# Old Cemeteries of Marshall County

ublished under the auspices of the Marshall County Historical Society THE MERDIAN - WEIS - APFEL CEMETERY PART I

This little cemetery has, indeed, almost as many "names" as it has burials remaining in it! --- and probably not a single one of those is "official," because as we have noted so many times about others this series, it was never officially established as a "legal" cemetery. The acre of ground it occupies, as in most other cases we have described, was never officially deeded, conveyed, nor dedicated as a budal ground. Like "Topsy" in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," it "jest growed '

The name we give it here, is probably no closer to being its "official name," If it ever had one, than any other of the half-dozen or more we have heard it called or fead about in old newspaper the earliest reference to it we have so far found in print, in 1971, calls it the "German" cemetery. Shortly after the opening of the newer Calvary cemetery, in 1875, we read of it as the "old German" cemetery Still later, in the early 1880's, it is called the "Irish" cemetery. And after the opening of St Patrick's cemetery in the early spring of 1886, it is then referred to as the "old Irish" ceme-

Our first knowledge of even its existence, came some eight vears ago from a 45-year-old list of soldier burials in this area, kept by the late Howard Young, for many years adjutant of the Lookout Mountain post of the G.A.R., who refers to it as the "Old Catholic" emetery. (He was the father of our next-door neighbor, Mrs May (Young) Dawson.)

However, several members of the extensive Merdian family, one of Henry's oldest as well as largest, insist that its real name is the Merdian" cemetery. And we have also heard it call the "Merdian-Wels," "Merdian-Apfel," "Wels-Apfel," and possibly even other combinations. Our (wholly artificial) nomenclature for it, above, is so designed as to include every family that may have had a hand in it in the past, so that no hard feelings will ensue over the title

#### Earliest Catholic Cemetery in Henry Area

Its early history, as with so many others we have described, is brouded in the "vagueness of antiquity," to the point where it is imost impossible to date it. Where we have been able to assign a airly accurate first-date-of-usage with cortain others, we are conronted with two unfortunate circumstances in this case (1) we are owhere near as well posted about most of the families represented n it (and its two successor cemeteries) as we have been with many her families who have used the particular ones described earlier this series, and (2) as with the Old Henry cemetery, so many raves originally made in this one have been moved out (to the two man Catholic parish cemeteries now serving the Henry community) hat we are at a complete loss to gain much actual authentic nowledge about its earliest burials

For those specific reasons, we have had to delay this story pursolv until the very last in the series, meanwhile hoping to be ble to gain enough accurate information in "Department (1)" above o present a satisfactory story Even so, we were not able to disover as much as we'd have liked to

We have been told a number of interesting bits of information bout this cemetery and some of the people and families represented it, and we have had to use a considerable amount of pure speculaon (some of which may not be wholly correct) in some other reards. Perhaps the most important introductory remark to make hight be, that although probably 100 per cent of the burials in it, ast as well as present, were those of Roman Catholics, it was ever intended to be, nor dedicated for use as, nor ever actually sidered to be, an "official" Catholic parish cemetery

The most obvious explanation of this is, that at the time of the probable) earliest-burials-in\_it, there was no regularly organized man Catholic parish in the Henry community

#### Earliest Services Held in Apfel Home

A portion, at least, of the history of this little cemetery, roughly out an acre in extent, is coincident with the history of Roman atholicism-not as an organized parish, but as of a number of inmigrant families, most of them South Germans, almost all of nom were of that faith-In the Henry area

Published histories state that the so-called "Dutch Settlement" in wer Henry township, had its earliest beginnings in about 1837 with he advent of about five families, mostly of Bavarian ancestry ose of George and William Kicin, George Heller, Frederick Reineck (Austrian, rather than Bavarian), and Anton Apfel

The following year saw the arrival of the Valentine Weis and nton Sidel families, and the next, 1839, that of the Fred W Troendy and Balser Klein families.

