

MAR 24 1999

Allen County Public Library

# Besancon, Indiana Chronicles

Issue No. 9

March 1999

## President's Message

It is now 6:00 a.m. and I find myself at my work table which is located in a corner of our kitchen, conveniently close to the coffee maker, telephone, and refrigerator. There is a sheet of paper in the typewriter, and I am wondering what to write about. A number of thoughts come to mind.

•I recently had a bad scare. The doctor ordered x-rays and a M.R.I. While waiting for the results of the test, I kept thinking "if worst comes to worst," as the old saying goes, God please let me finish my genealogies on the early French families of St. Louis Church. How about that for being a genealogy nut! Shirley was so sweet and accommodating during this time. I am glad to report that the news was good, and I will be digging into genealogy for a few more years.

•This brief time of illness did bring to mind that I did not want my work on genealogy to end or become lost, destroyed or forgotten. I want a finished product--if that is ever possible with genealogy. What all of this is leading to is this: do not waste time! If you have completed a family genealogy, make sure that it is deposited at a research center or library where it will be preserved. The Allen County Library in Fort Wayne is an excellent place which is known throughout the country for its genealogical collection. Also, the main purpose of the Besancon Historical Society is to preserve the histories and genealogies of the early settlers of eastern Allen county. We are growing into an archives and research center, and it is equally important that we have the materials and resources to support this center. Please get your

"Ancestral Charts" filled out and returned to the Society so that they can be kept on file in our archives. We want to preserve that information for posterity.

•This Fall a group from our Society will be traveling to eastern France via Chicago and Zurich. We will make the trip which took our immigrant ancestors months to make in seven hours. We will be visiting many of the towns and villages from which our ancestors came.

Continued on page 2.

The Besancon, Indiana Chronicles is a publication of the Besancon Historical Society. It is issued three times annually.

ISSN 1097-9646.

The Besancon Historical Society  
15535 Lincoln Highway East  
New Haven, Indiana 46774-9679

Gene Yoquelet, President  
Carlton Giant, Treasurer  
Barbara Gorney, Vice-President  
Theresa Martin, Secretary  
Ralph Violette, Editor of Chronicles

The Society maintains a web page at:

<http://www.ipfw.edu/ipfwhist/historgs/besanco.htm>

## Schedule of Meetings for 1999

*All meetings, unless otherwise noted, will start at 9:30 a.m. in the St. Louis Parish Conference Room in the parish office building. Mark your calendars!*

24 March  
Photo work day. 9:30 to 3:30 p.m. in Society Archives

27 March  
Business meeting

14 April  
Discussion and planning of trip to France in Society Archives

24 April  
"Besancon, France and the French Language"  
Speaker: Jeannine Jarrard, a native of Besancon, France and a French and Latin teacher in South Bend.

22 May  
Photo work day. 9:30 to 1:00 p.m. in Society Archives

23 May  
Photo Gallery Showing and Open House between 12 noon and 4:00 p.m. in Society Archives

29 May  
Business meeting

26 June  
Speaker: Rev. James Lothamer

31 July  
Business Meeting

28 August  
"Frontier Faith"  
Speaker: Rev. George Mather

25 September  
Business meeting

(No meeting scheduled in October)

27 November  
9:00--Business meeting and election of officers  
11:30--Luncheon at Hall's Village of Coventry

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### President's Message Continued.

•The windows in St. Louis Church are a work of art and would be impossible to replace. They are the original windows in the second church and contain the names of many of the first French settlers of this community. The Society maintains a Window Fund for the sole purpose of maintaining these beautiful windows. Contributions to this fund are always appreciated.

•We have some great guest speakers scheduled in the remaining months of this year. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. We also wish to thank Curt Witcher, director of the Historical Genealogy Department at the Allen County Public Library for helping the Society set up its library on the same system as the Allen County Library. Curt's time and effort were greatly appreciated. We also extend a hearty welcome to the new members of the Society and to Mr. Jean Miller, president, and Mr. Jacques Deliou, secretary, of the Montjoyce Association from our sister church St. Louis in Besancon, France. We are looking forward to meeting members of this association this Fall

*Gene Yoquelet*

**Besançon Indiana Chronicles**  
**Number 9 March 1999**

*In recent issues of the Chronicles a series of articles has been initiated on French communities established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in various parts of the United States. In the December 1998 issue of the Chronicles, Society member Joan Monnier began an article on the French settlement at Castroville, Texas. This is the concluding installment of that article. -ed.*

**Castroville, Texas: A French Alsatian Settlement**  
**by Joan Jacquay Monnier**

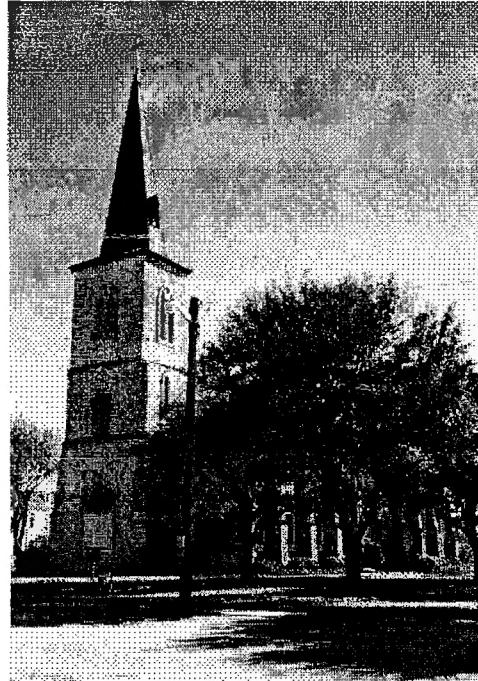
**Building Castroville**

The plans adopted for Castroville, Texas were typical of most European villages. The town was to be built around a town square and a church, and the inhabitants of Castroville would live in town and farm the countryside.

Buildings were constructed of local materials--limestone with a lime/sand mortar. Many were later plastered on both the outside and the inside and were white-washed. Wood shingles were used for the roofs and rocks were used for chimneys and fireplaces. The kitchen was a separate out-building.

