

Newsletter

February 2025



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★ COMING SOON – SOME EXCITING NEWS ABOUT THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD VIDEO!! STAY TUNED!! ★



From the Files

Pictured here is Dr. Heinzmann's home on the southeast corner of W. Partridge and N. Hanover. Immediately to the east (left) is the Doctor's office. Both of these still stand today.

Madeline Sullivan originally provided this picture with notes on the back of the postcard that said this was the 4th of July parade.

She also noted the Doctor's shingle hanging from the tree. (Dr. Heinzmann was the grandfather of our Metamora dentist.)

Did You Know...?

You recall that Adlai Stevenson was the VP of President Grover Cleveland. But did you know that Cleveland had a daughter, Ruth, for whom the Baby Ruth candy bar was named after?!

It's one of America's oldest candy bars, created in 1920.



John and Veronica (Blum) Fandel Family – 1906

John (1871-1924) and Veronica Blum (1873-1941) were married in 1893. The couple were parents to five children.

Pictured on the far left is Veronica (approximate age 33) and John on the far right (approximate age 35). Top row is Leo (12) and Anna – married name Grebner (8); middle row is Cyrilla – married name Kiesewetter (10); lower row is Rose – married name Hagemann (2) and Peter (4).

This family spawned a lot of names still familiar in the Metamora area – Alig, Elbert, Kern, Noe, Kiefner, Obery, Sharrick, Montgomery, Neff, Mishler, plus all the Fandels - and on and on. Some of your relation maybe...?

Thanks to one of the Newsletter's most valued readers and contributors – Larry Hagemann – for this picture. Veronica was Larry's great-aunt. The Blum farm was in the Lake Santa Fe area. The Newsletter wonders if today's Fandel Road is somehow connected to John's family. Any ideas...?

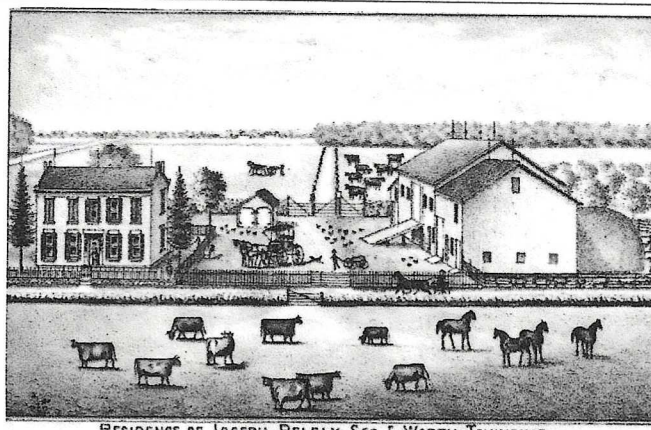
THE EARLY GERMANS AND FRENCH IN METAMORA.

Germans were the most numerous of the foreigners in Illinois in 1850, composing over one-third of the foreign population of the state. Economic, political, and religious influences were at work in the fatherland causing a tide of migration from all parts of the country to America. Once in America, the cheap land of the fertile Mississippi Valley was an inducement sufficient to bring the Germans westward and the line of transportation over the lakes directed the course of the stream to the Chicago gateway of the Illinois prairies.

Religious unrest was one cause of German emigration. A reorganization of the Lutheran church had taken place in the later thirties and the ruling Hohenzollerns had ordered all subjects to conform to the new belief. Penalties including imprisonment, confiscation of property and allied persecutions were practiced to such an extent that many left their native land.

Greatest of all the influences, however, were those of an economic nature, and to these is due the increase of German emigrants in the decade 1841-1850. Land could be purchased for \$1.25 per acre.

The small hand industries in Germany which for years had been a means by which the poorer Germans were enabled to make a living were now being beaten down by competition arising from the introduction of machinery. The evils of over-production and over-population were at work.



RESIDENCE OF JOSEPH BELSLY, SEC. 5, WORTH TOWNSHIP.

Subdivision of the land had gone on to a great extent and so small were the little plots of ground held by each peasant that it was with difficulty that the poor people eked out a bare existence.

In normal years, at the best, only a few potatoes, a little corn, oats, clover, and hay could be raised by the peasants, and even well-to-do farmers subsisted on milk, potatoes, and cornbread.

When crops failed these poor peasants were destitute. During the early years of the decade crops were good but beginning with the extremely severe winter of 1844 and 1845 a change came. In that winter many of the vineyards were destroyed and in the following spring floods in the valleys of the Rhine, Moselle, Main, Neckar, Danube, Elbe and Vistula rivers materially interfered with agriculture.

Moreover, the potato crop failed, causing a correspondingly large increase in the price of bread stuffs and made it exceedingly difficult for the peasants to gain a livelihood. The severity of the famine increased in 1846 and the cold winter following added misery to the lot of the peasants. In many places the wealthy class was compelled to provide for the poor, to keep them from starving.

During these years the agents of transportation companies were busy among the people. They were well-dressed and well-supplied with money and told wondrous stories of wealth to be easily acquired in America, of political freedom, tight taxes and easy government.

German communities were scattered here and there along the Illinois River before 1850. One of the early settlements began in 1833 in Woodford County and increased steadily.

After the political troubles in Germany in 1848 the German population was generally derived directly from Europe and the increase was more rapid. As a class, the Germans were desirable settlers owing to their quiet, sober, steady habits, their ability, and industry. Those who came without money to buy land hired themselves out to landowners and were contented to serve as laborers until they had learned the industry and acquired enough capital to make purchases for themselves. They applied themselves to the cultivation of the soil, not as adventurers for the sake of experiment, but as farmers who meant to keep possession of it.

They brought with them the same patient laborious habits which had distinguished them in their native land and as a consequence the settlements made, while retaining the characteristics of the fatherland to some extent, were models of well-ordered industry.

The head of the family worked, the children worked and the women worked, too, often as hard as the men, sharing the men's labors in the fields; for the German although not destitute of romance was far from believing that women were made only to be ornamental. Following this rule, it was not long before each of these German families owned not only its dwellings but the land upon which they stood.

THE FRENCH The first French colony of any importance to be established in Illinois after 1830 was at Metamora, Woodford County, in 1831. Immigrants included George Sommer, Peter Engle, John Engle, the Verklers, Christian Smith, Joseph Bachman, Michael Yoereger, Joseph Belsly, and Joseph Schertz.

Copied From *Settlement of Illinois from 1830 to 1850*



DAVENPORT STREET 1867

FACTS UPDATE. From last newsletter's "Facts Not Generally Known" our favorite California reader, Linda Kern Moore, reports that parents with kids in Maple Grove School (south of town) would speak German when they didn't want their children to know what they were talking about. This would have been around the 1940-50's era. Pretty handy around Christmas and birthdays!

Contact Us

Questions, ideas - Love to hear from you

Laure Adams, President, 369-2353 or jrfarmer@mtco.com; Dave Pohlman, Vice President 369-3290; pohlman46@yahoo.com 367-4426; Jim Efaw, Secretary, 367-6099 or jimefaw-mahp@eggroll.com; Jack Weddle, Treasurer, 645-0963, jackaweddle@gmail.com, Board members: Lee Summer, 367-4059, 635-0259, lsummer@mtco.com, Rick Lotz, 648-2010, lots@mtco.com, Adam Bockler adam.bockler@gmail.com