well cultivated, a new 2-storey house, a barn, and a good well (or spring) near the house. Lot 23 had 30 acres cleared and good buildings. Christian did not have a deed to either of these properties, how could he sell them? Christian had made a considerable investment. No doubt, he had made some payments on the lease, and he certainly had put up some buildings. He would expect to recuperate these expenses and receive some compensation for his efforts to clear the land. The new owner would need to agree to pay the remainder owing on the lease agreement. A transfer would then be made by the Canada Company and a deed issued when the new lessee completed the payment.

Why were Christian and Mary contemplating selling their improvements on these properties? Were they having difficulty making the payments? Were they already thinking of migrating to the western U.S.A.? A tradition in the Schlegel family has come to my attention that Christian had suffered an illness or injury and Nicolaus Schlegel, his brother-in-law, recommended the property be sold. This might explain why Nicholas Schlegel also advertised a public sale in the same issue of the *Deutscher Canadier*. It indicated Schlegel was living on Lot 22. The items for sale included two yoke of oxen, four cows, several heifers and steers, calves, sheep, suckling pigs, two wagons, a sleigh, two plows, a harrow, and a windmill. The only household item mentioned was a stove. If Christian was physically incapacitated, it might explain why Schlegel was taking responsibility for the sale to the point of listing Lot 22 as his residence. The Schlegels lived on Lots 11 and 12, Concession IV, and none of their children were yet married. Perhaps the Schlegels had come to be with the Wengers if they were in difficulty.

No doubt the sale of animals and farm equipment took place. The farms, however, were not sold or transferred until 1854 (Lot 23) and 1857 (Lot 22) - both to Nicolaus Schlegel. Nicolaus and Barbara's oldest daughter Catherine had married John Brenneman from Wilmot in 1853. Catherine and John took up residence on one or the other of these farms. They purchased Lot 23 in 1858 from Catherine's father. Unfortunately, their tenure was relatively short, because John died of tuberculosis in 1867. The widow and children remained another few years, but then sold out. Nicolaus Schlegel retained Lot 22 until 1873. He probably rented it, but it is not known to whom.

Whatever, difficulties Christian Wenger may have had, he survived, and the family moved to Henry County, Iowa -- probably as early as 1852 since they were already taxed in Iowa in 1853.(3) Land transfers were made by the Canada Company, not the lessee; so Christian Wenger did not need to be in Canada for those transactions.

Nicholas Roth Jr., Mary's brother, went to Iowa about 1854 as well as several other families from the South Easthope-East Zorra area. Christian Wenger died in 1882. Mary (Roth) Wenger had preceded him in 1867.

Excerpt from

<https://www.many-roads.com/2011/10/22/christian-and-mary-roth-wenger-a-brief-history/>

"In 1844 they (Christian and Mary Wenger) moved to Washington Co., Iowa north of Wayland by covered wagon, stopping overnite in Chicago where they could not find a place to stay. All the clothing they owned was on their backs as their clothing had been stolen before crossing the border in Canada. Christian was in his fifties when he arrived. Many of the descendants are still in Wayland, Iowa. Christian Wenger is buried at Joseph Sommers burying ground in Wayland, Iowa."

For more see "The Mennonites in Iowa" by Melvin Gingrich.

THE FAMILY OF CHRISTIAN AND MARY (ROTH) WENGER

Christian Wenger, son of Johannes Wenger and Katharina Zimmermann (she d. 1815)

grandson of Christian Wenger (1705-1783) and Anna Marie Stauffer

b. 2 Dec 1799, Basel, Switzerland (Basel Holee records say November 2)

d. 9 Apr 1882, Henry County, Iowa

m. 7 Sep 1830, Bourgfelden, Haut-Rhin, France

Anne Marie (Mary) Roth, dau. of Nicholas Roth and Anna Shantz

b. 15 Nov 1807, Dornach, near Mulhouse, Haut-Rhin, Alsace, France

d. 11 Nov 1867, Henry County, Iowa, burial in Sommers Cemetery, Washington County, Iowa

Children and Grandchildren of Christian and Mary Wenger:

1) Anna Wenger, b. 10 Aug 1831, Birsfelden, Basel, Switzerland

d. 25 Jul 1885

m. Christian Eicher (1821/29-1896)

Children:

a. John W. Eicher (1853-1890) m. 1877 to Jacobina Schlatter (1848-1923)

b. Mary Eicher (1854-1939) m. 1875 to Benjamin Miller (1853-1946)

c. Christian Eicher II (1856-1901) m. 1882 to Anna Rich (b. 1859)

d. Katherine Eicher (1858-1927) m. 1881 to John Miller (1859-1911)

e. Barbara Eicher (b. 1860) m. 1878 to Joe Roth (b. 1851)

f. Anna Eicher (1862-1891) m. Peter Miller (1860-1932)

g. Margaret Eicher (1864-1894) m. 1886 to Jacob Miller (1864-1901)

h. Joseph Eicher (b. 1866) m. 1889 to Katie Springer

i. Benedict Eicher (b. 1868) 1m. 1893 to Lydia Gill (1869-1896)

2m. 1905 to Katherine Kauffman (b. 1869)

j. Dave Eicher (b. 1871)

k. Lydia Eicher (b. 1873)

2) John Wenger, b. 6 Aug 1832, Birsfelden

m. Mary Ernst

3) Christian Wenger, b. 8/28 October 1833, Birsfelden d. 1912

m. 31 Dec 1857 to Elizabeth Goldschmidt (1838-1914)

dau. of Joseph Goldschmidt and Elizabeth Schwartzenruber

Children

a. Joseph G. Wenger (1859-1892) m. 1887 to Katie Henss (1867-1923)

b. Christian C. Wenger (1860-1940) m. 1887 to Ella Mae Allen (1872-1948)

c. Samuel Wenger (1861-1937) m. 1892 to Emma Beckler (1870-1965)

d. Jacob Wenger (1863-1928) m. 1888 to Mattie Roth (1863-1916)

e. Elizabeth Wenger (1865-1941) m. 1884 to Jacob C. Koebel (1860-1937)

f. John Wenger (1867-1937) m. 1891 to Lenore Jay (1870-1956)

g. Daniel S. Wenger (1868-1940) m. 1890 to Eva McClintic (b. 1874)

h. Henry Wenger (1870-1934) m. 1895 to Anna Freyenberger (1875-1952)

i. Ella Wenger (1873-1963) m. 1892 to Joseph Kobel (1865-1962)

j. Levi Wenger (1875-1938) m. 1896 to Jessie Billingsley (b. 1878)

4) Nicholas Wenger, b. 1835, probably Wilmot Township, Canada

d. 1862, Iowa

5) Joseph Wenger, b. 18 Nov 1837, South Easthope Township, Canada d. 18 Feb 1917, Iowa

WENGER / WINGER

m. 19 Feb 1863, Iowa,
to Elizabeth Roth (1842-1918) dau. of Joseph Roth and Elizabeth Roes

Children:

- a. Mary Wenger (1864-1947) m. 1896 to Valentine Schadd (1865-1931)
- b. Anna Wenger (1866-1942) m. 1894 to Christian K. Leichty (1863-1947)
- c. Christian Wenger (1868-1868)
- d. Elizabeth Wenger (1869-1950) m. 1897 to Joseph Mast (1862-1939)
- e. Barbara Wenger (1874-1965) m. 1895 to Joseph Wesley Conrad (1870-1935)
- f. Emma Wenger (1877-1944) m. 1899 to Jacob R. Leichty (1877-1953)
- g. Joseph Wenger (1878-1879)
- h. John R. Wenger (1879-1940) m. 1904 to Katie A. Chistner (b. 1882)
- i. Edward Wenger (1882-1967) m. 1906 to Elizabeth Good (1882-1952)
- j. William Wenger (1884-1963) m. 1916 to Mathilda Amillia Hilderbrand (b. 1894)
- k. David Wenger (1887-1942) m. 1913 to Katie Roth (1894-1972)

6) Mary Wenger, b. 1840, South Easthope
m. Joseph Rich

7) Magdalena Wenger, b. 24 Jan 1842, South Easthope
d. 14 Apr 1883
m. Christian Ernst (1823-1891)

Children:

- a. John Ernst (1860-1920)
- b. Benjamin Ernst (1861-1934) m. 1890 to Kathryn Roth (1869-1929)
- c. Mary Ernst (1863-1900) m. 1893 to Amos Conrad (b. 1859)
- d. Barbara Ernst (1866-1906) m. to Joseph Rich
- e. Christian Wenger Ernst (1868-1948) m. 1901 to Mary Elizabeth Schaad (1878-1956)
- f. David Ernst (1871-1871)
- g. Infant Twins still born in July, 1873.
- h. Anna Ernst (1874-1922) m. John C. Conrad (1872-1949)
- i. Catherine Ernst (1876-1936) m. Elmer Johnson (1878-1959)
- j. Magdalena "Ella" Ernst (1880-1900) m. Godfried Hauenstein
- k. Joseph Ernst (1883-1883)

8) Catherine Wenger, b. 11 Oct 1843, South Easthope d. 31 May 1923
m. 16 Feb 1864

to John Miller (1836-1918) probably son of Peter S. and Anna Miller

Children:

- a. Barbara Miller (died young)
- b. Marianria Miller (died young)
- c. Christian Miller (died in infancy)
- d. Anna Miller (b. 1867) died at age of 29 years.
- e. Maria (Mary) Miller (1869-1953) m. 1891 to William Banwart (1868-1946)
- f. Magtalena (Mattie) Miller (1871-1965) m. 1899 to Swain Olson (1868-1927)
- g. Michael Miller (1872-1957) m. 1897 to Ida Wutrich (1873-1967)
- h. Lucia (Lucy) Miller (1875-1959) m. to Joe Stevig (1875-1952)
- i. John Miller (b. 1876) died young
- j. Ella Miller (1882-1962) m. 1902 to Jake Wagler (1876-1951)
- k. Guy Miller (b. 1884) m. 1923 to Rose Steffen (b. 1892)
- l. Andrew Miller (1886-1929) m. 1914 to Hattie Kingsinger (b. 1890)

9) Barbara Wenger, b. 16 Jul 1846, South Easthope

WENGER / WINGER

- d. 16 Dec 1918, bu. North Hill Cemetery, Marion Twp., Washington Co., Iowa
- m. 22 Nov 1866
- to Christian C. Schlatter (1842-1926) son of Joseph Schlatter and Magdalena Christner
- Children:
 - a. Mary Schlatter (1867-1971) 1m. Peter Graber (1864-1922)
2m. Charles Lute (1867-1971)
 - b. Joseph Schlatter (1871-1897) a bachelor
 - c. Lena Schlatter (1874-1943) m. Howard Glandon
 - d. Christian W. Schlatter (1877-1963) m.1905 to Vaughn Belle Davis (1884-1973)
 - e. John Schlatter (1879-1882)

- 10) Benedict Wenger, b. 7 Aug 1848, South Easthope
 - d. 5 Jan 1920, Sugar Creek Mennonite Cemetery, Iowa
 - 1m. 13 May 1869 to Magdalena Gingerich (1846-1903)
dau. of Peter S. Gingerich & Helena Miller
 - 2m. 15 Jan 1905 to Catherine Bender Boshart (1853-1917)
dau. of Samuel Bender and Mary Miller
widow of Daniel Boshart
 - Children:
 - a. Christian Wenger
 - b. Magdalena Wenger
 - c. Jacob G. Wenger (1873-1945) m. 1898 to Sarah Conrad (18731-1968)
 - d. Peter G. Wenger (1875-1954) m. 1901 to Emma Lodders (1880-1968)
 - e. Ida Mae Wenger (1881-1948) m. Albert Fritz (1862-1929)
 - f. Samuel G. Wenger (1884-1966) m. 1904 to Elizabeth Mae Rich (1886-1970)

Researcher Helmut Gingerich from Bavaria has some different dates for Christian Wenger, son of Johannes and Catharine (Zimmermann) Wenger

Christian Wenger, born Nov 11, 1799 (2 Dec 1799)
and his marriage (no spouse name) on Jul 9, 1830 (7 Sep 1830)

The ten children of Christian Wenger and Anne Marie Roth are listed in the church books of Gurzelen, Canton Bern. There is a note by the priest which states, that in his eyes, the births were off place in the actual birth registers, as they were Anabaptists.

Wenger	Johannes	9"	1.
Wenger	Joseph	9"	2.
Wenger	August	9"	3.
Wenger	Maria	9"	4.
Wenger	Barbara	9"	5.
Wenger	Jacob	9"	6.
Wenger	Friedlin	9"	7.
Wenger	Magdalena	9"	8.
Wenger	Christian	9"	9.
Wenger	Catharina	9"	10.

Ms. Die im Oberrhein wohnhafte, dem Bistum in Bern
im Gruzelenen Pfar: einverleibung, in der Ehe lebende, Söhne, die
als wundenkinder für mich geboren, unterließ sich.

The list of the ten children of Christian Wenger as they appear in the church books of Gurzelen, Canton Bern, Switzerland

WENGER / WINGER

It is interesting to note that several of the Wenger children married persons who had also been born in Canada. Elizabeth Goldschmidt was not born in Canada, but her parents had lived here during the 1820s. The Millers, Schlatters, Gingerichs, Benders and Bosharts were in Canada until the 1850s or later.

WENGER ANCESTRY

(The information for this Wenger Ancestry Chart is taken from notes found in Lorraine Roth's files.)

- I. Peter Wengerd (1665-1750) lived in Guerzelen/ Seftigen, Switzerland
Wife's name unknown
- II. Christian Wenger (1705-1783) son of Peter Wenger of Guerzelen/ Seftigen, Switzerland
m. Anna Marie Stauffer
 - III. A. Christian Wenger, son of Christian Wenger and Anna Marie Stauffer
 - b. 1756 in Guerzelen/ Seftigen, Switzerland
 - d. 9 Feb 1824 in St. Louis, Alsace, France
 - m. 1790 to Barbara Wurgler (1770-1838)
 - III. B. Johannes Wenger, son of Christian Wenger and Anna Marie Stauffer
 - b. 1756 in Guerzelen/ Seftigen, Switzerland
 - m1. 1796 to Katharina Zimmermann (d. 1815)
sons of Johannes and Katharina:
 - 1. Johannes Wenger (1797-1815)
 - 2. **Christian Wenger (1799-1882) m. Anne Marie (Mary) Roth (1807-1867)**
 - m2. 1818 to Barbara Schneider
children of Johannes and Barbara:
 - 3. Barbara Wenger (b. 1819)
 - 4. Katharina Wenger (b. 1820)
 - 5. Anna Wenger (b. 1821)

NOTES:

- 1) *Was Isch Dini Nahme? What Is Your Name*, Delbert L. Gratz. c.1995 by Masthof Press, Morgantown, Pa., page 17.
- 2) Gertrude Booth, Topeka, Kansas, filled in many of the details on the Wenger family. She added another generation for several of the Wenger children. Her complete list is found in the WENGER file.
- 3) The Wenger Ancestry Chart was also supplied by Gertrude Booth, Topeka, Kansas
A packet of photographs and notes supplied by Emery Wenger of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, 4-2-2001 (in WENGER file)
- 4) The Wenger family is featured on pages 172-174 in *Country roads: The Story of South Easthope, South Easthope Township, 1827-2000*, Editor: Jam Hagarty, Published by the South Easthope History Book, Committee, (Stratford, Ontario, 2000)
- 5) Dennis Roth, Lacy, Washington, was the first person to research the Roth family, including the Wengers in the early 1980s.

Lorraine Roth
Tavistock, Ontario
May, 2010

~ Updated with new research and reformatted by Bruce W. Jantzi, 2015