As more living area became necessary, lean-to structures were often added to the rear of houses, thereby changing the slope of the roof-lines. Later porches made from logs shaded the front doors and windows. Hand dug wells lined with stones provided fresh water.

The architecture of the early homes of Castroville has been recognized as unique in the United States, and the area has been designated as a National Historic District. Ninety seven original homes remain today. (Castro's colonists also settled the nearby towns of Quihi and Vandenburg in 1846 and D'Hanis in 1847.)



**St. Louis Church. Photo by Joan Monnier**

**The Original Land Grants**

By the original land grants Castro was promised a large parcel of land if he persuaded 600 families or single men to settle on the land of a grant within three years. Each colonist would receive 640 acres (320, if single) after building a cabin and cultivating at least fifteen acres for three years. Land was also set aside for the erection of churches. The annexation of Texas to the United States in 1845 delayed the distribution of deeds to the colonists. However Henri Castro and over 550 colonists

**Besançon Indiana Chronicles**  
**Number 9 March 1999**

received land certificates between 1850 and 1855. Some settlers who received land that was not suitable for farming began to raise cattle and became ranchers. Others found occupations needed to create a community.

Surnames common to both Besançon and Castroville are Geant/Giant, Huth, Monier/Monnier, and Savageot/Savio.



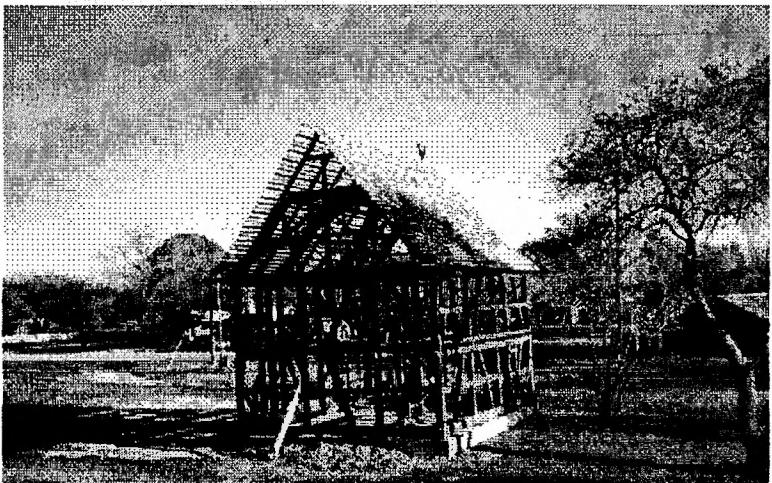
**Monier House.** Photo by Joan Monnier

### To The Present

Castroville kept its quiet ways, marched in procession on Saint Louis Day, and kept its unwritten Alsatian dialect for six or seven generations.

On May 30, 1975 Equisheim, Alsace and Castroville became sister cities. When Alsatian visitors came to Castroville, they were amazed to learn they could understand the words spoken by Castrovillians in their Alsatian dialect. In 1995 the Alsatian Club was formed with the intention of reviving the Alsatian language spoken by the older members of the community.

Although Julia Nott Waugh (1888-1958) published Castro-ville and Henri Castro, Empresario in



**Stinebaugh House.** This house was imported from Alsace. Masons are currently completing the house, and students from the Lycée Agricole in Rouffach will do the landscaping. Photo by Joan Monnier

1934, it was Ruth Curry Lawler, a teacher, who was instrumental in reviving the Alsatian heritage of Castroville. In 1948 she organized a slogan contest whose winning entry was "Castroville, The Little Alsace of Texas" submitted by L.J. Haby. This remains today as the slogan for Castroville, Texas.

Another prominent organization, the Castro Garden Club whose goal is to keep Castroville beautiful, was formed at a tea hosted by "Miss Ruth" in 1952.

The association Jardin des Racines sponsored two projects for Castroville

## Besancon Indiana Chronicles

Number 9 March 1999

through the Lycée Agricole (Agricultural College) of Rouffach, France. In 1997 the college sent faculty and students directed by Professor Paul Dulin to beautify a large area in Regional Park called "Jardin des Racines" (Garden of Roots). The students planted trees and shrubs around a plot in the shape of Alsace. In 1998 the visitors reconstructed the framework of an old Alsatian house that was purchased by the association, disassembled and shipped to Texas. The site chosen for the house was east of the Medina River near the bridge and south of Highway 90. When the framework of the house was completed the students followed an old Alsatian custom of nailing a tree limb to the ridge pole. Now we know the reason for the prickly pear cactus we saw atop the frame of the roof of this future tourist and cultural center!

Sources:

Castro Colonies Heritage Association, Inc. Medina County History 1994.

Castroville Chamber of Commerce. Castroville Vistitor Guide.

Crook, Cornelia E. Henry Castro and his Homestead.

Texas State Historical Association, The New Handbook of Texas. 1996

Texas Tour Book. AAA Publishing, 1998.

Waugh, Julia Nott. Castro-ville and Henry Castro, Empresario. 1934.

Weaver, Bobby. Castro's Colony: Empressario Development in Texas, 1842-1865. 1985.

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The Society is updating its records and has the following listed as Lifetime Members. Please notify the Society of any corrections.

Joan E. Bail 11701 West 102 Street Overland Park KA 66214-2615

Barbara Broach 18 Reliez Valley Ct. Lafayette CA 94549

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Joyce Crowl 5036 Abbey Land Shelby Township MI 48316

Catherine Czurec 425 Columbia Road Valley City OH 44280

Thomas Lombardi 300 West Houston Street Garrett IN 46738

Gladys Lomont 4311 Girard Road New Haven IN 46774

Jim Lomont 3606 Girard Road New Haven IN 46774

Michael Lomont 5115 Girard Road New Haven IN 46774

Annette Raaberg 14350 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue San Francisco CA 94122

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The editor has received the following letter from a genealogist in France. The original French is provided in the event that the loose and partial translation is faulty.

En amateur je recherche actuellement les personnes originaires de la région de Besançon qui ont émigré aux USA au 19<sup>ème</sup> siècle. J'ai trouvé votre adresse par internet. J'ai noté une quarantaine de personnes de ma famille, toutes originaires de petits villages (Âissey, Lanans, Saint Juan Lanans situés dans un rayon de 10 KM à 25 KM de Besançon environ) qui se sont rendues aux USA. Ces personnes qui avaient comme patronyme Boucard, Nolot, Voynet, Colin, Coeudevey, Corneille, Cornu, Deschamps, Picard, etc. se sont rendus pour certains en Louisiane mais les plus nombreux dans l'Indiana comté de Harrison (FrenchTown) et dans le comté d'Allen (Fort Wayne). J'ai trouvé des renseignements surtout grâce aux archives notariées. Bénévolement bien sûr, je suis prêt à vous servir de correspondant pour des recherches à Besançon. Je possède la généalogie de ces personnes jusque vers 1720 minimum. Cependant j'aimerais si cela est possible que vous me renseigniez sur le devenir de mes parents. (Continued on page 13)

**Besancon Indiana Chronicles**  
**Number 9 March 1999**

Society member Sue Kratzman has compiled the following index of names appearing in Issues 1 through 8 of the Chronicles. Periodic updates of this index will be provided in the future.

**Chronicles Index**  
**by Sue Kratzman**

The first number is the number of the newsletter. The second number is the page number.

**A**

- Adam, Rev. August ---1-4,2-10  
Adams, Ella---2-14  
Adlesperger, Rosa---4-4  
Allgeier, Rev. J. Nicholas ---2-10  
Auer, Elisabeth---2-13  
Auer, Frank---4-9  
Auer, Mary---4-9  
Augustyniak, Charlotte---4-1  
Aulon, Mary Frances---5-7

**B**

- Bacon, Adeline---7-3  
Bacon, Albert S.---7-4  
Bacon, Amanda---7-3  
Bacon, Anna B.---7-4  
Bacon, Arthur C.---7-4  
Bacon, Charles S.---7-4  
Bacon, Charles W.---7-3  
Bacon, Ephraim II---7-3  
Bacon, Ephraim J.---7-4  
Bacon, Harvey---5-6  
Bacon, Ida M.---7-4  
Bacon, John---7-3  
Bacon, Laura---7-3  
Bacon, Louis J.---7-4  
Bacon, Lucy---7-3,7-4

- Bacon, Mary Louise ---7-4,7-5  
Bacon, Michael---7-3  
Bacon, Samuel J.---7-4  
Bacon, Samuel---2-3,7-3  
Bacon, Socrates---7-3  
Bainbridge, Esta---4-4  
Bandelier, Franciela---5-6  
Banet, Alex---4-3  
Banet, Henry---4-3  
Banet, Jesse---4-3  
Barbaret, Lucienne---7-4  
Barbe, Catherine---4-5  
Barber, Marcus---7-6  
Barbier, Falista---4-4  
Barbier, Mary---4-4  
Barbier---7-8  
Barcio, Rev. Robert G.---6-5  
Beauchot, August---5-8  
Beauchot, Eugenie Reuille ---5-7  
Becker, Blanche---4-1  
Beerbower, Albert---5-5  
Beerbower, Olive---5-5-  
Behrman, Mildred---5-6  
Behrman, Pearl---5-6  
Behrman, William---5-6  
Belot, Frank J.---4-3  
Benoit, Julian Rev.---3-8  
Bessonies, Rev. A.---2-10,3-8  
Bidaux, Marianne---6-4  
Blanc, George---3-3  
Blazer, Clara---4-4  
Bobay---4-3  
Bodey, Eliza---2-13  
Bouchu, Bernadette---6-5  
Bouvier, Catherine---5-7  
Bowers, Elizabeth---2-3

- Bowers, Henry Castleman ---1-3  
Bowers, John---1-3  
Bowers, Michael---1-4  
Bowers, Stephen---5-6  
Bowser, Al---3-1  
Brady, Hudson F.---7-7  
Brady, James F.---7-7  
Brady, Kenneth---7-7  
Brady, Loretta---7-3  
Brady, Patrick D.---7-7  
Brady, Peter---2-12,2-13  
Brady, Stan H.---7-7  
Brady, Thomas E.---7-7  
Brockmyer, Phyllis---1-4,2-1  
Bron, Marie Jeanne---6-4  
Buege, Pauline---4-4

**C**

- Calkins, Lulu---4-4  
Carrier, J.C.---1-4  
Castleman, Brian---3-10  
Castleman, Ervin---3-10  
Castleman, Margaret---1-3  
Castro, Henri---8-3,8-4  
Cayot, Jesse---4-3  
Cayot, Pierre Francois---6-5  
Centlivre, Louis---4-3,6-11  
Champagne, Claude Joseph ---6-2,6-5  
Champagne, Jean Claude ---6-5  
Chirac, Jacques---6-11  
Coeurdevey, Pierre---6-5  
Coffee, Jerry---4-4  
Coling, Bessie Stradley ---2-14  
Collins, Elizabeth A.---4-8

**Besancon Indiana Chronicles**  
**Number 9 March 1999**

Collins, Victoria---4-4+  
Command, Hortense---4-8  
Command, Justin Jr.---4-8  
Command, Justin---4-8  
Comment, Glenola---4-2  
Comment, Walter---4-2  
Converset, Alise Mary Lucy  
---1-3  
Converset, Annette Louisa  
---1-3  
Converset, Bennet Joseph  
---1-3  
Converset, Emma Genevieve  
---1-3  
Converset, Frances---5-6  
Converset, Frank C.---1-3  
Converset, Henry Bernard  
---1-3  
Converset, Henry Lewis  
---1-3  
Converset, Josephine---3  
Converset, Louis Frank---1-3  
Converset, Mary---1-3  
Converset, Stephen Augustine  
---1-3  
Coonrod, Catherine---1-3  
Coonrod, Francis  
Christeen---1-3  
Coonrod, Leslie---5-4  
Coonrod, Magdalene---1-3  
Coonrod, Mary Melissa---1-3  
Coonrod, Mathias---1-3  
Coonrod, Peter Christopher  
---1-3  
Coonrod, Peter Wesley---1-3  
Coonrod, Warren Nicholas  
---1-3  
Corneille, Charles---4-3  
Corneille---7-8  
Coulardot, Hypolite---4-3  
Coulardot, Joseph---4-3  
Coulardot, Narcis---4-3

Cox, Nancy Ann---7-4  
Cribbons, Jack---4-4  
Crowl, Joyce Lomont  
---4-1,7-8,8-1  
Curts, Arlene  
---4-1,5-1,5-9,6-11,7-8  
Curts, Robert---7-8  
Curts---7-8

**D**

Daniels, Emily---2-13  
De St. Palias, Bishop Maurice  
---1-4  
Demaison, Jean Nicolas Jr.  
---6-4  
Demaison, Jean Nicolas---6-4  
Demers, W.---1-4  
DeMontaubricq, A.---1-4  
Dickerson, Gideon---1-4  
Didelot---6-5  
Didier, Clem---4-3  
Didier, Josephine---7-4  
Didier, Victor---7-4  
Ditzell, Marie Adele---2-3  
Ditzell, Susanne---2-3  
Ditzell, William---2-3  
Dodane, Eva---5-6+  
Dodane, Gerald---3-10  
Dodane, Isabelle---5-6  
Dodane, Isabelle---5-9  
Dodane, Joseph---2-10,5-6  
Dodane, Justine Monnot  
---5-6  
Dodane, Mae---5-6  
Dodane, Norma---4-2  
Dodane---6-10,7-8  
Donat, Clara---5-5  
Donat, Phoebe---5-5  
Dunn, James C.---4-4  
Dupont, Jean Claude---3-3  
Dupont, Jean---3-3  
Dupont, Laio (or Saio)---3-3

Dupont, Marg---3-3  
Dupont, Marie---3-3  
Dwight, William L.---3-3

**E**

Earp, Anne---7-3

**F**

Fairbanks, Jonathan---7-3  
Fairbanks, Sarah---7-3  
Faire (Favor)---5-4  
Faire---6-10  
Farre, Addie---5-6  
Farrell, Francis M.---5-8  
Farrell, Marie---5-8  
Featherspiel, Balzer---4-4  
Featherspiel, Magdalene  
---4-4  
Feltes, Rev. Charles J.---2-10  
Finney, Laura Mae---2-14  
Fondeuer, Francoise M.  
---7-11  
Fraine, John---7-11  
Fraine, Mary E.---7-11  
Fraine, Prosper---7-11  
Frane, Caroline---7-11  
Frane, Charles---4-3  
Frane, Clarence Simon---3-10  
Frane, Elizabeth---7-11  
Frane, Elmer---3-10  
Frane, Francis  
---3-10,7-10,7-11  
Frane, Francois---7-11  
Frane, Jane---7-11  
Frane, Joseph---7-10  
Frane, Josephine---7-11  
Frane, Jules---7-11  
Frane, Lester---4-3  
Frane, Margaret---7-10  
Frane, Mary---7-107-11  
Frane, Pauline---7-10  
Frane, Pierrette---7-10

Besancon Indiana Chronicles  
Number 9 March 1999

Frane, Prosper---7-10,7-11+  
Frane, Theresa---7-11  
Frene, Francis---4-2  
Fresne, Claude Francois X.  
---7-12  
Fresne, Claude Joseph---7-12  
Fresne, Jean Claude  
---7-11,7-12  
Fresne, Jean Pierre---7-11  
Fresne, Jeanne Francoise  
---7-12  
Fresne, Jeanne Marguerite  
---7-12  
Fridez, Marie---6-4  
Fry, Melvin---5-6

G

Gagnon, J.---4-5  
Gamber, Maria Magdalena  
---2-7,2-12  
Gauthier, John---5-8  
Gauthier, Mary Alice---5-8  
Gauthier, Mary Elise---5-8  
Geant, Jean Pierre---3-3  
Geant, Jean---3-3  
Geant, Louise---3-3  
Geant, Marg---3-3  
Geant, Marie---3-3  
Gentelz, Theodore---8-4  
Gerardot, Adrian---3-10  
Gerardot, Bernard---5-6  
Gerardot, Charles---5-6  
Gerardot, Eddie---5-6  
Gerardot, Francis Mrs.---5-6  
Gerardot, Frank Mrs.---5-6  
Gerardot, Henry---3-10  
Gerardot, John---5-6  
Gerardot, Lawrence---3-10  
Gerardot, Leo---3-10  
Gerardot, Simon---5-6  
Gerardot---7-8

Giant, Carlton  
---1-4,2-2,5-1,5-9,6-11,7-2  
Giant, Charlotte---1-4  
Giant, Randolph---3-10  
Girard, Louis---5-6  
Girard, Mary---5-6  
Girardat, Adelaide---2-3  
Girardat, Alexis Jr.---2-3  
Girardat, Alexis---2-3,4-9  
Girardat, Antoine---2-3  
Girardat, Celestin---4-9  
Girardat, Edouard---2-3  
Girardat, Jean Pierre---2-3  
Girardat, Joseph---2-3  
Girardat, Louis C.---2-3  
Girardat, Louis---4-9  
Girardat, Virginie---2-3  
Girardot, Alexis---7-4  
Girardot, Allen---3-10  
Girardot, Alphonse---4-3+  
Girardot, Clem---4-3  
Girardot, Earl---4-2  
Girardot, Edna---4-2  
Girardot, Elsie---4-2  
Girardot, Frances Converset  
---5-6  
Girardot, Henry J.---4-3  
Girardot, Henry---3-10  
Girardot, Jane---7-4  
Girardot, Joseph---5-6  
Girardot, Mrs. Henry---4-2  
Girardot, Sarah---4-2  
Girardot---6-10  
Gladieux, Alice---4-2  
Gladieux, Amiel---4-3  
Gladieux, Arthur---5-6  
Gladieux, Charles (Mike)  
---4-3  
Gladieux, Clem---5-6  
Gladieux, Francis---6-11  
Gladieux, Francois---2-6  
Gladieux, Frank---4-3