During the next 20 years, a sizeable number of others of the me nationality and faith came to the Henry-Whitefield area to their homes, including such familiar names in the community 8 Merdian, Neuhalfen, Mattern, Bickerman, Toemmes (later changed some to Thomas), Peterman, and many others perhaps less famil-

#### early spring of 1886, of the St. Joseph's parish St. Patrick's cemetery. German, Irish, Portions Separated

Anyone browsing through the pitifully neglected, badly-overgrown-with-brush remains of this little cemetery, with very much of a perceptive eye, can deduce several things of interest. About the first is, the growth and expansion of it, from west to east. The gate, constructed of a durable hardwood, stands at the southwest corner, and for all its age and disuse and lack of maintenance (with an occasional coat of paint), it is still in reasonably good condition! (It slides, rather than being hinged) Another is, that the earliest burials in it, represented by what few stones still remain for present-day inspection, are all in the westerly third of the cemetery; and without exception, the names on these stones Mattern, Apfel, Haas, Peterman, and Merdian (besides Koch and Ackerman already given)-are all of distinctly German flavor

By contrast, the easterly two thirds of the area is filled with names with just as positive an Irish ring, and though they begin almost as early as do the German names, for dates (1853 the earliest, James Hartley, 50 years old) they continue on well past 1874, to the last burial in it of which we have any knowledge, that of Margaret Murnane, 18 years old, who died of "consumption" on Nov. 21. 1885. (Her grave, however, was more than likely moved in the post-1886 exodus, to the then newly-opened-up St Patrick's cemetery. The Murnanes were related to the Harney family, and although the name itself no longer is to be found hereabouts, the blood line is. through the latter name )

#### Many Graves Moved Out

The South German families which formed the nucleus of the original St. Mary's church did a much more thorough job of moving their graves out to their new (1875) Calvary cemetery, than did the less-numerous Irish who arrived somewhat later. Only one grave of each of the seven German names above still remains in it.

(Because we have never become as familiar with the Calvary cemetery and its burials as we have the Henry City cemetery, with which we have far more frequent contact, we are unable to tabulate just how many, or which, graves have been likely moved into Calvary, from this little cemetery A wild guess, however, might be "about fifty or so" This is arrived at considering the proportion of Roman Catholics in the overall population of the area served by these Henry township cometeries, in that period, plus an estimate of how many graves would likely be missing from the area occupied by the German population in this cemetery, which appears to have had definite boundaries)

Published histories of the area are not very thorough on their biographical coverage of South German unmigrant families in this area, relatively few have ever found their way into them. This was likely because many of them kept rather about from their Englishspeaking neighbors. for the first generation after their arrival here at least, and even for quite a few years, the German language was still used almost exclusively by them in their family, social, business, and even religious life a circumstance not at all uncommon with "national" groups in their new Stateside homes all over the country, for at least their first (immigrant) generation

(This last circumstance the persistent use by the ourly priests of St Mary's church of the German language in vernacular portions of Catholic services finally led to the separation of the local Catholic population in 1874 into two churches the English-speaking Irish portion of the paush family finally succeeded in having the Bishopof Peoria separate it into two churches and the St Joseph's parish

#### The Merdian Family

Although far from being the carliest of the South German families to arrive in the Henry area, the one-which most heavily populated it in succeeding years in fact one of the very most numerous to be found anywhere hereabouts was the family of Johan Joseph Merdian, hum Nov 18 or 19 1811 in the (then) Kingdom of Bavaria (Germany had not yet then been unified under a single king) As a young man still unmarried he came to the States, remaining in New York for several years, where he met and married Mary Ursula Burgun a native of the province of Lorraine

-- In his native Bavaria Joseph (as he was usually called) had learned the wagon-maker's trade and was anxious to go into business for himself somewhere in the States. He had made one trip to Marshall county, and liked its prospects but was hampered by an insufficiency of capital to set himself up anywhere at the moment During his short second stay in New York (having left his wife) and two eldest children there while he made his first trip here in 1842) he was able to berrow \$500 fits second top to Marshall county included his family

Upon the family's arrived tree he used some of the money to buy some good libnois botteen land in Sections 29 and 30 of Renry township and the remainder to set up his wagon making business. in Henry itself.

