

SEEDLINGS

Of the EHLER and O'BRIEN family tree
from
Dearborn and Ripley Counties
Indiana.

Compiled and Written

by

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1966

DEDICATION

To the branches, twigs and seedlings who are making history.
May their contributions be as interesting as our forefathers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere thanks are due all the family members who contributed information for their branches. Special thanks go to the many non-family folks who provided either background material or pertinent facts for "Seedlings", namely, Mr. Stegner, ninety-six years young of Holton, Mr. and Mrs. Ezra Engleking, Mrs. Elizabeth Dieselberg, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Zimmer, Mr. and Mrs. John McNamara, Mr. and Mrs. Heavey, Mr. and Mrs. Selkey, Mrs. Walter Miller, and Mrs. Sue Theobald Hoff all of Sunman or nearby.

FOREWORD

This documentary should be cherished along with the family Bible. When some joyful or sad event occurs, as births, marriages or deaths, let the other owners of the family history know, so that the dates and names can be inserted in the proper place, in that manner making the history self-perpetuating.

By diligent research the author has secured proof of pertinent dates and events. At the moment an application for membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution is pending relative to acceptance of proofs of descent from our Revolutionary veteran.

If anyone is interested in D.A.R. or Sons of the American Revolution membership (if My application is accepted) he or she will have much easier access by "going in under" the author's membership number. As soon as membership is forthcoming all will be notified. All that will be necessary then, will be to tie in from the established great-grandparents' records to the present with the necessary 'proofs'.

The next pages carry the list of owners of Seedlings, so as to facilitate your notification of coming historical events.

All proofs noted on the list of Proofs page are either originals or photostats of the originals, and are in the authors' copy. Anyone needing or desiring a copy may have one for the usual photostat fee, which is a quarter per page.

Information from Trinity Lutheran Church Lancaster, Pa. came too late to be included in the "history" and is as follows: Proof D); Michael Ehler married Marie Magedelena Dennis on August 19, 1782. This is a correction of information on page 2, 1st paragraph.

SEEDLINGS

A History of the Ehler and O'Brien Families of Dearborn and Ripley Counties Indiana

In the later dawn of American history, before the United States became a political entity, many people emigrated from the western European countries and settled in the colonies. Their reasons for coming were as varied as their number.

Some immigrants had achieved prominence before they left their native land. Others rose to prominence in American colonial times. These we know from recorded history. Many others came who never achieved the prominence of the historian's notice, but who, by their steady industry and unobtrusive citizenry made the United States a better place to live.

What an exciting discovery when one of these unpublicized early settlers provides the start of a family history. It is hoped that the author can convey some of the thrill of discovery through the following account.

.. Some time in the middle 1700's we find that George and Rosina Oehler - unlauted Oe is pronounced in German like our long A, and is frequently shortened to E, as in this case - was a settler in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. No record of their marriage was sought, but from Record Book 2 of Trinity Lutheran Church, now known as Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity, at Lancaster, Pa. we find the following baptismal records of some of their children; (Proof D)

Catharina-born Nov. 29, 1747, baptized Dec. 20, 1747.

Johann Martin-born Jan. 20, 1750, baptized Jan. 28, 1750.

George Heinrich-born Jan. 19, 1755, baptized Feb. 2, 1755.

+Johann Michael-born Aug. 2, 1760, baptized Aug. 17, 1760.

Unnamed child-baptized Oct. 27, 1765.

Could have been "Christian" ? (I found a Christian E. Fought & applied for pension in Madison, Wis.)

-Johann Michael Oehler - 8/2/1760 - while having the baptismal name of Johann first, a custom among early families, was called by his middle name of Michael.

When the Colonies were embroiled in their fight for independence Michael volunteered for military service, and General Services Administration records (Proof A) show him as Michael Ehler. As previously noted the change of spelling of the surname from Oehler to Ehler was probably an accident of pronunciation and recording. The family thereafter went by the shorter form--Ehler.

Michael volunteered in June 1776 and served two months under Capt. Boyd in Col. Ross' Pennsylvania Regiment. He reenlisted and served six months in Capt. Graeff's company of Col. Cunningham's Pa. Regiment under Brigadier Gen. Hand, and was in the battles of Flatbush and East Chester. In 1777 he was called and served two months under Capt. Petrie and Col. Klotz and again in the winter of 1779 served under Capt. Davis and Col. Klotz for two months, and for another two months in 1781 under Capt. Boyd and Col. Ross. His duty in the 1777, 1779 and 1781 stints was to guard British prisoners or to guard and transport prisoners from one place to another. After each term of service he was discharged, having served faithfully, and it is to be assumed that he went home and worked on the family farm.

In 1782 Michael Ehler moved from Lancaster to Jonestown, Lebanon Township of Lancaster County. In 1813 Lebanon Township became a separate county named Lebanon County. Michael Ehler

and Marie Magdal. (Magdalena) born Dennis 5/5/1760 (Proof G) were married either at or near Jonestown. They lived there for thirty-seven years. Although the record of their marriage is not available—records of other events bear it out. An old record book of Zion Lutheran Church at Jonestown (Proof E) shows the birth of a son, Johann, on May 20, 1791 to Michael and Marie Magdal Ehler.