Gladieux, Jean Pierre---2-6  
Gladieux, Josephine---2-6  
Gladieux, Louis J.---4-3  
Gladieux, Louis S.---4-3  
Gladieux, Mary Ida---5-3  
Gladieux, Nelson---4-2  
Gladieux, Philippe---2-6  
Gladieux, Rose---2-6  
Gladieux, Virgil---4-2  
Gladio, Francis---2-6  
Gladio, Josephine---2-6  
Gladio, Lester---2-6  
Gladio, Peter---2-6  
Gladio, Phillip---2-6  
Gladio, Rosanna---2-6  
Gladio, Victoria---2-6  
Godard, Jeanne Francoise  
---7-11  
Gollner, Rev. Lawrence  
---2-10  
Gorney, Barb  
---5-1,5-9,6-11,8-1,7-2  
Gorney, Terri  
---4-3,5-1,5-5,5-9,6-11,8-1,7-  
8  
Graham, Margery M.---4-1  
Grant, Hattie---4-4  
Gremaux, Arsane---4-3  
Gremaux, Marie---7-11  
Gremot, Catharine---4-8  
Gremot, Francis Jr.---4-8  
Gremot, Francis---4-8  
Grevin, Rev. Louis  
---1-4,2-10  
Gromeaux, Clifford---3-10  
Gromeaux, Joe---3-10  
Gromeaux, Kenneth---3-10  
Gromeaux, Louis---3-10  
Guerin, Mother Theodore  
---3-9  
Guillemin, Frederic---6-2,6-5

**Besancon Indiana Chronicles**  
**Number 9 March 1999**

**H**

Hackman, Frank---4-4  
Hahn, Margaret---6-11  
Hall, Karen---6-11  
Hammond, Mary Alice---4-4  
Harris, John---6-11  
Hart, Agnes---6-9,6-10  
Hart, Peter---6-5  
Heidet---6-5  
Heine, Albert---5-6  
Heine, Emma---5-6  
Heine, Herbert---5-6  
Heine, Mate---5-6  
Henry, Bernard---5-6  
Hession, Rev. Edward---2-10  
Hession, Rev. Joseph---2-10  
Hoevel, Rev. Robert J.---2-10  
Hoover, Myrtle---7-5  
Horve, George, William---2-6  
Houston, Samuel---8-3  
Hughes, Anderson---4-4  
Hugo, Victor---1-2  
Huth, Louis---8-4  
Huth, Ludwig---8-4

**I**

Isabey, Pierrette Melitene  
---4-4  
Isaby---7-8

**J**

Jacquay, Helen---1-4  
Jacquay, Ralph---3-10  
Jauris, Anna Ursula---7-8  
Jeanney, Georges---6-9,6-10  
Johnston, Cordelia---4-4  
Johnston, JoAnne---5-9  
Jourdain, Jeanne Marie  
---7-12  
Jurline, Emma---2-14

**K**

Kays---7-8  
Kennirk, Bertha---5-6  
Kennirk, Frank---5-6  
Kennirk, John---5-6  
Kenrick, Rev. Francis---6-3  
Killens, Thomas B.---4-1  
Kleinreichert---4-3  
Kline, Frank---4-3  
Knecht, Monica---4-1  
Kratzman, Sue  
---3-1,5-1,5-9,7-8,8-1

**L**

Lachat, Anne Marie---6-4  
Lambelin, Pierre---3-3  
Lamblin, August A.---3-10  
Laurent, Cyril---6-5  
Lauyer, Francis---5-8  
Lauyer, Frank---5-8  
Lechler, Ethel---2-14  
Lechler, James---2-14  
LeLourdy, Jacques---7-12  
Letot, Joe---4-3  
Lewis, William---7-6  
Linder, Clarice  
Lothamer---2-13  
Litot, Rev. Edward---2-10  
Lombardi, Rev. Thomas  
---1-4,2-1,2-9,2-10,2-11,3-1,  
5-9  
Lomont, Arthur---5-6  
Lomont, Carolyn---2-14  
Lomont, Catherine---2-14  
Lomont, Charles---4-3  
Lomont, Charlotte---5-6  
Lomont, Claude Francoise  
---4-1  
Lomont, Clem---4-3  
Lomont, Cletus---2-14  
Lomont, Delores Gerardot  
---3-10

Lomont, Edna---2-14  
Lomont, Ernest---4-3  
Lomont, Esther---2-14  
Lomont, Francois Theophile  
---4-1  
Lomont, Frank E.---4-3  
Lomont, Gladys  
---1-1,1-4,3-1,4-2  
Lomont, Jesse---5-6  
Lomont, Jim  
---3-1,4-1,5-1,8-1  
Lomont, Joseph---2-14  
Lomont, Justin---2-14  
Lomont, Manford---3-10  
Lomont, Marsh---2-1  
Lomont, Mary---2-14  
Lomont, Mick---2-2  
Lomont, Monica---2-14  
Lomont, Robert---2-14  
Lomont, Ursula---2-14  
Lomont---6-10  
Lortie, Dominick---4-4  
Lortie---7-8  
Lotahamer, Joseph---4-9  
Lotahamer, Louis  
Lester---4-9  
Lotahamer, Albert---2-14  
Lotahamer, Andrew---2-14  
Lotahamer, Carl---2-14  
Lotahamer, Catherine---2-14  
Lotahamer, Charles Oliver  
---2-14  
Lotahamer, Clarice---2-14  
Lotahamer, Donald---2-14  
Lotahamer, Edward---2-14  
Lotahamer, Eliza Ann---2-14  
Lotahamer, Emma---2-14  
Lotahamer, Ernest---2-14  
Lotahamer, Esther---2-14  
Lotahamer, Evelyn---2-14  
Lotahamer, Gladys---2-14,4-2  
Lotahamer, Hazel---2-14