#### Sells Wagon Shop

The second and permanent or vol. I.J. seph Merdian in Henry township was in 1843. Published recerts de not state just how long he operated his wagonworks here or when he sold it or why but it is to be presumed that the income from Germing the rich land he

As for the Weis family, the name has all but died out completely around Henry. There appear to have been (probably) two sons of Valentine Wels, an early settler in Henry (1838), Edmund, born in Bavaria in 1828, and August C., born in Henry township in 1839, who married and raised families here.

Edmund farmed at one time about 80 years ago, in Section 36 of Whitefield township, its southeast corner section, and in the northeast quarter of it, through which both Rte. 29 and the Rock Island railroad pass diagonally, still held (in the last revision of the Marshall-Putnam plat-book, published several years ago), by a member of the Weis family.

Edmund Weis' wife was formerly Johanna Lindsey; they had eight children, of which six grew to maturity: Michael (who went to Woodford county, across the Illinois river from Chillicothe), Alexander, Ida (Mrs. Otto) Noll, (who also lived in Woodford county, near her brother Michael), Conrad (who remained around Henry, and died Dec. 16, 1942, in Henry), Edmund, Jr. (who joined two elder ones of the family across the river from Chillicothe), and Emma.

#### Operated Provisions, Musical Instrument Business.

The other branch of the family, that of August C. Weis, lived for the most part in Henry itself, and were probably better known than he first-named.

The father, Valentine Weis, is said to have built the first store building to stand on the spot now occupied by the Fairbanks building, and in it, conducted a grocery, general provisions, and musical instrument store, for a great many years. Upon his retirement in 1870, his son August C. Weis succeeded him in the business. He is said to have been a composer of music himself, of some note.

Among the children of August C. and 'Mary (Troendley) Weis were Kathryn (Mrs. Walter) Harrison (Feb. 8, 1870-May 1, 1930, buried in the Harrison lot in Henry City cemetery), George (Sept. 19, 1868-March 4, 1952), Emma, Frank, and Fred, for many years the efficient movie projector operator at the Henry theatre, who died within the past two years. (We do not have actual dates for the last three named.)

Of the Apfel family, we have never found but very little published information. No published biographies of any of them appear in any of the books we have ever examined. Our only present source of information comes from an atlas of Marshall county published in 1873, which lists two Apřels, C(onrad?), who owned land in Section 30 of Henry township, closely adjoining (to the south) the site of our little cemetery; and A(nton?), who owned the land on which it actually stands, and where he, or some other Anthony/ Anton Apfel is buried (The names are synonymous, and were sometimes interchanged. Likewise, there is a large family of Appels hereabouts-this too may have been a change in spelling adopted by inter generations of the original Apfel family, though we do not (now this for sure.)

Finally, the wife of William B. Merdian ("Billie"), who farms the land formerly belonging to the estate of his late father, Barnhard Merdian, was nee Edith Apfel.

#### Matterns, Petermans

Two others of the German families represented in this cemetery are those of George Peter and Frances (Erich) Mattern, and Adam and Regina (Lippert) Peterman The former couple was listed in published biographies as having had seven children who grow to maturity' George P., Katherine, Michael J. Stephen, Margaret (Bickerman), William, and Henry To these, probably between George P and Katherine, must be added John V Mattern, (Aug 23, 1846-Feb. 5, 1853) buried in this cemetery

The Peterman family, William, Lawrence, Frank, Katherine, John, ida, and Henry, and perhaps some others we may have unintentionally omlitted from not knowing them as well as we do some others. were more than likely grandchildren of the lone Petermann (spelled on the stone with two "n's," rather than the way living members of the family now spell (t) buried here. Nichdias Petermann, who died Aug 11, 1859, at 56. (If his wife is buried here too, there is no stone to indicate lt)

We have already exhausted our space limitations, with still having said nothing of the many Irish familles who in bygone years used this cemetery, nor of the five war veterans who were once buried here, now reduced by move-outs to three. Hence, there will be a continuation of this story in a "Part II" in a near future issue.)



Henry News-Kepublican 5 Tuesday, December 31, 1957

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Doisinger Robert C. Davis and family, Peoria, Mrs. Eva Hupp and Letha, Chimet her brothers and their wives.

Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Larson and Mr. and Mrs. Everett Larson of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Deisinger Walnut, Mr. and Mrs. Gail Larson have invited to their home for a New Year's day dinner. Mr. and of Harmon, and Mr. and Mrs. Bela Larson of Nelson, at Stan's on Mrs. Fred Delsinger of Putnam, Route 29 for a chicken dinner Saturday evening. After dinner the Bob Deisinger and family, Mr. and group came on to the Deisinger home in Henry for an evening of and the Gilbert Gish. family of Buda.

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Hessing, Last week Sunday supper guests Brock and Bryce, of Peoria, and Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Wiedman, Scott of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Heinrich were Mr. and Mrs. Carl Otto of and Bruce, were the Leo Quinns' supper guests last night, Monday. Varna.

Spending Christmas, eve and Christmas day with the R. A. Ham-mells in Champaign were Mr. and Mr. and Mrs. Harold J. Builingon are to leave Bradenton, Fla. with their trailer Friday and they will meet other members of a Mrs. B. F. Hammell and Frank. group in Dade City, Fla., for the Mr and Mrs. Howard Crook and drive to Nogales, Ariz., the start-ing point of a Wallie Bryan trailer children were in Henry Sunday having dinner with the Earl Hupcaravan through Mexico to Nanbells. ama. Mr. and Mrs. Dayne Farr and

took lee cream and cake to the Lloyd Wright home Thursday ev-ening in celebration of Mr. Supper Christmas down with the sup ening in celebration of Mr. supper Christmas day Wright's birthday which occurred Farr's, Mrs. Parry's the following day.

Hibb's sister and husband, Mr. and Mrs. Forrost Ellison in Vermont; The Misses Nora and Helen Bogner had with them for dinner and a gift exchange Christmas night, 1 111 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gibbs visit-ed with Mr. and Mrs. William Keh-Mr. and Mrs. Otto Louis and Nor-bert, Putnam, Mr. and Mrs. Earl lenbach in Chillicothe Sunday af-Hartwig and Mary of Princeton; the Robert Klein family of Granternoon. ville, Mrs. John Stadel and Louis, and Miss Marilyn Fulton. Evelyn Louis, who is in training at St. Joseph's hospital, Bloomington,

visited with the group over long distance telephone that night. She arrived home Saturday for a week's vacation.

Gardner Campbell, a student at West Virginia Tech at Montgom-ery, W. Va., spent the holidays with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J A. Campbell.

Mr. and Mrs. R. C. McLeod and three children left Saturday morn ing for Minneapolis, Minn., after having been with her parents, the C. A. Bourdettes, since Mnoday night. After spending a couple of days with Mr. McLeod's brother, Bob McLeod and family, in Minneapolis, the former Mary Helen Bourdette and her family left the fore part of this week for their home in Cando, N. D. Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Barth enter-

tained the Eldon Bogner and Lewis Wabel Jr., families and Lawrence Newman at dinner Sunday Bobby, Frankle and Maureen McNutt were Friday afternoon guests of Judy, Roger and Jane Bogner at the Eldon Bogner home Mr. and Mrs. Frank S. Clift ontertained at dinner and supper on Christmas, Miss Sadie Hupp, the Eugene Clift family, Sparland, Dr