In Egle's "History of Lebanon County" (Proof H) the muster roll of Capt. Benjamin Lisher's Company, War of 1812, lists Christian Ehler, apparently another son of Michael and Marie Magdal Ehler. Thomas Ehler served as godparent for one of Christian Ehler's children at St. John's United Church of Christ, Jonestown (Proof F).

There were probably other children born to Michael and Marie M. Ehler besides Johann, Christian and Thomas, since family lore is that another son, Elijah, settled in Cincinnati and was a pioneer shipbuilder there.

After thirty-seven years at Jonestown the Ehler family moved to Germantown, Montgomery County, Ohio, where they lived about one year. The next move was to Manchester Township, Dearborn County, Indiana, where they resided until their deaths. (Proof A)

In the "History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties" (Proof C, p. 594) we learn that "Section 1, in Township 7, Range 3 west, Jackson Township, in 1818 was deeded by the government to Samuel C. Vance and Michael Ehler." Incidentally, another source of information has it that Samuel Vance overextended himself in land to which he had taken title and much of it had to be returned to the Government and resold. Just how much of this section was Michael Ehler's is not known. However, in an original Tract Book of Dearborn County (Proof I), surveyed by Symmes and Stites is found this notation—"On July 17, 1818 Michael Ehler bought 159.55 acres of Government land", another quarter section.

Today, this property has been divided and resold many times so that the original tract has lost its identity as a unit. In tracking down leads for this account I learned that at least a part is now owned (in 1966) by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Zimmer on Lake Tambo Road. The farmstead is about one-fourth mile south of the Weisburg - St. Paul Church Road, or Ashley Road.

The present owners stated that the next preceding owner has told them that when he bought the farm that there were two headstones laying flat on the ground near the barn, and he supposed that the nearby barn had been built over the actual gravesite and that the stones had been laid to one side. The headstones are those of our Revolutionary War veteran Michael Ehler, who died April 23, 1838, aged 77 years, eight months and 21 days, and his wife Mary M. Ehler, who died Jan. 11, 1836, aged 75 years, eight months and six days. This information is from the actual headstones propped against a shed on the farm of Walter Zimmer.

A. J. Cotton (Proof N, pp 461-2) has this to say of "Michael Ehler fell dead on his floor in a minute," apparently a heart attack.

While these stones have survived unscathed for many years it is felt by the descendants that a more fitting site would be preferable, either the O'Brien family cemetery near Holton in Ripley County or the cemetery of St. John's Lutheran Church at Hubbles Corner, because it is nearby and the decedents probably were early members of that church.

Michael Ehler applied for a military pension which was granted June 17, 1833, and retroactive to March 4, 1831, in the amount of \$40 per year. The last payment for him was made to his attorney on April 19, 1839 at the Pension Agency at Madison, Indiana. (Proof A)

Now let us return to Jonestown, Pennsylvania.

Thomas Ehler, son of Michael and Marie Magdalena Ehler was born August 14, 1796 in Jonestown, Pa. (Proof G, page 231) so state the records at St. John's Lutheran Church at Hubbles Corner, Indiana. The first church edifice was a log building known as Pastor Engle's church and somewhere in the late 1820's burned to the ground along with all the church records to that time. Pastor Engle was the first pastor and early churches were frequently named for the pastor of the flock. When the church structure was rebuilt and named St. John's Lutheran undoubtedly members of the congregation were asked to help in recalling names and dates of church associated events that were lost in the fire. It is assumed that the statement of Thomas' birthdate was made at that time.

War between the United States and Great Britain was in progress when, (Proof B) on August 1, 1814 Thomas Ehler volunteered at Jonestown and served as a private in the "Jonestown Rangers" Commanded by Capt. Benjamin Lisher in the First Brigade, Pennsylvania Volunteers and served three months or thereabouts and was honorably discharged on March 5, 1815.

On May 2, 1823, Thomas Ehler was commissioned a Lieutenant X (thought to be in B Company) in the 15th Regiment of the Militia of the State of Indiana. Said commission was signed by the then Governor William Hendricks. It is not known whether Thomas Ehler ever saw active service in the Militia after his commission as a Lieutenant, but he retained his interest in military service. During the Civil War when he was sixty five years old he volunteered for active service but was held on reserve status because of age. On February 5, 1872 he was granted a pension of \$8 a month because of military service.

The trees of the forest primaeval needed good roots, and so does a family tree. We have now established one root, the Ehler Family.

Now comes another root, whose beginnings are family tradition. Johannes(?) and Caterina Fasnacht were married in Holland. Because of religious persecution Johannes and two sons came to America and settled in Pennsylvania where other Fasnacht families had resided for several years. The mother, Caterina, and two younger children fled to Germany where she found work in a doctor's family, and could keep the young children with her. Besides helping with the housework she helped the doctor, who in turn taught her medicine and midwifery.

The doctor decided to come to America, possibly because of letters from Caterina's husband, and bring his family. Caterina had saved some money but not enough for passage for herself and her children. So she indentured herself to the doctor to pay her passage. The doctor settled in the Lebanon Township area of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Caterina Fasnacht was reunited with her husband and sons, but continued to work for the doctor to repay her passage money.

Caterina Fasnacht's love of the beautiful is shown by the fact that she brought with her to the new country a few pieces of Queensware, a fine new type of porcelain tableware, made in England

by Josiah Wedgewood. Of this ware a large meat platter has been handed down from oldest daughter to oldest daughter, and is now in the possession of the author of "Seedlings".

Due to the almost complete absence of doctors in this area Caterina Fasnacht's dexterity in medicine and as a midwife was in great demand. The only child born in America to Johannes and Caterina Fasnacht was a daughter Catherina, on July 27, 1798 at Jonestown, Lebanon Township later County, Pennsylvania. (Proof G, page 208 and referring to paragraph 2, page 3)

As young Catherina grew to maturity she went about the countryside with her mother and also became adept at medicine and midwifery. This talent was soon to prove most advantageous in the new west.

The theme of every novel is boy meets girl, they fall in love, marry and live happily ever after. Our history takes a romantic turn and on February 25, 1818 Catherina Fasnachts and Thomas Ehler were married (Proof O), in the Jonestown area.

In 1817 (Proof C page 707) Thomas Ehler purchased 80 acres of Government bounty land in the southwest quarter of Section 1, of Jackson Township, Dearborn County, Indiana. And in (Proof C, page 595) "the fall of 1818 Thomas Ehler and Zachariah Conger, hailing from Pennsylvania, settled in the southern part of the township-Jackson."

So in 1818 Thomas brought his bride to this site and built a log house." They became the second settlers in this township. His nearest neighbor was in Manchester Township, one and one-half miles distant, and the nearest mill for grinding, twelve miles, on the Whitewater, with only a blazed path through the unbroken forest. Here Thomas Ehler performed much hard work opening out his farm, and here they resided through life." (Proof C-p 595).

Catherina Fasnacht' Ehler's granddaughter, Else O'Brien told of Catherina's great love and respect for the Redskins who lived near their homestead in Dearborn County. Sometimes they would bring her a freshly killed wild turkey or other wild game in exchange for a loaf of fresh bread.

Catherina had been taught the use of herbs as medicine and was always on the lookout for the most needed and the rare ones. Sometimes the Indians would show her where an especially needed "weed" grew or would bring her some. She doctored them as well as white settlers for miles around, and in return for her kindness to the Indians the Ehler family was never molested by them.

I would like to locate this farm for anyone caring to see where some of their ancestors lived. On State Route 101 St. Paul's Methodist church is on the west approximately one mile south of Sunman. The paved 'mile road' Ashley Road dead ends at this church and runs eastward to Weisburg. About a mile east of S.R.101 is Lake Tambo Road which dead ends at Weisburg road and runs south from it. On the southeast corner is a pile of frame rubble, all that remains of the Thomas Ehler homestead. The last resident and owner of the family name was one of Thomas Ehler's granddaughters, Caroline, but more about her later.

Also junctioning the Weisburg road at this point is the Hill road, about 300 feet east of Lake Tambo road. Hill road is named for a family and might also describe it's topography-- over a little rise, down through a wooded area, across a creek, and we are at another road known as 1000 N or Van Wedding road. This was the site of the Van Wedding settlement or village in bygone years.

Just a short distance west of the Van Wedding settlement, possibly one half to three quarters of a mile runs the present county line between Dearborn and Ripley counties. Originally this was the Treaty Line between the Government and the Indians. This accounts for the proximity of the 'Redskins' to the farmstead of Thomas Ehler and his Father, Michael Ehler.

The original area of Dearborn County included what is now Switzerland and Ohio counties. The same soil type, geological formations, and general topography are found in all three counties. The Swise who settled Switzerland County had quite an industry in vinyards, and because the soil and topography lent itself to that crop there were formerly many acres of vinyards in "old" Dearborn county. Much acreage around Van Wedding Station was also in vinyards.

Thomas Ehler was said to be one of the vinyardists and employed several men who lived at the Ehler home as farm hands. Each evening after supper all gathered in the sitting room for Bible reading and to pray the stations of the Cross that were framed and hung on the walls--Lutheran yet!! Possibly his home was the setting for the services of "Pastor Engle's Church" which in 1833 was organized as St. John's Lutheran Church at Hubbles Corner.

Now let us return to Thomas Ehler and his young bride, Catherina. They were married in 1818 and the same year set up housekeeping at the above described location. Both were of devout Lutheran families and within a few miles were other families of the same religious belief. They met for prayer services in various homes under Pastor Engle and in the early 1820's a log church was built at Hubbles Corner. In the late 1820's this church burned also all church records. In 1833 the church was rebuilt and named St. John's Lutheran still with Rev. Engle as Pastor.

Thomas and Catherina Ehler were one of about ten founding families and were lifelong active members of this church. (Proof C page 708). Upon their deaths they were buried in St. John's Church cemetery. Today time and weathering have all but obliterated the names from most headstones in the old part of the cemetery. