

8. BERGER

The Christian Berger family appeared in the North Easthope/South Easthope Amish Mennonite records from 1848 to 1861. A family register from a family Bible provide us with a number of details, but are lacking others. Christian Berger married November 24, 1847, but we do not know where. He married Katharina Biehr/Biehn, whose surname is difficult to decipher. I tend to favour "Biehr" which is generally spelled Bier. An Egli family list gives her maiden name as Bowers. (1) (See notes below) The 1861 census gives Christian's birthplace as Switzerland and Catherine's as Bavaria. A Bier family came from Bavaria about the same time the Bergers show up. This would indicate a possible relationship, but exactly what relationship is open to speculation. It is discussed in more detail in the BIER Family Genealogical Introduction.

In September and October of 1848, Christian Berger's name appeared in Joseph Ruby's "Hausbuch" (journal). They probably resided in South Easthope for a few years, but purchased Lot 3, Concession II in North Easthope in 1855. As bishop of the Amish Mennonite congregation, Joseph Ruby began submitting records of births, marriages, and deaths about 1857. A few of the Berger children were recorded by him. The Bible record recorded seven children between 1849 and 1859.

In 1860, Christian and Catherine sold their North Easthope property, but they still appeared in the 1861 census. Christian's death in December, 1861, was recorded in the Bible but not in Joseph Ruby's record, indicating that the family may have left the country before his death.

The date of Catherine's marriage to Jacob Riggerbach (sometimes Ringenbach) was not recorded, but the births of three daughters were recorded between 1863 and 1869, the last one on January 10. The death of Jacob took place on January 1, 1869. Widow Catherine lived until May 14, 1891.

This Introduction will be divided under two headings. It is not known whether Christian Berger and Mary Berger are related.

1. The Christian and Catherine (Bier) Berger Family
2. Mary Berger, wife of Jacob Erb

NORTH EASTHOPE TOWNSHIP – 1861 Census

Christian Berger, 44, farmer, Menonist, Switzerland

Catarina, 34, Bavaria

Barbara, 11, Canada

Samuel, 10

Jacob, 8

Helena, 7 (Magdalena)

Christian, 6

John, 2

(Joseph, 1857-59 was not in census)

THE CHRISTIAN AND CATHERINE (BIER?) BERGER FAMILY

Christian Berger, b. ca.1813 (estimate from age at time of death)

d. 15 Dec 1861, Tazewell County, Illinois

m. 24 Nov 1847, Europe?

Catherine Bier?, (4) b. ca.1825 (estimate from age at time of death)

Bavaria (according to Canadian census)

Berne, Switzerland (according to Illinois census)

d. 14 May 1891, Illinois?

2m. to Jacob Riggenbach, b. ca.1831

d. 1 Jan 1869, Allentown, Illinois

Children:

1) Barbara Berger, b. 24 Feb 1849, probably South Easthope Twp., Canada

d. 17 Dec? 1877, Illinois?

m. Christian Christner/Grimm

(a) Emma Christner/Grimm, b. 2 Apr 1877 m. _____ Egli

2) Samuel Berger, b. 4 Jun 1850, probably S. Easthope; in 1910 living in Elm Grove, (Illinois?)

3) Jacob Berger, b. 14 Jun 1852, probably S. Easthope (2); d. 16 Aug 1935, Morton, Illinois

m. Nellie Bach

4) Magdalena Berger, b. 3 Sep 1854, probably S. Easthope; d. 4 May 1901; bu. Wolcott, Indiana

m. Charles F. Blum/Blume

5) Christian Berger, b. 7 Sep 1856, North Easthope; d. 14 Apr 1929 Limestone, Peoria, Illinois

m. Kate Bartlett

6) Joseph Berger, b. 9 Aug 1857, N. Easthope

d. 12 Nov 1859, N. Easthope

7) John Berger, b. 12 Jun 1859, N. Easthope; d. 12 Jan 1939, Olio, Woodford, Illinois (deaf since childhood)

8) Catherine (Katie) Riggenbach, b. 12/17? Aug 1863, Allentown, Illinois

d. 30? Mar 1887?, Illinois?

m. Jacob Scheidel

9) Maria Riggenbach, b. 9? May 1866, Allentown, Illinois; d. 1951 Chandlerville, Illinois

m. William Struber

10) Anna Riggenbach, b. 10 Jan 1869, Allentown, Illinois

(Ringenbach) d. 29 Apr 1959, Manson, Iowa, bu. Rose Hill Cemetery

m. 23 Jan 1889/90, Hopedale, Illinois

John Egli, son of John Egli and Magdalena Gascho

b. 20 Apr 1859, Hay Township, Huron County, Canada

d. 26 Feb 1934, Manson, Iowa; bu. Rose Hill Cem., Manson, Iowa.

(10 children)

(For more details on this family see the EGLI Family Genealogical Introduction)

The above family list was put together by Lorraine Roth, who used the family record found in the Berger/Riggenbach Bible. Researcher Helmut Gingerich from Bavaria, Germany also provided information for this list, especially for the family when living in Illinois.