ROY HANSON

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**CLOSING OUT** PUBLC S

The Anton Apfel family bought land in Section 30, and (probably) onated an acre or so of it for use as a neighborhood burying round, located at just about the exact center of the section. There ere doubtless two reasons for this. (1) there was at that time, no ganized Roman Catholic parish in the neighborhood, and (2) the earby Anton Apfel home, if we have been told correctly, was the e of the first (and for several years thereafter) Roman Catholic rvices held in this area

#### Church Organized About 1850

During those early years, when things "were in a state of flux the expression is so commonly used for general instability nd uncertainty in getting something finally organized these buth Germans were served by a few nearby parish priests and others I a more missionary character, on irregular and occasional visits was not until about 1850, or perhaps shortly before local history rather vague on this point-that the St Mary's parish of Henry as formally organized

Ellworth's volume states that it built its first building in Henry 1850, but that only two years later, it became necessary to reuild and enlarge it The foundation for the second building (where e parish school building now stands) was laid in 1852, and the lifice itself completed in 1854 (This building served the parish nill 1909, when a magnificent new structure was completed and edicated, which still serves the parish in an admirable manner The history of this church was published so recently in connecon with its centennial celebration several years ago that it should hardly necessary to repeat much of it, and, after all we are ecializing in the histories of cemeteries, rather than churches ex pt where there was a definite church-cemetery the-up (which there as not, in this particular case.)

#### Earliest Burials

As with so many others, the presence of (1) possible very early marked burlals, (2) early graves moved in from clsewhere every mmon in those particular days), and (3) more than likely a reable number of very early graves moved out of it, make it close impossible to date this cemetery within a period closer than sibly 10 years.

"The earliest date of death on a stone still remaining in it is 43;-Markrid Koch, wife of Henry Koch, died on Aug 8 of that ar-Next is Augusta B. Ackerman, four-year-old daughter of A C E-Ackerman, who died Sept. 3, 1844

Then follows a gap of about eight years until 1852, with two tials in the fall of that year Christina Merdian, infant daughtet Johan Joseph and Mary (Burgun) Merdian who died at 2 vent Months, and 19 days, on Sept. 2, 1852, and Thomas R. Loynd whit wid have been mis-spelled, mis-read or mis-copied-we have er seen such a name elsewhere in our lives's, who died Oct h 52, the age being illegible

From then on until 1874, hardly a year passes without from one three burials, (all of the three in 1854 taking place during the lack diphtheria" epidemic period described in another article in is series), ending rather abruptly in 1874 We know of only Six ening up, in 1875, of the St Mary's parish Calvary cometers and how who doed it how of any weet over neved of the b) the final "coup de grace" supplied by the opening up, in the ably few if any we ever neved of f

had bought along the over appended to him more than that from (wagon-making lakewist local records are silent as to who succeeded him in the wagon business. Henry was quite a wagon manufacturing center a century (g) there were several wagon factories here. for many years '

At any lat the later concentrate tion farming buying more and more land until at his death on Mech 2, 1893, he was accounted a very wealthy man. His wife survival fam by nearly 17 years. Both , are buried in Calvary or refers to an most of their children

As did most couples in that disc the Joseph Merdians had what would be accounted today a large family. Published records do not agree on exactly how it invictuidants one record says eleven and another says ten However, nine (1.9) on grew to maturity, and all but three remained to ruse they an families within a very few nules of Henry

#### One Buried in This Cometery. One Still Living

Ewo of the Jose, hole of any ford any ford an unit with them to Henry in 1813. Stephen Jelept Lein Max 25 9 and Mary A who later became Mrs. Marcus Percer barn on 50. We can account for len children, if there was an include the task task nome between these two named did in other on Security and was buried there. At least we have never to ear out the Merd in infant's grave hereabouts cunless there is a fit to a construction on this cemetery). and this family has been able on a pscientious about marking well all its graves where the e-

