



**The Life and Family
of
Johann and Anna Maria Bayerl**



**From 19th Century St. Katarina
to
21st Century Birch Creek**

By Andy Bayerl

Assisted by several Bayerl cousins



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Acknowledgements

First and foremost we must acknowledge our debt to Johann and Anna Maria and their children - Jacob, Charles, Barbara and Joseph. They made the decision to undertake the difficult journey from Bohemia for a new life in America. Had they not made that choice none of us would be where we are or who we are.

Then of course we owe an immense debt to all of our parents. They endured two world wars, the great depression and many cold Birch Creek winters, nurturing us and giving us the opportunity to make the best lives we could.

The stories from Birch Creek came from many family online discussions – electronic walks down memory lane sometimes poignant, often hilarious. We are especially grateful to Ronnie and Marlene and all of the Jasenovsky family. They all have an amazing memory of things past and a talent for storytelling that is unequalled.

Joyce Bayerl Stepniak has been our “boots on the ground” in Menominee. She is excited about learning everything she can about the family and has been invaluable as local contact point.

Then of course there is Dick Bayerl. He has been the inspiration for this momentous reunion. His interest in uncovering all of the threads of the family has been insatiable. We would never have considered such an undertaking without his guidance.

Finally, we owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to our third cousin Father Robert Altmann. His translation of many seemingly indecipherable family documents has enabled us see further into our history than we could ever have imagined. With his help we have traced the family back two and possibly three generations from Johann into the early 18th century. We know the town they lived in, the church they worshipped at and a sense of what their lives were like in St. Katharina. We also derived information on the history of St. Katarina from his translation of the document titled “*History of the Parish Community of St. Katharina*”. Thank you so much, Father Bob.

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Forward

This is the story of our common ancestors, Johann Bayerl and his wife Anna Maria Altmann. They were born and raised in St. Katharina, Bohemia. Johann was born in July 1829 at Fechterhof No. 6. Anna Maria was born in 1826 and lived at Kreikerhof No. 57. St. Katarina is southwest of Prague in what is now the Czech Republic about a mile from the Bavarian border. The town is now called Svata Katerina.

We have undertaken this task in order to share with our extended family what we have learned these past few years about our ancestors and their homeland and their life in Birch Creek in the late 19th and early 20th century. Much of what is presented here can be found in the **Bayerls of Birch Creek** family tree that we have online at www.ancestry.com. There you will find the family genealogy from around 18th century to the present, spanning some ten or more generations. We have included there photos and documents from our many dear cousins along with official records of birth, marriage and death from various sources, including the ships registry of their journey from Bohemia to their new life in America and the land patents taken out on the three farms in Birch Creek.

We hope you enjoy what you find here and we encourage all of you and your children to continue the task of maintaining this record of our heritage and of the future generations of the Bayerl family.

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Life in St. Katarina

Early History

The aforementioned “*History of the Parish Community of St. Katharina*” takes us from the feudal years in the 17th century to post WWII when the Germans were all expelled and the town of St. Katarina was destroyed.

The area was originally settled by farmers and tradesmen from Bavaria in the early 1400’s. There is a low mountain range that forms a natural boundary between Bohemia (now the Czech Republic), Austria and Bavaria. The eastern side in Bohemia is called the Bohmerwald or Bohemian Forest. St. Katarina is in the foothills of those mountains in a valley carved by the Angel Bach (Angel Creek). The area is named after the **Chapel of St. Katharina**, which served the spiritual needs of the residents as well as travelers.

St. Katharina was not an enclosed central village but rather was a series of scattered properties. The properties were typically named after the owner with the “Hof” suffix. We have Weberhof, Fecterhof, (Wolf-)Ganglehof and many others. In German a *Hof* is literally a yard. From what we know these properties were often large multi-family dwellings with livestock on the ground level and families living on the second level.

The so called “free farmers” of St. Katharina were cheated and abused over the years, as the land was mortgaged to one robber baron after another. The story reads very much like the tale of Robin Hood, as the farmers tried to survive against the natural elements and cruel lords.

Bohemia as a whole was a key player during much of that period and indeed through WWII. It was always a buffer between Prussia and the northern Baltic States and the rest of the Austrian Empire. Thus it was a natural launch point for attacks.

It played a pivotal role in the start of the Thirty Years War, which was an attempt by Austria and the rest of the Holy Roman Empire to quell the rise of the protestant movement begun by Martin Luther. Bohemia had a diverse population of Catholics and Protestants. In an event called the “Defenestration of Prague” two Austrian officials were thrown out the window of a government office. That was part of a general revolt in Bohemia against the religious repression and is often considered to have sparked the conflict that raged for 30 thirty years.

St. Katharina, being on the border with Austria and the German states, was a key component of the power struggles that dominated Europe for centuries. During the Thirty Years War beginning in 1618, they suffered attacks from Bavarian and Swedish marauding armies and at the same time were forced to pay for billeting of the Austrian army. The entire area was desolated during that never ending war and the years that followed. The war ended with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.

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During the remainder of the 17th century and through the 18th century the Habsburg monarchy consolidated their control of both the Austrian throne as well as the throne of the Holy Roman Empire. The Austrian empire itself went from northern Italy to Bohemia on the border with Prussia and Bavaria and including Hungary and the Slavic countries to the east. During this period we see a constant struggle between Austria and the German states of Bavaria and Prussia.

From 1740 to 1780 Maria Theresa, daughter of Charles VI, was the Austrian Empress. This lends an interesting sidelight to the predominance of the names Anna Maria and Theresa in our female ancestors. There was of course the religious significance of Mary and the saints Anne and Theresa but in addition to the Empress Maria Theresa, Maria Anna was Archduchess of Austria and for a time the Holy Roman Empress in the 1600's. They obviously became very popular names for female children.

In 1804 the Holy Roman Empire was dissolved and replaced by the Austrian Empire. This was done to avoid Napoleon's claim to the throne as his power rose in Europe. After the defeat of Napoleon, power shifted to Prussia in the north under Hohenzollern rule but really run by Bismarck the *Iron Chancellor*. Ultimately this culminated in the brief Austro-Prussian war in 1866 where Prussia mounted a *Blitzkrieg* through Bohemia to face the Austrians near Vienna and force an armistice. This began the rise of the unified Germany and the waning of the Austrian influence of Europe.

All of this transpired while Johann and Anna Maria were starting their family in 1855. Their youngest son Josef was born in July of 1865, just a year before the Austrian defeat by Prussia. This would have been a fearful time with the Prussian army marching through their homeland.

St. Katharina was also in the region called the Sudetenland, which was ceded to Germany prior to WWII in an attempt to appease Hitler. After the war in the early 50's the German residents were all expelled from what had become Czechoslovakia. The entire town of St. Katharina was leveled including the church and cemeteries. This is one of reasons why there is such difficulty in finding the genealogical linkages.

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The Village of St. Katharina

The photo below is an idyllic 20th century view of St. Katharina taken from above the town and looking out over the *Böhmer Wald (Bohemian Forest)* to the southwest. That low mountain range spans the border between Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) and Bavaria. Notice the onion dome steeple of the church. According to Wikipedia: “*It is the predominant form for church domes in Russia and Bavaria, Germany, but can also be found regularly across Austria, Eastern Europe, India the Middle East and Central Asia.*”



Figure 1. St. Katharina - a landscape view

According to the “*History of the Parish Community of St. Katharina:*“, the Church of St. Katharina was built in 1604 and expanded in the 18th century. The photos below show a closer view of the church with school in front of it and the interior of the church. The school was built in 1904 and from the dress we can tell this would have been around the turn of the 20th century. The school that Johann and Anna knew would have been a much more modest building but most likely close by.

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Figure 2. The school and church of St. Katharina



Figure 3. Interior of the church of St. Katharina

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Geography

The maps below show St. Katharina in relation to the surrounding area. Figure 1 is from older days – probably near the time when our ancestors lived there. Notice the mostly German names for the towns and locations. The border with Bavaria is in lower left corner. If you look very closely around St. Katharina you will see the names of many of the family dwellings.

Figure 2 is a more recent view of the area. The Czech name is now Svata Katerina. Notice the *Bayerischer Wald* in the lower left. It is the Bavarian part of the mountain range and forest that becomes the *Böhmer Wald*. In the earlier map that region was also called the *Rantscher Wald*.

If you download the *Google Earth* program you can use it view Svata Katerina and the surrounding countryside as it is today. You can see the road leading to the Bavarian border security checkpoints. Prior to the end of the cold war those checkpoints were part of what constituted what was called the *iron curtain*.

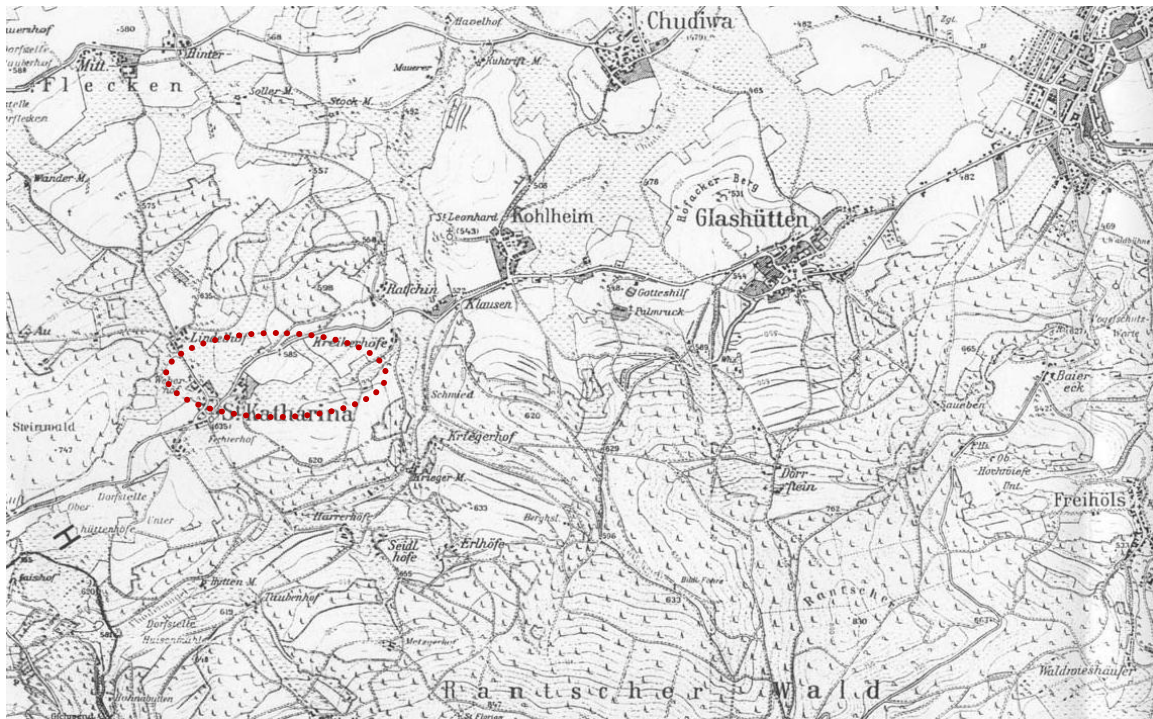


Figure 4. St. Katharina - back in the day

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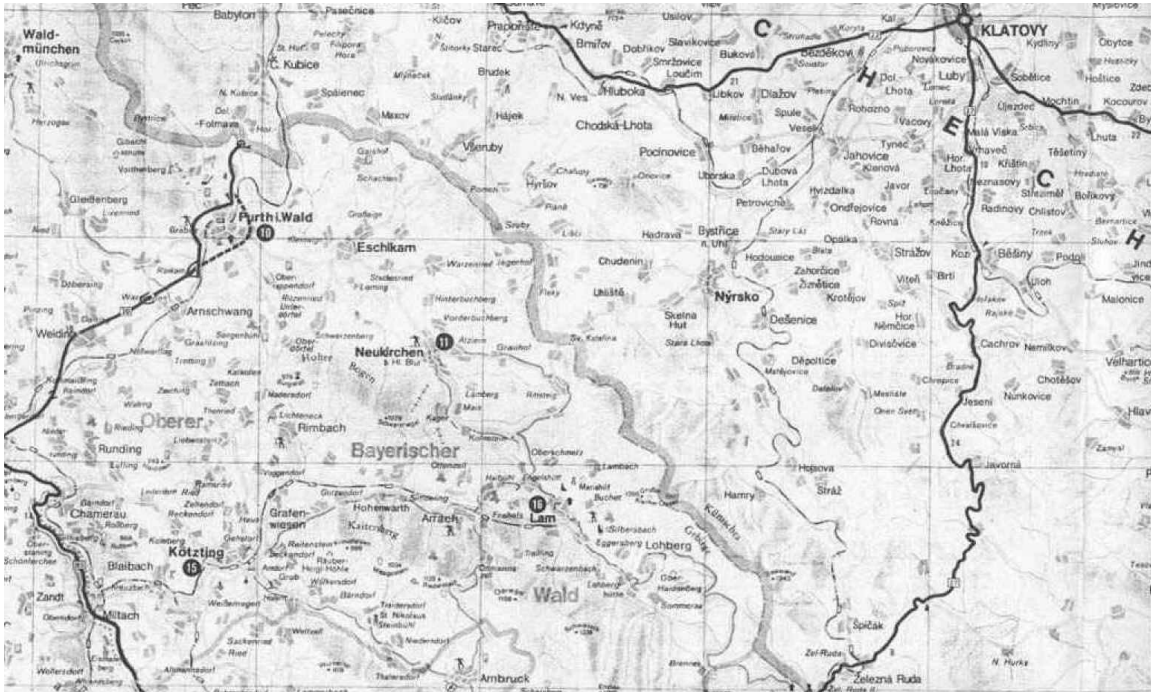
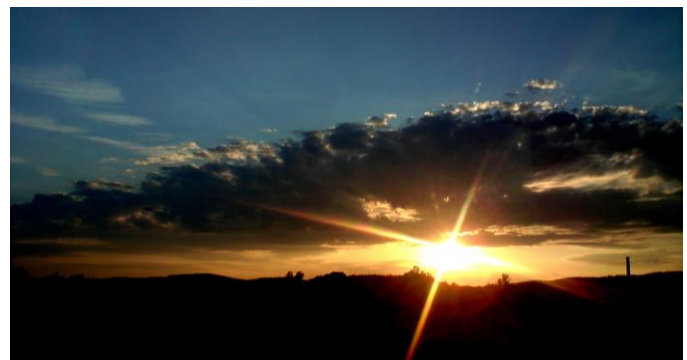


Figure 5. Svata Katerina – a more recent view



Left: A Google Earth view of our homeland. A Vietnamese market is found at a major rest stop on Highway 5 just about 10 miles from the Bavarian border. St Katharine name is maintained in the village of Svatá Kateřine and the Katerínské Chalupy. Chalupy is Czech for Cottages. It would be interesting to see what it would be like to visit this area. Maybe stay a few days in the Chalupy and soak up a bit of the wonderful old historical Bohemian landscape. For those with Google savvy find this map at 49° 40' N, 12° 35' E.