**Besancon Indiana Chronicles**  
**Number 9 March 1999**

- Lothamer, Helen---2-14  
Lothamer, Irene---2-14  
Lothamer, James---2-14  
Lothamer, Jean---2-14  
Lothamer, Jesse---2-14  
Lothamer, Jessie---2-14  
Lothamer, John---2-14  
Lothamer, Joseph---2-14  
Lothamer, Julian---3-10  
Lothamer, Lela---2-14  
Lothamer, Lester Lewis  
---2-14  
Lothamer, Louis---2-14  
Lothamer, Marie---2-14  
Lothamer, Mildred---2-14  
Lothamer, Ogden---2-14  
Lothamer, Oscar---2-14  
Lothamer, Rev. Jesse  
---2-10,2-14  
Lothamer, Robert---2-14  
Lothamer, Sarah Sophia  
---2-14  
Lothamer, Ted---2-14  
Lothammer, Agatha---2-7  
Lothammer, Anthony---2-7  
Lothammer, Catherine---2-7  
Lothammer, Eliza---2-7  
Lothammer, Ignatius  
---2-7,2-12  
Lothammer, Joseph A.---2-13  
Lothammer, Joseph  
---2-7,2-12,2-13  
Lothammer, Magdalena---2-7  
Lothammer, Maurice(Morris)  
---2-7,2-12  
Lothammer, Rev, James W.  
---2-7  
Lothammer, Rev. Jesse  
---2-13  
Lothammer, Theobald Jr.  
---2-7,2-12
- Lothammer, Theobald  
---2-7,2-12  
Lothammer, Theresa  
---2-7,2-13  
Louen, Rev. Michael---1-2  
Lupkin, William L.---2-2  
Lynch, Annette L.---6-2,6-5
- M**
- Major---7-8  
Maldeney, Henry---7-5  
Markley, Betty---5-1  
Martin, Catherine Bouvier  
---5-7  
Martin, Theresa J.  
---4-1,5-1,5-9,6-9,6-11  
Martin, Theresa---7-2  
Martin, Ursula Gerardot  
---3-10  
Martin, Woodrow---3-10  
Mathias, Amelia---8-3  
Maujay, Constance---1-4  
Mayers, Mary---4-4  
McBirney, Connie A.  
---3-4,5-5  
McClure, Frank---4-4  
McCormick, Elizabeth Ellen  
---7-5  
McCormick, Ellen---7-4  
McCormick, Ezra---7-4,7-5  
McCormick, John Louis---7-5  
McCormick, Lucy Marie  
---7-5  
McCormick, Margaret---7-4  
McCormick, Mary B.---7-4  
McCormick, Mary Louise  
---7-5  
McCormick, Patrick Joseph  
---7-4  
McCormick, Peter---7-4  
McCormick, Rebecca Ann  
---7-4
- McCormick, Rose Ann---7-5  
McCormick, Samuel Peter  
---7-5  
McCormick, Thomas B.---7-4  
McDivitt, Virgil---7-6  
McGowan, Mary---4-4  
McMullen, John---8-4  
Meyer, Charles J.---4-4  
Mignault, A.---1-4  
Miller, Fred---7-5  
Miller, Lillie May---2-13  
Monnier, Bernard---3-10  
Monnier, Elmer---4-3  
Monnier, Elsie---4-2  
Monnier, Ethel---4-2  
Monnier, Geraldine---3-10  
Monnier, Joan Jacquay  
---1-4,2-6,3-3,4-1,4-5,5-3,8-3  
Monnot, Albert Francis---4-8  
Monnot, Celestine---4-8  
Monnot, Eugene---4-8  
Monnot, Justine---5-6  
Monnot, Louise---4-8  
Monnot, Ottilia---4-8  
Mooney, Jacob---1-4  
Moore, Robert---4-4  
Moorman, Rev. George  
---2-10,4-2  
Morrow, Alyce Jane---5-7  
Mosika, Christina---4-4  
Moulin, Jean Pierre---3-3  
Moulin, Pierre---3-3  
Moulin---6-5  
Moure, Francis---4-2  
Moure, Frank---4-3  
Moure, Paul---4-2  
Moure, Raymond---4-3
- N**
- Nageotte, Francois Joseph  
---6-4  
Nageotte, Francoise---6-4

**Besancon Indiana Chronicles**  
**Number 9 March 1999**

Nageotte, Louis---6-4  
Nageotte, Michel---6-4  
Neuman, Otto---4-4  
Noise, Nicolas---4-5  
Noll, Rev. John Francis  
---2-4,2-10  
Notbush, Albert---4-4

**O**

Oberley, Arnold---3-10  
Oberley, Arthur---3-10  
Oberley, Elmer Jr.---3-10  
Oberley, Elton---3-10  
Oberley, Russell---3-10  
Oberley, Wilbur---3-10  
Odin, Bishop Jean Marie  
---8-4  
Owen, Robert---3-4

**P**

Pailloz, Alexander---4-4  
Pailloz, Anna Mary---4-4  
Pailloz, Charles Edward---4-4  
Pailloz, Charles---4-4  
Pailloz, Emma Henrietta  
---4-4  
Pailloz, Francis (Frank)  
---4-3,4-4  
Pailloz, Frank Alexander(Alec)  
---4-3,4-4  
Pailloz, Frank Dominic---4-4  
Pailloz, Frederick Jacob---4-4  
Pailloz, Hattie---4-4  
Pailloz, Henry, Alfred---4-4  
Pailloz, Jane Jennie---4-4  
Pailloz, Jean Baptiste---4-3  
Pailloz, Jean Pierre---4-3  
Pailloz, John Wesley---4-4  
Pailloz, John William---4-3  
Pailloz, Joseph Julian---4-4  
Pailloz, Joseph Justin---4-3  
Pailloz, Julian Joseph---4-4

Pailloz, Justine---4-4  
Pailloz, Lenora Jane---4-4  
Pailloz, Margaret Josephine  
---4-4  
Pailloz, Marie---4-4  
Pailloz, Mary Ellen---4-4  
Pailloz, Mary Louisa---4-4  
Pailloz, Mary---4-4  
Pailloz, William Joseph---4-4  
Pailloz, William Justin---4-4  
Pailloz, William---4-4  
Pailloz, Xavier Joseph---4-4  
Pailloz/Pio---7-8  
Pangburn, Kenneth---7-6  
Parnin, Francis---1-4  
Parrot, Joseph---4-3  
Pepe, Amiel---4-3  
Pepe, Florence---4-2  
Pepe, Marc---7-11  
Pepe, Wilbur---4-2  
Pernin---6-10  
Pernot, Constant---1-4  
Perrey, Antoine Joseph---6-5  
Perrey, John E.---4-1  
Perriguey, Marie Louise---2-3  
Perry, Captain E.---8-4  
Petitjean, Jean Pierre---3-3  
Pio, Albert---4-4  
Pio, Edward Charles---4-4  
Pio, Ellen---4-4  
Pio, Emma---4-4  
Pio, Ida---4-4  
Pio, Lillie---4-4  
Pio, Mrs. ---1-2  
Pio, William---4-4  
Pion, Charles---4-3  
Pion, Louis---4-3  
Platter, Bill---2-1  
Porchet, Joseph---6-5  
Poux, Paul T.---6-5  
Prenat, Constant---6-4  
Prenat, Francoise---6-4

Prenat, Jacques (Jacob)  
---6-3,6-4  
Prenat, Jean Jacques---6-4  
Prenat, Marianne---6-3  
Prenat, Pierre Fidel---6-4  
Prenat, Pierre Francois---6-4  
Prenat, Pierre---6-4  
Prenat (Perrenat), Richard  
---6-3

**R**

Rausis, Francis Nicholas  
---7-8  
Rausis, Marie Cesarine  
---2-3,7-8  
Rausis, Marie Louise---2-3  
Rausis, Mary Alexandria  
---7-8  
Rausis, Mary Louise---7-8  
Rausis, Morris Felix---7-8  
Rausis, Mourice Nicholas  
---7-8  
Reed, Sarah---4-4  
Reisel, Joseph---2-6  
Reisset, Antoine---2-6  
Reisset, Elisa---2-6  
Reisset, Joseph---2-6  
Reisset, Pierre---2-6  
Renier, Herbert---4-2  
Reset, Marianne---6-3  
Reuille, Charles---5-7  
Reuille, Clifford---3-10  
Reuille, Eugenie---5-7  
Reuille, Francis---3-10  
Reuille, Henry---3-10,5-7  
Reuille, James---5-7  
Reuille, John---3-11  
Reuille, Joseph---4-3,5-7,5-8  
Reuille, Jules or Julian---5-7  
Reuille, Lawrence---3-11  
Reuille, Narcis---4-2  
Reuille, Viola---4-2

**Besancon Indiana Chronicles**  
**Number 9 March 1999**

Reuille (Roy), Clara---5-8  
Reverd, Anne Francoise  
---7-12  
Rheinarson, Myrtle---4-4  
Richard, Elmer---5-6  
Richman, William---5-6  
Rivard, Marie---2-3,7-4  
Robbins, Mark---1-4,2-11  
Roberts, William---4-4  
Rodey, Pierrette---7-11  
Rondot, Dorothy---7-6  
Rorick, Joseph---3-11  
Rorick, Justin---3-11  
Rorick, Margaret---4-4  
Rose, Frank---5-6  
Rose, Maurice---4-2  
Rosselot, Fred Jr.---4-3  
Rosselot, Fred---4-3  
Rosselot, Harry---4-3  
Rossworm, Glenn---1-3  
Roussel, Aldon---5-3  
Roussel, Frances---4-5  
Roussel, Francois---4-5  
Roussel, Jean Francois---4-5  
Roussel, John Francis---4-5  
Roussel, Juanita---5-3  
Roussel, Lilliosa---5-3  
Roussel, Louis Jr.---5-3  
Roussel, Louis---4-2,4-5,5-3  
Roussel, Marie Piere---4-5  
Roussel, Wilbur---5-3  
Roussel---6-10  
Roussell/Russell, Wilbur  
---3-11  
Roussey, Adrian---3-11,4-2  
Roussey, Amiel---4-3  
Roussey, Claude Joseph---4-3  
Roussey, Esther---4-2  
Roussey, Frank---3-11,4-3  
Roussey, Marie Josephine  
---4-3  
Roussey, William---4-3

Roy, Clarence---2-10  
Roy, Jean Baptist---7-11  
Ruble, Daisy---2-14  
Ruis, F.M.---1-4  
Rupley, George---4-4  
Ryan, Edith---5-6  
Ryan, Julia---5-6  
Ryan, Lawrence---5-6

**S**

Sabine, Adeline---2-14  
Sallot, Elizabeth Jeanne  
---7-11  
Sallot, Jean Francois---7-11  
Sarrazine, Charles---4-3  
Savageot, Victor---6-5  
Schipper, Rebecca---2-9  
Schrader, John Mrs.---5-6  
Schroff, Judy  
---3-1,5-1,5-9,7-8,8-1  
Schuler, Mary Ann---4-4  
Schwegel, Caroline---4-4  
Smith, Albert J.---5-6  
Smith, Charles---5-6  
Smith, Isabelle Dodane---5-6  
Smith, Phyllis M.---7-6  
Sneider, Eliza---4-9  
Snyder, Anna---2-13  
Snyder, Catherine---2-13  
Snyder, Eliza---2-12,2-13  
Snyder, Elizabeth---2-13  
Snyder, Emma---2-13  
Snyder, George---2-13  
Snyder, Isaac Jr.---2-13  
Snyder, Isaac---2-13  
Snyder, Joseph---2-13  
Snyder, Lewis---2-13  
Snyder, Lydia---2-13  
Snyder, Noah---2-13  
Snyder, Rebecca---2-13  
Snyder, Rev. John---2-13  
Snyder, Rose---2-13

Snyder, Sarah---2-13  
Snyder, Valentine---2-13  
Socie, Mary---5-5  
Sordelet, Adelia---4-4  
Sordelet, Catherine---4-4  
Stump, James E.---4-1  
Stump, Jeanne---4-1  
Stump, Rita Mae---4-1

**T**

Tatman, Alice Mary---7-6  
Tatman, Bernard C.---7-6  
Tatman, Clarence W.---7-6  
Tatman, Edith M.---7-6  
Tatman, Elsie M.---7-6  
Tatman, Elwilda (Willie)  
---7-6  
Tatman, Esther L.---7-6  
Tatman, Evelyn Rita---7-6  
Tatman, Floyd---7-6  
Tatman, Lloyd---7-6  
Tatman, Rosella B.---7-6  
Tatman, Velma Elizabeth  
---7-6  
Tatman, William---7-5  
Taylor, Marie Eugenie---2-3  
Taylor, Robert M. Jr.---5-5  
Taylor, Robert M.---3-4  
Ternet, Charles---4-3  
Ternet, Francis---5-5  
Ternet, Herman---3-11  
Ternet, John Baptist---4-8  
Ternet, John Ernest---5-5  
Ternet, Louis---3-11  
Tittle, Charles---7-5  
Toussaint, Joseph---4-3  
Toussaint, Jules---4-3  
Townsend, George---4-3  
Townsend, William---4-3  
Treuchet, Pidgy---4-3  
Tyndall, Olive Beerbower  
---5-5

**Besancon Indiana Chronicles  
Number 9 March 1999**

**U**

Urbain, Maria---4-9  
Urbine, Anna Josephine---2-3  
Urbine, Augustine---2-3  
Urbine, Louis---4-3  
Urbine, Peter---4-3  
Urbine, Russel---4-2

**V**

Vandevennet, A.J.M.---1-4  
Venderley, Manford---3-11  
Venderly, George---7-11  
Venderly, Louis---3-11  
Veniard, Felix---1-4  
Verdy, Angelique Marie---4-1  
Vernier, Claude Francoise  
---4-3

Vernier, Jeanne Claude---4-3  
Vernier, Jeanne Pierrette  
---7-12  
Violette, Ralph  
---1-4,2-5,2-9,2-11,3-2,3-4,3-  
12,5-5,6-9,6-10,7-8  
Voirol, Clarence---3-11  
Voirol, Edmund---3=11  
Voirol, Elmer---3-11  
Voirol, Eugene---3-11  
Voirol, Eugenie---4-8  
Voirol, Florant---1-4  
Voirol, Frank---3-11  
Voirol, Jules---4-8  
Voirol, Kenneth---3-11  
Voirol, Lawrence---3-11  
Voirol, Leonard---3-11

Voirol, Louis---3-11,4-3  
Voirol, Norbert---3-11  
Voirol, Richard---3-10,3-11  
Voirol, Viola---5-4  
Voors, Dianna  
---1-3,1-4,2-1,2-2,2-9,2-10

**W**

Walker, Paul---5-6  
Weilemann, Albert---5-6  
Weilemann, Rudolph---5-6  
Westrick, Teresa Susan  
---2-14

**Y**

Yoquelet, Clarence---3-11  
Yoquelet, Gene  
---3-12,7-2,7-10

*Continued from page 5:* Vous n'êtes pas sans savoir que le prochain congrès de généalogie international dans l'an 2000 se passera à Besançon. La société de généalogie CEGFC dont je fais partie sera bien entendu de la partie.

Jean Cuche  
19 Rue de la Cassotte  
25000 Besançon France  
jcuche@besancon.net

*Translation:* I am researching individuals from the region around Besançon who emigrated to the U.S. in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I have found about forty people from my family, all of whom came from small villages (Aissey, Lanans, Saint Juan Lanans located from 10 to 25 KM from Besançon) who went to the U.S. Some of these who had the surnames Boucard, Nolot, Voynet, Colin, Coeudevey, Corneille, Cornu, Deschamps, Picard, etc. settled in Louisiana, but most settled in Harrison (Frenchtown) and Allen (Fort Wayne) Counties in Indiana. I am willing to correspond with anyone conducting research in Besançon. I possess the genealogy of individuals at least as far back as 1720. In return, I would like to obtain information on my relatives [who emigrated to the United States].  
Jean Cuche

**Besançon Indiana Chronicles**  
**Number 9 March 1999**

**Miscellany**

The Society has initiated a subscription to French Ancestors, a bimonthly newsletter dedicated to exploring the French heritage of western Ohio. This publication focuses on the genealogical background of the ancestors of the Ohio French from Alsace, Lorraine, Franche Comté and bordering areas who settled in Darke and Shelby counties in the nineteenth century. The publication not only contains a wealth of information on the genealogies of these settlers, but it presents well-researched articles on the customs, clothing, food, architecture, religious observances, etc. of the settlers and the regions from which they came. Those desiring additional information can contact the editor Marianne R. Doyle at 2923 Tara Trail, Beavercreek OH 45434-6252, (937) 429-2979, [Doylemr@aol.com](mailto:Doylemr@aol.com).

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The 1998 issue of the Old Fort News (Vol. 61, Nos. 1 & 2) published by the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society is devoted entirely to Jean Baptiste Drouet de Richardville, a Miami chieftain of French ancestry who was one of the wealthiest men in the West in his lifetime and whose house still exists on Bluffton Road in Fort Wayne. The issue contains an article on Richardville by Lois Shepherd Headings, a retired South Side High School Social Studies teacher. The issue also contains several primary documents dealing with a variety of subjects, including land.

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**Ohio Migration Trails.** Ever wonder what route your ancestors took to reach Indiana? A new site on the internet traces the path of six trails which were extensively used to cross Ohio in the nineteenth century. The routes of six trails are indicated:

- Lake Trail or Lake Shore Path
- Great Trail or Great Path (which goes through Stark County)
- Vincennes and Indianapolis Road from Detroit
- Maysville Pike (to Cincinnati)
- Scioto Trail (to Portsmouth)
- Zane's Trace (from Wheeling West Virginia to Mason County, Kentucky)

The URL for this site is <http://www.infinet.com/~dzimmerm/Gwen/migration.htm>

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Want to learn more about the Franche-Comté, the region of France where Besançon is located? Detailed information is available on the four modern *departements* into which this region is divided--Jura, Doubs, Haute Saone, and Territoire de Belfort--at a Web site maintained by Interfrance at <http://www.interfrance.com/fr/fc/franche-comte.html>. Another web site with much useful genealogical information on the region of France from which most Besançon families came is the site maintained by the Centre d'Entraide Généalogique de Franche-Comté at [http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Rue/3002/cegfc.html#deb\\_cegfc](http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Rue/3002/cegfc.html#deb_cegfc)

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