Clara most after Mar. Row we would find Wolf and lived in the McNata Michael control of a right who left here for the Portland On are a set of Ease thy baby Christian the the sensing this little whose grass as noted remeters have a first constant i annois and Henry who is now the first same in the f plete the roster the state marry and bring up All of the state of a large their families in the Beller area. space mind Smith Jane Bol-- where both died and were

1. N howeg a Hot as a h burnd some year og gamma second generation still Henry the last and the + + rinday (on Feb. 2, 1958) lives in Herry Society of Controls health for all of his

and in remarkable . advated yes. Here without contrade Bognet have a stated of happeness He enheen sparid to a having outlived a disportionjush the rather and a district averaged to the second second nephews several of

where were determined to If he lives to the ige of the which of present there is a good likelih of that the body is a rear hipbented the feat of the Camers family described out of the stress which counted 150 years fronthe end of the death of the last

spy virgiti F F of the hundreds . . . listed in the Heids 2, if the distance of an interview Merdians It is present a there is a 12 Me due to 1 5 Fig. ( ) i family which is closely thed through sector correspectation of the two

#### Other German Families

Certainly this concert, was not concert of it ever was, from any great prependerance ( Merdian Weis or Apfel hurials in it' Only me Merdian study Christian no Weiss and only one Apfel (AntHaving decided to quit farming, we will hold a closing out sale at the farm located 2 miles east and 11/4 miles north of Varna; 7 miles west and 1/4 mile south of Wenona; or 5 miles south and 11/2 miles east of Magnolia, Ill., on . . .

# Thursday, January 16



### FARM MACHINERY and MISCELLANEOUS

1952 John Deere "A" tractor with power-trol and roll-a-matic (excellent condition); 1945 Ford-Ferguson tractor with new tires; 1942 IHC "H" tractor; 1955 John Deere "227" corn picker, good condition; 1956 IHC "64" 7-ft. combine, like new;

1955 IHC 4-row corn planter, good condition; 3bottom 14-inch John Deere mounted plow; IHC 2bottom 14-inch plow; Ford 2-bottom 14-inch mounted plow; Ford 7-ft. mower; 7-ft. windrower;

John Deere 2-row cultivator; IHC 2-row cultivator; John Deere 2-row rotary hoe, like new; 1955 New Idea side delivery rake; John Deere 15-ft. disc:

IHC 4-section harrow; IHC 3-section spring tooth harrow; Peoria oats seeder; rubber tired running gear with flare box; rubber tired gear with square box: hay rack on rubber tired gear;

9 — SHEEP — 9

LES

High wheeled wagon; corrugated roller; overhead jack and cradle; speed jack; hand corn sheller;

Quincy tank type air compressor; clipper fanning mill with riddles; Two 300 gal. gas tanks with stands; 12x16 tarpaulin, nearly new; pump jack; <sup>1/3</sup> hp electric motor;

<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> hp electric motor with grinder; 2 water tanks with drinkers; 2 tractor umbrellas in good condition; 2-wheel cart; brooder house;

Woven wire clamp; barb wire stretcher; 2 log chains; barrel type oil pump; grease guns; 2" belt; 4" belt; 4 light brooder unit;

Chicken feeders and waterers; hammers; saws; scoops; forks; and many other items too numerous to mention.

9 ewes, 3 to 5 years old

1200 Bales - CLOVER HAY - 1200 Bales no rain

### HOUSEHOLD GOODS

Extension dining table; 2 occasional chairs; 4 chrome kitchen chairs; chest of drawers with mirror; dresser; wood bed; iron bed; child's teeter-totter and swing; fruit jars; and many other items.

# NOTT & DONOHO, Q TERMS: CASH.

JOE

Not responsible for accidents. Lunch will be served by the Homemakers class of Varna Methodist church. LEONARD STONIER, AUCTIONEER.

JOEL JENKINS, CLERK