A beautiful sunset photo found posted on Google Earth near the Svatá Kateřine area. Awesome!

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Johann's Father and Grandfather

Because most of the records of the area were lost in the post-WWII purge, the authors of the history of St. Katharina have attempted to deduce from various tax records the names of the residents and where they lived. The difficulty is compounded by the many variations in names as they appear in the records. The Bayerl name appears with multiple spellings as Peyer, Baierle and Beyerle.

A note from Fr. Bob indicates that in 1780 Andreas Bayerl is listed as "*Mitnachbar auf der FechterHöfe*". Andreas was the grandfather of Johann. As described by Fr. Bob, the term *Mitnachbar* designates the younger brother or a cousin of oldest son who inherits the property – so the *Mitnachbar* owns his section of the property but is not the heir to the family property.

There are conflicting records on who was the father of Andreas. A birth record for Andreas lists him as legitimate son of Jacob Bayerl, tenant on the Fechterhöfe. The land records from the parish document indicate that a George Beyerle was the owner of that property in 1734. There is also a marriage record for an Andreas Bayerl that shows his father as Johan Georg Bayerl.

Andreas married his first wife, Margaretha Rank, in April 1784 at the age of 17. She died four months later in August. He then married Anna Maria Gerl in December of that year. They had five children at the Fechterhof. The oldest was a daughter Barbara born in 1786, followed by Joseph in 1787, Johann in 1789 and Johann again in 1792.

The presumption is that the first Johann died at a very young age with the next child taking the same name – a common practice of the time. Johann would be the father of our great grandfather. He married Katharina Bauman in the early 1800's. She was born in 1798, daughter of Georg and Margaretha Bauman. They had four children: Johann, born October 22, 1829; Katharina born December 19, 1832; Josef born August 15, 1835; and Franzisca born November 8, 1840.

Andreas also had a daughter named Anna Maria born in 1794. She could have been the mother of our great grandmother Anna Maria Altmann, which would have Johann and Anna first cousins. However, other records indicate that Andreas had another son, Johann George, who also had a daughter named Anna Maria. We do not know for sure if either of those is the second interconnection between the Bayerl and Altmann lines. In the family tree we show it as the daughter of Johann George, which would have made our great grandparents second cousins.

Johann and Anna Maria

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Johann and Anna Maria were married on February 14, 1855. Anna Maria was the daughter of Josef Altmann of Kreikerhof N 57 and Anna Marie Bayerl of Weberhof N 2.

An interesting fact: This was a double wedding ceremony on Valentine's Day in 1855. The couples were Johann Bayerl marrying Anna Maria Altmann and Josef Altmann marrying Anna Zierhut. Anna Maria and Josef were sister and brother. Josef was the great-grandfather of Fr. Bob Altmann, who was instrumental in researching and translating documents for the family research.

They began their family on the same property where Johann had lived. Their first child, Jakob, was born at Fechterhof N 7 (Johann was born at N. 6) on April 5, 1856, a little more than a year after their marriage.

Three years later their son Joseph was born on March 1, 1859, at the Wirsthaus N 1. Joseph lived only slightly more than a month and died on April 15, 1859. A year later, Barbara was born on March 6, 1860 – again at the Wirsthaus N 1.

The Wirsthaus was the tavern or inn on the Kreikerhof property and was also the home of Anna's father. Johann's father was not the first born son, so Johann would not inherit the Fechterhof property. Thus, from the birth records, we can see them begin to wander among the properties.

Two years later on February 21, 1862, Karl was born but now they were at Weberhof N 1. Anna's mother had lived at Weberhof N 2, so once again it appears that they were following family properties.

Their fifth child Adalbert was born in the 1863/1864 timeframe. We have very little information on Adalbert. He was on the ship's registry in 1882 when they came to America but we have no other information about him. He remains a mystery.

Finally, on July 11, 1865, Josef was born, this time at Ganglehof N 6. We see again the tradition of using the name of a previously deceased child. Ganglehof was the final home of Johann and Anna Maria in St. Katharina. It is their residence as shown on the ship's registry in 1882 when they emigrated from Bohemia to America.

Anna Maria and Her Sister Theresa

It is interesting to follow the parallel paths of Anna Maria and her younger sister Theresa. Theresa married Josef Muench on October 10, 1855, just a few months after Anna Maria was married. They began their marriage at Rothenbaum N 4.

Their first daughter Anna Maria was born on February 14, 1856, four months after the marriage but lived only 9 days. Their second child Theresia was born on June 29, 1857 but once again died only two weeks later on July 17. Their third child, Anna Maria again, was born a year later on July 30, 1858. She survived but their fourth child Josef, born on

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December 9, 1860, once again survived only 2 months. He died on their 5th anniversary February 14, 1861.

Their fifth child Josef survived. He was born on March 20, 1863 and married Theresia Kraus on May 14, 1888. Josef and Theresia were the parents of our cousin Aloisius Cardinal Münch.

On December 11, 1865, we have the birth of Karl at Ganglehof N 50. Notice here that Anna Maria and Theresia have now been reunited on the Ganglehof property. From the records we see that they remained together until they left for America.

Theresia had two more children at Ganglehof. Karl was born on March 11, 1869, but sadly again survived only 3 months, dying on June 25. Her eighth child Theresia was born on November 26, 1870. She grew up at Ganglehof with her cousin Josef and they immigrated separately with their families. They were eventually married in Birch Creek when Josef's first wife died at childbirth and Theresia came to help out.

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From Bohemia to America

Beginning the Journey

In the spring of 1882 Johann at the age of 52 and Anna Maria at 55 began the journey to America with their family. They were looking for the opportunity to start a new life on land that they were able to own simply by establishing residence on it thanks to the **Homestead Act of 1862**.

They most likely travelled by train to Bremen in Germany, some 400 miles from St. Katarina. That journey may have begun in Prague to north or in Bavaria to the west or perhaps somewhere nearer to St. Katarina. It may have been a difficult journey but it was certainly filled with anticipation of a new life in America.

The SS Main

In late April of 1882 the family boarded the **SS Main** operated by Norddeutscher Lloyd Bremen out of the German port of Bremen. Johann and Anna Maria were accompanied by their daughter Barbara and three sons Karl, Adalbert and Joseph. The eldest son Jacob had made the journey earlier on his own prepare the way for the rest of the family.

The SS Main arrived in New York harbor on May 9 where the family members disembarked and were processed through the Ellis Island immigration facility. Once again they most likely then continued their journey by train travelling via Chicago and Milwaukee to Birch Creek in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

To the best of our knowledge the family of Josef and Theresia Münch sailed on the SS Main with Johann and Anna Maria. They most likely travelled together to Milwaukee, where they would have parted company as Johann and Anna went on to Birch Creek in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The Altmann's continued on to Blenker in north central Wisconsin where many from that family still reside.

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Life in Birch Creek

Menominee Township

The family ended their journey in Menominee Township, the southernmost township of Menominee County the southernmost county in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Menominee Township is bounded on the west and south by the Menominee River, which also forms part of the border with Wisconsin. It is bounded on the east by Green Bay and Ingallston Township and on the north by Mellen Township.



The oldest son Jacob had arrived the year before to determine the best areas to consider for settlement. They selected on an 80 acre plot of land in Birch Creek in the middle of Menominee Township. On July 14, 1882, Johann laid claim to the north half of the southwest quarter of section #34.

Menominee Township is a legal entity called a *civil township*. It was once two separate *survey townships* - Menominee and Cedar. A survey township is nominally a 6-mile square area divided into 36 sections, each 1-mile square. Sections are generally numbered within a township as follows (north at top). The numbering alternates direction to make it easier on the surveyor as he walked the land.

6	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
30	29	28	27	26	25
31	32	33	34	35	36

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A section contains 640 acres divided into four equal blocks with each block further divided into 40-acre blocks. These *quarter-quarter sections* were identified as shown below for easy association on the land patent paperwork.

NWNW NENW NENE NENE
 SWNW SENW SWNE SENE
 NWSW NESW NWSE NESE
 SWSW SESW SWSE SESE

The blocks labeled **NWSW NESW** were the 80 acres originally settled by Johann and the family in 1882. The **Homestead Act of 1862** was written to encourage the settlement of large parts of the Midwest and west. It provided for a claim of up to 160 adjacent acres for private settlement. With proof at least 5 years of residence and up to 7 years, a head of household could purchase the land for a nominal fee of \$10. The original land patent was filed by Johann in January 1889 for identified 80-acre half-quarter section.

Jacob, the eldest son, eventually took ownership of the original blocks and later purchased **NWNW** and **NENW** blocks to the north going to the gravel pit and the Little River. Joseph, the youngest son, purchased the **SESW** block to the south for \$200 in 1888 and later the **SWSW** and **SWSE** blocks on either side. Karl claimed three 40-acre blocks in the adjacent section 27 to the north and bordering on the Little River as well.



Figure 6. Bayerl Family Farms

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The map above shows the sections and the three farms. On the bottom is county road 320 intersecting with the railroad and highway 41 on the right. Further to the right you see a small cross representing the church and cemetery and the word *school*.

Section 34 was bounded on the south by country road 320 (now Birch Creek Road) and on the east by the railroad and highway 41 with the center of Birch Creek at their intersection. Birch Creek road forms the boundary between the two sections that make up the civil township of Menominee.

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Holy Trinity Church and Birch Creek School

Just as the school and church were next to each other in St. Katharina, they were near each other in Birch Creek as well at intersection of Country Road 320 and Bay de Noc Road. The church was on the southwest quadrant of the intersection and the school on the opposite northeast corner of that intersection with the cemetery across the street from both.

The parish was formed in 1882 and the church was built in 1884. The old church was torn down and replaced by a new one in 1961. Because of consolidation of parishes, the parish and church were renamed Holy Redeemer in 1972



Figure 7. Birch Creek Holy Trinity Church

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The original log schoolhouse was built in 1869. Two years later in 1871 it was burned in the firestorm of the Peshtigo fire. In 1872 it was replaced by a frame building, which was used until 1909 when it was replaced by the current brick structure.



Figure 8. Birch Creek School and blacksmith shop – a winter scene

The photo above shows the southwest corner of the school looking east on Country Road 320 with the old blacksmith shop in the background. The blacksmith shop is thought to be where school was originally taught before the first log schoolhouse was built. The blacksmith shop is well known in the lore of students who attended the Birch Creek District #4 school. This side of the school was the “*big room*” for the older students – generally grades 4-6 in the later year. The north side of the school was the “*little room*” for the younger grades.

An interesting aspect of a two room schoolhouse is that a *classroom* was really the table at the front of the room. When it was time for a particular subject, 5th grade geography for example, those students went to the front of the room. The remaining students were expected to stay at their desks and study. If you believe that you are sadly mistaken. Any teacher who could manage a classroom like that had to be a candidate for sainthood.

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The Second Generation

The Barbara Hermann Story

Barbara Bayerl was the middle child in the family of Johann and Anna Maria. She turned 22 shortly before they left St. Katarina. The only real record we have of Barbara is her birth record and her name on the passenger list of the SS Main – and a headstone in the Birch Creek cemetery.



Figure 9. Barbara (Bayerl) Hermann Gravestone

The headstone is next to those of Johann and Anna Maria with the name Barbara Hermann and a poem in German that reads:

*Schlummet sanft in dieser Grust
Bis dich der Hieland wieder reift.
Im Lande wo's kein Scheiden giebt Vereint
Gott die sich hier geliebt.*

In English it says:

*Sleep softly in this grave
Until you journey back to the Saviour.
In the land where there is no parting
God unites those who loved you here.*

The headstone is an enigma with hints of a fascinating story beneath. Inspection of the SS Main passenger list on May 9, 1882, reveals a Richard Hermann on the page with the

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Bayerl family. There is the hint of a shipboard romance between Barbara and Richard or perhaps they met while waiting for the ship in Bremen.

We do know that the 1900 census records show a niece Mary Hermann age 14 in the household of Joseph, the youngest son, along with John (Johann) age 70. We can only assume that she was born to Barbara and her husband and that Barbara most likely died while giving birth to Mary or shortly thereafter. We know nothing about who she married or when or whether it was indeed Richard Hermann from the SS Main.

Mary Hermann eventually married Frank Nohlechek and they had three children – Rose, Alfred and Joseph. Joe was killed in action in WWII in Brittany on 13 March 1945.

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Jacob Bayerl Family

Jacob Bayerl was born in St. Katarina on April 5, 1856 - the first child of Johann and Anna Maria. He travelled to Birch Creek a year before the rest of the family and become familiar with the best areas to consider for purchasing of land.

In 1885 Jacob married Theresa Altman who was born in 1862 in St. Katarina. They took over the first 800 acres claimed by the family in 1882 and settled into a life of farming, eventually purchasing another 80 acres. They had three children: Charles, Jacob and Theresa. Jacob died in 1930 and Theresa in 1935.

Charles was born December 13, 1885. He married Theresia Hoffman on April 15, 1913 in Birch Creek and had one daughter, Margaret. Charles died May 15, 1939. Charles owned the general store & cheese factory. He built the Birch Creek Cheese Factory and was commonly called "The Mayor of Birch Creek".

Jacob was born in May 10, 1893. He married Leocadia Sieminski on June 14, 1922 and they made his father's farm their home. Leocadia was born December 4, 1905 and they had 12 children: Anthony, Jacob, William, Rosie, Annie, Stella, Mary Jane, Charlie, Francis, Agnes, Lawrence and Aloysius. Leocadia died April 6, 1956 and Jacob died September 1966.

Theresa was born May 19, 1896. She married Charles Linsmeier around 1916 in Birch Creek. Charles was born December 23, 1896. They had four children: Leonard, Helen, Charles and Rosemary. Theresa died September 17, 1969 and Charles died May 21, 1985.

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Charles (Karl) Bayerl Family

Charles (Karl) Bayerl was born St. Katharina on February 21, 1862 - the fourth child of Johann and Anna Maria. He immigrated to Birch Creek in May 1882 with the rest of the family.

On April 17, 1888, he married Barbara Dangschwartz in Birch Creek. Barbara was born in 1863 and is the daughter of Jacob and Barbara Dangschwartz. They purchased 120 acres near the other family properties. The farm is located on the Old Birch Creek Road now owned by Dennis Nagler. They settled into a life of farming but it has also been said that Karl was a tailor. Charles passed away September 14, 1941.

Charles and Barbara had nine children in all - eight girls and one boy.

Theresa (Tracy) was born in 1888. She married Sylvester Golueke about 1908 in Birch Creek and moved to Chicago, IL. Sylvester was born on December 18, 1884. Sylvester worked in masonry. They had one son, Frances born on April 17, 1909. Theresa passed away in 1936, Sylvester on January 10, 1963 and Frank on May 24, 1988.

When Frank grew up, he met and married Mary Nortch born March 3, 1925 (sister of Katie wife of Joseph) on September 4, 1946 in Epiphany Church in Menominee. Frank worked as a mechanic and Mary was a homemaker. They had three children: Theresa born March 4, 1947, Doris on December 16, 1949 and Thomas February 8, 1953.

Mary Magdeline was born January 17, 1890. Married Martin Hornick 1910 and May 23, 1911 they had a daughter, Adeline. Unfortunately, Martin Hornick died in 1912 not long after Adeline was born. Mary then married Odello (Dell) Mantei born on January 29, 1885 they married between 1913 & 1918. They moved to a house on 11th Avenue (formerly 924 Dunlap Avenue) in Menominee where Mary took care of the household and Dell was a Mail Carrier. Dell passed away in July 15, 1969 and Mary on May 10, 1972.

On October 9, 1933, Adeline Hornick married Laurits (Larry) Peter Brink born on November 3, 1900. They moved to Green Bay where Adeline raised the first born and Larry worked for International Harvester Motor Truck Division. They had two children James Thomas was born on March 28, 1936 in Menominee and Barbara Joy was born on September 7, 1939 in Wausau, Wisconsin. The family lived in Green Bay during WWII when there were no motor trucks available and Larry worked at a factory parts depot. After the war, Larry joined the Bark River Culvert and Equipment Company and the family relocated to Iron River in the UP. They later relocated to Rhinelander, Wausau, Marinette and Rhinelander where Larry retired. Larry died September 5, 1966 and Adeline on November 4, 1987. After Larry's death Adeline returned to Menominee.

Barbara Bayerl was born in April 28, 1892 and married William Smith. They lived in St. Louis, Missouri. This is about all that is known about Barbara.

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Josephine Bayerl was born in 1893 and died in 1932. According to the 1920 census Josephine at the age of 25 was listed as a waitress in Forsyth, Marquette, MI. The story is she passed away from asphyxiation shortly before she married. She is buried in the Birch Creek Cemetery.

Joseph Bayerl was born May 1, 1895. Joe was the only boy in a family of eight girls. I've been told he was quite spoiled. Joe left the farm to live in Detroit and worked as a telephone lineman. When the depression hit in the 1930s, he came back to Birch Creek to take over the farm. On October 11, 1934, he married Katherine Nortch. Joe and Katie had seven (7) children: Carl Joseph: March 23, 1935, Robert Michael: September 29, 1937, Marianne Barbara: January 10, 1940, Peter John: July 3, 1941, James Francis: March 15, 1943, Theresa Katherine September 21, 1946 (infant death) and Joyce Marie: May 2, 1949. Joe and Katie worked the farm until 1954 when Joe became ill and moved to Menominee. Joe worked as a janitor at the Lloyd Theater but was mostly retired/disabled due to illness. Joe and Katie received the nickname of River Joe and River Joe Katie because there were many Bayerl's named Joe and since he had a little creek behind his place the name was given. After many years of illness, Joe died on January 24, 1971 and Katie died on November 27, 1987.

Frances Bayerl was born in 1896 and died in 1929 of cancer in Mary Mantei's care.

Marion Bayerl was born September 8, 1898. Marion married John Hebert about 1921 in Canada. They had one daughter; Mary Ellen was born 1923. They lived in Detroit, MI where Marion was a homemaker and John worked for the Detroit Fire Department, becoming a Captain. John died on December 1967 and Marion died on April 9, 1983.

On 1923, Mary Ellen married William Fielder born abt 1920. They lived in the Detroit Area where William operated a hardware store. They had two children: Mark born on 1951 and Sharon born on 1953.

Agnes (Peggy) Bayerl was born in 1900. Peggy married Rueben Suttkus born May 29, 1898 around 1921 they lived in Wichita, Kansas and moved to Texas. Peggy was a homemaker and Rueben worked for the Treasury Department and died at his desk. Rueben died August 10, 1956 and Peggy died January 24, 1982 in Bowie, Texas.

Elizabeth Matilda Bayerl was born 1904. Elizabeth or Betty married Jerry Williams who was born October 28, 1899 married around 1929 in Detroit Wayne County Michigan. After their marriage they moved to Windsor Ontario Canada where Betty was a homemaker and Jerry worked as a consulting engineer. Jerry died 1996 and Betty died 1990.

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Joseph Bayerl Family

Joseph was born in St. Katarina on July 11, 1865 - the sixth child of Johann and Anna Maria. He came with the rest of the family to Birch Creek in May. Joseph married Franceska Heitzmann on April 13, 1896. They had a daughter Barbara born on January 19, 1897. However, Franceska died on January 30, 1897 while Barbara was still an infant.

In 1915 **Barbara** married Peter Linsmeier who was born January 13, 1887. They had six children: Peter, William, Robert, Elmer, Marion and Betty Lou. Peter died in October 1966 and Barbara on December 19, 1987.

After the death of his first wife, Joseph Bayerl married Theresa Münch on October 25, 1898. Theresa was Joseph's first cousin, daughter of Anna's sister Theresa Altmann Münch. She was 6 years young than Joseph, born in 1871 in St. Katarina and they had all lived together at Ganglehof. Theresa's brother Josef was the father of the famous and beloved Aloysious Cardinal Münch.

At the time of Franceska's death Joseph was living on the farm with Johann, who was in his 70's, as well as his 3 year old niece Mary, daughter of Barbara Hermann. Somewhere in this time period, Anna Maria also died, leaving the men to manage things by themselves. Theresa came to Birch Creek from Milwaukee where the Münch family had settled. She most likely came to console and to help out around the house and things developed from there.

Joseph died May 21, 1954 and Theresa on May 27, 1952. Together they had ten children.