MARY BERGER/BURGER, WIFE OF JACOB ERB

Jacob Erb, a resident of Wilmot Township, married Mary Berger (as his second wife) in 1838 in Holmes County, Ohio, and brought her to Wilmot. Mary had been born in 1814 to Christian Berger/Burge and Frances Forney. Three children were born to Mary and Jacob before they left for LaGrange County, Indiana, in 1847.(3) May there have been a relationship between the Christian Berger, above, and Mary, wife of Jacob Erb?

Jacob Erb, b. 10 Dec 1798, France (perhaps this should be 1793)
 d. 19 Oct 1884, Clay Twp., LaGrange Co., IN, bu. Lupold Cemetery
 m. date and name unknown
 wife is presumed to have died in Wilmot Township
 2m. 7 Jan 1838, Holmes Co., Ohio
Mary Berger/Burger, dau. of Christian Berger/Burge and Frances Forney
 b. 24 Feb 1814
 d. 16 May 1904, bu. Lupold Cemetery

Child to first marriage:

1) David Erb, b. 1831, Canada *(According to the census records, there were at least three children in this household -- two males and one female -- but some may not have survived.)*

Children to second marriage:

- 2) Frances Erb, b. 31 Aug 1838, Wilmot Township, Canada
 d. 1 Mar 1925, LaGrange Co., Indiana
 m. 26 Nov 1856 to Elijah Mingis
 2m. 30 Jun 1882 to George W. Parker
- 3) Daniel H. Erb, b. 16 Jan 1840, Wilmot Township
 d. 8 Aug 1925, Clay Twp., LaGrange Co.
 m. 1 Jan 1874 to Ellen Mitilda (sic) Johnson
- 4) Christopher Erb, b. Sep 1844, Wilmot Township
 d. 31 May 1908, West Branch, Ogemaw Co., Michigan
 m. 4 Jul 1864 to Martha Slosser
- 5) Sarah Erb, b. 2 May 1848, LaGrange Co.
 d. 8 May 1860, Newbury Twp., LaGrange Co.
- 6) Mary (Jeannie) Erb, b. 25 Aug 1850, Newbury Township, LaGrange Co.
 d. 2 Jan 1927, LaGrange Co.
 m. 15 Apr 1864 to Jonathan Klingaman
 2m. 15 Aug 1912 to John Balmer/Baulmer
- 7) Elizabeth Harriet Erb, b. 25 May 1853, Newbury Township
 d. 13 Jun 1929, LaGrange Co.
 m. 29 Jan 1871 to William Klingaman
 2m. 26 Sep 1914 to John Neu
- 8) Henry Sam Erb, b. Jan 1855, Newbury Township
 d. 19 Mar 1922, LaGrange Co.
 m. 10 Aug 1876, to Elizabeth Johnstonbough

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9) Eliza E. (Etta) Erb, b. 18 Oct 1858, Newbury Township
d. 21 Nov 1918, Pasadena, Los Angeles Co., California
m. 26 Sep 1875 to Jerome B. Rhinehart

10) Elijah Erb, b. 14 Feb 1861, Newbury Township
d. 3 Oct 1904, Guthrie, Union Co., Iowa
m. 24 Mar 1886 to Nora Kinney

NOTES:

1) The record of this Berger/Riggenbach family came to us via Milton Gascho of Kokomo, Indiana, who received it from Irene (Egli) Mays. Milton was trying to track down the family of John and Magdalena (Gascho) Egli who had moved from Canada to Illinois in 1867. One of the Riggenbach daughters had married one of the Egli sons.

A photocopy of the Bible record and a transcription are found in the BERGER Document file. Clippings sent by Irene (Egli) Mays to Milton Gascho in 1984 concerning Anna Ringenbach/Riggenbach are in the EGLI file.

2) Leigh Ann Hoffert, Walkerton, Indiana, sent a list of Berger marriages for Tazewell County, but this list gives only the names of both parties and the date of marriage -- not the names of parents. Leigh Ann also sent census lists. These lists are also in the BERGER file.

3) For more details on the Jacob and Mary (Berger) Erb family, see the ERB Family Genealogical Introduction.

4) In 1935, Catherine Bier (m. Berger and Riggenbach) is named Katharina 'Ackermann' in her son Jacob Berger's (b. 1852) death record. (from Helmut Gingerich) Is there a possibility that Christian Berger (1813-1861) had a first wife, or is this a case of incorrect memory of the informant filling out the death record?

Lorraine Roth
Tavistock, Ontario
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~ Reformatted and Updated
by Bruce W. Jantzi, 2017

LAND RECORDS:

NORTH EASTHOPE TOWNSHIP

Christian Berger (sometimes appears as Becker) (wife Catherine)
Lot 3, Con. II, in 1855 purchased from Daniel Erb
in 1860 sold to John Ruthig