

Diederich Family Genealogy

Tom Diederich wrote on Nov 29, 2007:

``I found [the following] long lost document from my ancestors that describes, amongst other things, some early experiences in Avon / Sheffield, Ohio:

(Written by Mary Catherine Diederich in 1898)

In the spring of 1843, John and Gertrude Diederich, being convinced that their native Country would not furnish them the necessities of life in the future, resolved to seek a new home in far off America.

Being the first in the family to make the attempt, the undertaking was no small one. To leave home, friends and relatives, in fact all, and go thousands of miles into an unknown country is an undertaking which deserves reflection by the present generation who are enjoying the fruits of our forefather's excursions.

Strengthened by the best of motives they left their native country and embarked at Rotterdam, via Antwerp in a sailboat called the Maria, thinking that a ship which bore the name of our blessed mother would be a safe conveyance. They set sail aiming for their new home.

After a long and tedious voyage of sixty-four days, they sighted land and with their three children, Mathias, Catherine, and Frank, aged respectively nine, six and three, they set foot on American soil at New York on July 24th 1843.

As Cleveland was their destination, they at once repaired to continue the journey made by way of the Hudson River to Albany, thence along the Great Erie Canal, across the State of New York, to Buffalo, from there by way of Lake Erie to Cleveland.

Here they arrived the second day of August, 1843 and found shelter and lodging with a Mr. Wolff, who had come to Cleveland several years previously, and who was ever ready to extend his hospitality to the new comers.

In a few days John Diederich joined a party of men who went out in search of land in the Western Reserve. They were directed west of Cleveland where it was said a number of German families had recently settled.

They reached East Avon and the home of John Miller, near the present site of [Holy] Trinity Church. Under his direction the party came to Sheffield where a German family named Laux was living, besides a number of English families who had settled in the place about twenty-five years before this time.

As the eastern section of Sheffield was then being rapidly settled by Germans, and as all were one faith, our newcomers decided to make this their new home.

The family found shelter with the Laux family and also lived for several weeks in a log house on Barrows Road while a rude log house was being built. It was fall of 1843 before the family occupied their new home. Winter being on hand, what could the family subsist on during that long season when nothing can be planted?

Besides the farm bought was one of unbroken forest which first must be cleared. Nothing was plentiful but wood. Providence did not send an angel direct, but his angels in human form who were always ready to alleviate the wants of these newcomers. What would our early German settlers have done had it not been for the kindly assistance of their English neighbors? They were ever ready to lend a helping hand, and asked no recompense whatsoever.

These good people have gone but their deeds have immortalized their names. Were there ever nobler people than Milton, Garfield, Robins, Burrell, Hiram Burrell and their charitable wives and many others? This generation does not know them, but their names linger in our households.

Many were the hardships endured by the pioneer settlers sixty years ago. There were no places where roads should be, which since the first surveys had turned into a young wilderness.

It is not to be wondered that some of the people in those days lost their way which had to be picked carefully on logs and stumps to avoid the water that stood in dense forests. Often the call of a lost person was heard to which the settlers would reply. And in that way the right path was found again by following the directions of the sound.

Although Sheffield was settled in 1815 it seemed a wilderness still to our parents in 1843. One of the great drawbacks in the earlier days was the fever and ague with which most of the people were more or less afflicted. This continued for some time with much loss of life.

The good people prayed and pleaded with St. Theresa of Avila and promised if their prayers were heard they would build a church in honor of her and keep October 15th as a holyday. Their prayers were answered and the church was built. For years October 15th was a great festive day. The altars were filled with flowers, a high mass was said, and in general it was a family reunion and homecoming. It was known to many for years as Theresa Day.

St. Theresa's Church of Sheffield, Ohio was organized in 1845 by the Reverend Peter Greish with the following membership:

John Miller and wife, Catherine

Christian March and wife

John Foster and wife

Peter Laux and wife, Elizabeth

Henry Schwartz and wife, Magdalen

Peter Schneider and wife

Mathias Schueller and wife, Maria Catherine

George Susgauer and wife, Catherine

John Diederich and wife, Gertrude

Peter Rothgery and wife, Magdlen

Peter Urich

Andrew Bugeno

Peter Young

Leopold Miller

John Caughlin and wife, Anna

George Klingshern and wife

Anthony Dietsch and wife

John Kelling and wife, Catherine

At the organization it was agreed upon that every member pay one dollar with which they bought one acre of ground. On this ground they built a log church 24 x 30 feet which served as a place of worship until 1851. The new church was a frame structure 40 x 60 feet costing \$1500. First mass was read Christmas Day, 1851.

One acre of land had been purchased of Captain Aaron Root with the understanding that if he sold the farm he would donate another acre, which he did. So, there are now two acres of land which in part serves as cemetery.

At the organization John Miller, Christian March, Peter Laux and Peter Schneider were appointed first church trustees. In 1879 the church property was valued at

\$4000. Since then there has been substantial brick parsonage built at the cost of \$3000.

Children of Johan Diederich and Susanna Herig (brothers and sisters of John Diederich).

Peter Diederich: Born, 1790; Died, 1810

Michael Diederich: Born, 1793; Died 1870 in North Ridgeville. Married Anna Marie Guntert of Arrabach (she died in 1854 at age 51). Michael and children Emigrated to America in 1855.

Maria Diederich Stuarts: Born in 1795, Died in 1830 in Mayfield Germany. Was married to a Mr. Stuarts.

Margaretha Diederich Schmitz: Born in 1797, Died in 1881 in Carlisle Ohio at the age of 86. She married Matthew? and emigrated to America in 1855. She re-married to John Schmitz of Avon Ohio who died several years later.

Mathias Diederich: Born on 10/11/1800, Died on 2/15/1891 at North Ridgeville. He married Anna Catherine Pickard in 1827 at Retterath Germany. They emigrated to America 6/15/1847

Catherine Diederich: Born in 1802, Died in 1854 in Mannenbach, Germany. She married John Diederich of Mannenbach Germany (not related) and he died in 1848

JOHN DIEDERICH: Inasmuch as our immediate family stems from JOHN DIEDERICH, we will concern ourselves hereafter with their history and descendants ..."