Theresa Frances was born February 13, 1899 and married George Kanyuh on January 23, 1921. George was born February 26, 1895. They had ten children: Dorothy, Gladys, Bette, George, Luella, James, Kenneth, Robert, Patricia and Theresa. Theresa passed away in Norway, MI and George on April 19, 1974 in Woodridge, Illinois. They are buried in Iron Mountain, Michigan.

Louise was born October 1, 1900 but died at the age of three on December 11, 1903.

John Carl was born February 20, 1902 and married Claire Tanguay on June 13, 1931. Clara was born on March 18, 1911 the daughter of Ferdinand and Leonie Tanguay. They had seven children: Cecilia, Richard, John, Margaret, Mary Grace, Andrew and Theresa. Claire died in April 1974 and John in July 1978.

Joseph was born April 1903 and died at five months on September 10.

Emma was born in 1904 and married Henry Allgeyer. Henry was born September 15, 1901. They had three children: Rosemary, Henry and Leonard. Emma died of lung cancer in 1954 and Henry died on November 7, 1993.

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Catherine was born November 7, 1905 and married Vincent Jasenovsky. Vincent was born March 19, 1911. They had six children: James, Robert, Ronald, Vincent, Joseph and Marlene. The father Vincent died on September 1, 1971 and Catherine on May 2, 2001.

Joseph was born in November 23, 1907 and died July 13, 1975. Joseph, known as Sap, lost a hand in a sawmill accident and lived on the family farm with John and Claire.

Peter Paul was born June 26, 1908 and at three months on September 7.

George was born May 1910 and died at the age of two in 1912.

Frank was born in 1912 and died on November 14, 1967. He also lived on the farm with John and Claire and was well loved by the family.

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Stories from Birch Creek

"Stories happen to those who can tell them." Thucydides

Charlie and the Cheese Factory

Charles J. Bayerl, son of Jacob Sr., owned and ran a cheese factory and general store in Birch Creek. As is mentioned in the newspaper clipping below, he was also known unofficially as the *Mayor of Birch Creek*. The store also served as the Menominee Township meeting place and post office.



Figure 10. Charlie Bayerl Cheese Factory Newspaper Clipping



Figure 11. Recent image of the Charlie Bayerl cheese factory

The cheese factory and store today

Contributed by Ron Jasenosky

The home and buildings where the old cheese factory is still located is currently owned by Gene Dressel. When we were growing up the place was owned by the Sheveys. They ran it as a hardware store and logging/lumber yard. I went to school with Delmar who graduated a year ahead of me. The Shevey's retired and eventually moved to town. Mrs. Shevey passed away just a couple of few years ago. You must remember them, the older kids were Eunice, Norman and Delma. They rode the high school bus with us in the early 50's.

Milk for cheese

Contributed by Dick (Dicky boy) Bayerl

When I remember going to the cheese factory I believe it was still run by the Lieds. I just don't remember any connection with the Sheveys running it...just the store. I also remember that when our milk was picked up we got the cans from the day before filled with whey which we gave to the pigs to eat. Then we'd wash them with soap and water and have them ready for milk that evening.

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The Shevey name is of course very familiar. A story about Delmar; one day while walking home from school Delmar offered that he could get a pack of cigarettes from the store which he did. We took the pack down 320 past Korhts farm and found a place on the south side, just below the hill, where a windstorm had blown a tree down with its roots pointing away from the road. We snuck behind it and smoked a few cigarettes. I remember feeling a bit dizzy as we walked home from there.

Shevey's store and more

Contributed by Marlene Jasenosky Crofoot

I would go down and put a penny in the bubble gum machine and get a few colored balls and a handful of ants. But it was the "41 Super Market", owned by Ann and Jim Nemetz, that supplied us with the 16 oz. bottles of "Lotta Cola". We would get it at lunch if we could run our tails off and get there with our dime and back to school during lunch time. Not sure how long they let us get away with that, seems like we were always watching over our shoulder for Ed Geine or someone or another who escaped from Marquette prison who our mothers thought was riding the back roads of Birch Creek looking for more skin to make lamps! Shoot I remember walking all the way up to school backwards waving to mom from our kitchen sink window till I was about at Chaltry's, then I had to watch for Rookie the mean dog!

Of course my wonderful brother Vincy must have felt sorry for me because many a day he would give me a piggy back ride all the way to school. Only of course until he and the boys would have a pissing contest and see who could write their names on the tar road. I think it was Vincy who had the most trouble because he had an "i" to dot. I always looked the other way but I do think it was my first and only case of penis envy! Many a day they waited for Betty Tanguay in the ditch with milk weeds ready to ram her windshield, like she didn't know who was doing it! She always called poor mom who was helpless with 5 ragamuffins out of control. I could go on and on.

The Hilltop Bar

An extract from the 2001 "Menominee Remembered"

Contributed by Dick Bayerl

If you look at the photo below of the school and blacksmith shop you see 320 go up a hill. I think it is where Joe Kanyuh built his first bar. Here's are a couple paragraphs from the 2001 "Menominee Remembered". Remember that Joe only had one arm with which to do the work - truly a "One Armed Legend".

Joe's first bar was on Birch Creek Road and was called the Hillside, built in 1931. He later changed it to the Hilltop. This was a log cabin, a pop, beer and 'shine stand. It was ten feet by ten feet and built with logs he carried out on his back for forty acres. He sawed the logs on a table saw he mad from a model T engine. He opened the bar on

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Decoration Day in 1931 by borrowing twenty-five dollars from his brother who was visiting from Iron Mountain, to stock the bar.

He earned enough money to pay back his brother after the first day and was clean with the world. After two weeks, business was so good he added another nine feet. He was proud of his hardheaded independence and also sold beer and liquor during the "dry" years of Prohibition. Sometimes the "Regulators" would come into the Hilltop Bar and look for the still and moonshine. Joe always said their pant cuffs were touching it, but they never found it because it was hidden under the floorboards of the bar. Things eased up in 1933 when Prohibition ended and he obtained his license to sell beer legally.



Figure 12. Birch Creek School with a view down County Road 320

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A picture from the past

Local packing plant workers

A photograph found by John Bayerl

A number of Birch Creek residents worked at the Twin City Packing plant which was in operation from the 1890's. Some of the men worked there for over thirty years cutting meat and going into the cooler constantly to retrieve the hanging carcasses and store the meat cuts for shipping. The plant was bought out by Plankinton around 1955 and closed five years later. A few of the workers went to Milwaukee to continue working for Plankinton there. Other chose to stay in Birch Creek and make do as best they could. The photo below was possibly taken around the 1955 timeframe. We have highlighted our immediate relatives' names.



Figure 13. Twin City packing plant employees

Front row: C. Payne, J. Braun, P. Lindahl, A Stauber, Scotty Bertrand, L.Haines, J. Schuchart, J. Nyberg, Harry Sieminski

Second row: R. Brown, Chuck Everson, Joe Przewrocki, J. Chervenka, S. Zoke, George Nagler, **John Bayerl**, C. Wellmer, L. Roenfranz, E. Shiner

Third row: W. Obert, H. Miller, W. Bertrand, Carl allgeyer, **William Bayerl**, **Jake Bayerl**, H. Sauzer, C. Lauzer, **Elmer Linsmeier**, Don Brown, R. Sonntag, Schuchart

Top row: **Peter Linsmeier**, J. Williams. Walter Sieminski, R. Gilbert, S. Linder, F. Brown, **Tony Bayerl**, R.LaCombe, Stanley Sieminski, M. Sporrer

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Historical Sketches of the Holy Trinity Parish

Transcribed from an article at the time the new church was dedicated

Newspaper images contributed by Dick Bayerl

Birch Creek is a hamlet, five miles north of Menominee, Michigan, southern most point of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

The United States government had need to transport defenses to Lake Superior regions to subdue border skirmishes; thus the Bay de Noc Road, not improved or paved but just a rough blazed trail; in its wake followed land hungry pioneers on foot and ox carts to homestead in the rich timberlands; thus began Birch Creek.

First deeds registered in Menominee of private landholders of Birch Creek are dated in 1863, and include the property on which the Holy Trinity Church is built.

The influx of hardy Catholics who reared families of large numbers found that going to Menominee or Marinette, Wisconsin, to fulfill their religious duties by way of the railroad tracks on foot very tedious; they soon rallied and badgered to get more immediate services.

In 1884 thirteen families, some we know of include: Johannes Bayerl, Xavior Allgeyer, Wolfgang Pflanzner, Andreas Harter, Thomas Heizmann, Peter Schneider I, Max Menacher, Jacob Noppenberger, Alois Weber, Frank Steberel, Ben Schmidt I and William Fleishmann.

Sharing labor and supplies they diligently endeavored to build “ a house of worship”. The land was donated by the flour miller, Xavior Allgeyer, on the S.W. corner of where the Bay de Noc Road crossed the section line now Highway 320, on the N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 2 in Township 32 north of Range 27 W. in the county of Menominee and the State of Michigan.

How thoughtful they were when they decided to make their church big enough to seat 185 persons, foreseeing a future of prospering and enterprising folks who kept settling in the vicinity.

The structure, of clap-board exterior which was kept neatly painted white, cloaked many secrets. The hand-hewed poles, the 14” wide and wider pine boards many of which were 20’ long, and logs which were joined by notching, as nails were precious and use sparingly; there were three windows on each side, the floor was of soft matched-pine lumber, the ceiling was low and it had wainscoting from the floor to the window sills. As for fixtures no pews were available at first, only kneelers sufficed; the lights were affixed to the side walls between each window above which hung the Stations of the Cross. The same stations were used until the church was razed 75 years later.

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The early church was heated with a heater set up in the middle aisle. The long stove pipe, leading to the chimney on the side wall, was often red hot on cold wintry days when the heater was gorged to capacity with blocks of oak, beech, birch and maple wood.

The 60 pound bell, which is now on the new church, was hauled by oxen pulling a stone-boat through the mire from the Chicago and North Western Railroad spur, one-half mile west of the church, and hoisted to its bell tower several years after.

The fixtures, many of which hold nostalgic memories for the senior members of the parish, were acquired by relatives from distant cities. The old organ a Lakeside, which pealed happy and sad tunes, remained in the church until 1953.

One of the first baptisms on record was performed by Rev. Michael Weiss. A Father Francis Becker of Marinette brought religion into individual homes before the church was finished. By 1886 the first Mass was proudly sung by a German priest from the Green Bay Diocese, a Father Fox, who later became Bishop of Green Bay.

The church being so remote, a better arrangement was necessary so the Marquette Diocese, decreed that the Epiphany of Menominee should serve the new mission – Holy Trinity of Birch Creek. Father Faust was pastor and later followed by Rev. Joseph Neumeier until 1898; then the parish of St. Adalbert's, which was smaller, was given the mission parish.

Rev. Fr. Julius Papon assumed the duties as shepherd – baptizing, marrying and burying. He had great pride in his flock, spending his summers in a new rectory which was built adjacent to the church.

As many as 47 received their First Holy Communion in one class and just as large a class was prepared for the sacrament of Confirmation. Catechism instructions were given in the German language.

The families of the parish paid their pew rentals and pastor's salary with stove wood, food produced on the farms, and annual picnics and bazaars. For the 40 years as a mission, Holy Trinity went through the hardships of war, depressions, decline of the lumber industry, the influx of Polish and French families, changes of living conditions and employment in the cities and many families moved away,

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Birch Creek School

An article published in the old Menominee Herald Leader

Contributed by Ron Jasenosky

Oscar Bartholomew taught the first school in Menominee County in 1854. The young man was from Elmira, New York, and held school in the blacksmith shop. I always thought that shop belong to the Kass family. Bartholomew was only a boy himself and taught school for just two months. In 1856 another school was opened and charged \$3 per student for 12 weeks. The start of school in the old settlement of Birch Creek was held in 1869. In 1869 a log school building was erected at the present school site of the school building. School was only in session for two and a half months from 1869 to 1871.

An extract from an article by the Menominee Historical Society

Contributed by Ron Jasenosky

In 1871, the year of the Peshtigo Fire, the log school building burned and was replaced with a frame building in 1872. This structure was used until the present school building was built in 1909. The children of the Sieman, Hackman, Junge, Thuerkauf and Allgeyer families attended the school in 1873. Many of these families are still in the area.

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The present brick building operated as a one-room school house from 1909 until 1925 when it was remodeled into a two-teacher, two-room school. The teachers also served as janitors - making fires, until later when a permanent janitor was hired. Note: When we were going to BCGS Johnny Kass, George's younger brother was the janitor. Just as classes were starting he would be leaving the school after firing up the coal furnace.



Figure 14. Birch Creek school students circa 1912

The school continued to function until May of 1959 and on January 3, 1962 the Board of Education District Number 4 of the Menominee Township became annexed to the Menominee Public School District.

Some of the teachers during our time are listed below. You may remember some of them:

- 1945 - Mildred Grabowsky and Martha Lamack
- 1946 - Martha Lamack and Mary Kahl
- 1949 - Martha Lamack and Ann Nemetz
- 1950 - Martha Duffrin and Ann Nemetz
- 1951 - Martha Duffrin and Margret Young
- 1954 - Martha Duffrin and Gladys Kline
- 1955 - Martha Duffrin and Mrs. Alice Winter
- 1958 - Cecelia Parrett and Mrs. Alice Winter (to May of 1959)

In 1962 the school building was purchased by Mr. George Kass. And in June of 1979, the school was acquired by the parish of Holy Redeemer Church from Mr. Kass for the sum of \$12,000 on a land contract.

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The Christmas Play

Contributed by Marlene Jasenosky

One memory I have is the fact that as soon as we came back from Thanksgiving holiday we would start planning the Christmas play. It was huge. We would have a curtain that went all the way across the front of the "big room" and we practiced and did nothing until Christmas was over.

I remember one Christmas Ronnie and Vincie were supposed to sing "Red River Valley" but Ronnie had to have his tonsils out and at the same time one of the other brothers had to have his appendix out. I doubt that Vincie went solo.

One year Lenny Allgeyer and I were Hansel and Gretel and we spent weeks gluing gumdrops and candy onto a huge paper box -- the witch's house). We practiced and practiced and the night of the performance when all the parents were there we got to eat the candy as we said our lines and we just lost it. We giggled the entire time and ate our buns off. Teacher was not happy with us at all. I think I was in about 4th grade.

The cloakroom

Contributed by John (Hunse) Bayerl

I recall a particular instance that happened sometime during my career there. I don't remember who the teacher was or what year it might have been, but on a winter afternoon the teacher went in the cloakroom for something (Come on, admit it, when's the last time you heard the word 'cloakroom?') and a couple of older boys locked the door on her. I vividly recall her screaming and banging on the door to get out. I don't recall who it was that locked her in and we were probably afraid of them, but eventually someone went to get George Kass and he let her out. We had a substitute teacher the next day.

A LESSON LEARNED

*At first it didn't seem like we really
wanted to be mean to her.
We just got bored and restless
that snowy December afternoon
there in that old two-room
country schoolhouse.*

*So, we first graders helped
lock teacher in the cloakroom.*

*Jane. See Jane.
See Jane cry.*

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Getting the school ready

Contributed by Ron Jasenosky

A week or so before school started in the fall mom had the job of cleaning the whole school upstairs and down. We would help her and I can still remember her walking to the school in the morning carrying a bucket and cleaning supplies. She would walk home for lunch and then go back for the afternoon. It would take her a whole week to clean. I remember it well because one time I was helping mom wash windows on the south side and was standing on a ladder when Billy Chaltry shot me in the leg with a BB gun.

Contributed by Marlene Jasenosky Crofoot

I helped mom to carry those supplies to and from school. Some days we packed our lunch. I helped but mostly I played the piano because we never had a piano at home. John or George always came and checked on us. Mom worked so hard on her hands and knees washing everything down and then the last thing was to polish the floors with some bowling lane polish. That's why it always smelled so good when we went back in the fall, it had that special smell. I think she got paid \$50 for a week of work, if that!

Special Memories

A “Spooktacular” Fourth of July

Contributed by Ron Jasenosky

Probably was the summer of 1955 or 1956. It had to be around the 4th of July because we had sparklers. Lenny Allgeyer, and the Jasenosky boys, Ron, Vince and Joe were bored and looking for some mischief. A plan was conceived to scare someone, so we took one of mom's clean bed sheets and with our sparklers walked up to the BC cemetery. It was still light out, probably more towards dusk. so we spread the bed sheet out on the ground over a grave and put the sparklers around the outside of the sheet. It was in the middle of the cemetery where you couldn't miss it if were driving from the east or west on country road 320.

We were hiding behind a tree, giggling holding a long pole tied to the sheet. Finally a car came from the east so we lit the sparklers and when the vehicle got to the top of the hill we yanked the sheet with the pole and it went flying up. Now here is the best part. It was a hot, muggy, mosquito filled night; the driver inside the car hit his brakes, and then took off like a bat out of hell, squealing his tires, and continued on to Birch Creek, never stopping at US 41 or the RR tracks. He pulled into Meyers bar (don't know if the bar was his original destination) and the last we saw of him he was running to the bar door. Just have to wonder what look he had on his face, and what he told the bar patrons. I am sure he didn't take 320 going home that night.

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We were still laughing when we got home. The next day mom went to get the sheet and she couldn't figure out how pine needles, grass stains and sparkler ashes got on her clean sheet. Like dummies we forgot to shake the sheet out or throw it in the dirty clothes basket.

The Blacksmith Shop

Contributed by Ron Jasenosky

The blacksmith shop behind the school was directly across from the Katherine Kass home. I remember it well because we were always trying to peek through the windows to see what was in the shop. For a long period of time Johnny Kass kept a very old car in the shop. I think it was a black model T or A. The shop could have been moved to that location because if I remember right it was sitting on the ground with no foundation and it had a gravel floor. I suspect it was the same blacksmith shop that the young teacher first taught school in.

The shop for many years had apple stains on the west side because we used to make the smaller kids stand against the wall with their arms out and legs spread and while they were screaming we would see how close we could come to not hitting them with apples from the tree in the school yard. Did you also know (and this is from my mother who hated snakes) that some years after the school was closed for good, they opened up the well behind the school and it was full of pine snakes. I believe after the school closed a man rented the school from G. Kass and used it as a wood shop until the parish bought it.

Fishing for bullheads

Extract from a memoir by John Bayerl

It all began during my childhood days on the farm in Birch Creek in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. While money was always in short supply, there was never a shortage of free, fun things to do, and fishing topped my list. On June evenings, when the first hot, humid weather of the summer had arrived, after the cows had been milked and chores were completed, my brother and I, along with some of our cousins who lived on the next farm, would head down a gravel road to the Little River. Beforehand, I had gone with a shovel and empty tin can to dig in the soft, damp loam in the garden; unearthing and gathering plump, juicy worms to use as bait.

The gravel road curved around past a pasture where our herd of black and white spotted Holstein cows lowed contentedly as they lay in the grass; seemingly content to the point of smugness that they had just a short time earlier filled stainless steel buckets with warm, foamy milk for their owners. The road then curved again, up a slight incline through a bit of a forest and then down a low hill past a gravel pit. Then the smell of wet, decaying swamp grasses told us that we were nearing the river. The road now became straight and level until we arrived at a small wood bridge flanked by steel rails. We had arrived at the fishing hole!

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The Little River is aptly named. It was about 25 feet across where the bridge was located, and sank to a depth of perhaps six feet at that point. For most of its course it was a slow, shallow stream that wandered aimlessly through cedar swamps and marshes until it emptied into the Menominee River near its mouth on Green Bay. It was too warm to support trout or other more sporting fish, but the bottom feeders like pickerel and bullheads were plentiful. Pickerel are small versions of the mighty Northern Pike, and bullheads are the smaller cousins of Catfish. Like their human counterparts in the cities, bullheads liked to congregate and head out for dinner after the sun had set, and one of their favorite eating places was the deep hole under the bridge at our fishing hole.

We usually arrived somewhat before sunset, and scurried about gathering sticks and limbs which we then placed teepee style around crumpled newspapers. Using an old strike anywhere "farmer match" we soon had a blazing fire going and the smell of wood smoke filled the air. Often, if the mosquitoes were out enmasse, we would throw green grass on the fire, creating a smudge pot. If it were a particularly warm evening, we might also "skinny dip" with a bar of soap.

My fishing tackle consisted of a ball of green fishing line, some hooks and some lead weights. The hook and sinker were tied to one end of the line and the other end was fastened securely to a bridge rail. When the sun had set and the fire blazed brightly, it was time to thread a gob of worms on the hook and toss it into the river with the sinker. The gentle current soon took the slack out of the line, and I waited for my first bite.

In the years since I fished for bullheads I have caught salmon in the Pacific Ocean, Bluefish off Cape Cod, cutthroat trout on Lost Lake on Mt. Hood in Oregon, and brook, rainbow and brown trout on rivers, lakes and streams throughout Michigan. Yet, my biggest thrill in fishing will always be the memory of seeing that green line, dancing in the fire light as a bullhead took the bait.

Cowslips

By John A. Bayerl

*In Birch Creek
where we went to school
we walked until we were in seventh grade,
then we rode the G. M. C. bus to town;
and cowslips became
a bump over the culvert
on Country Road 320.*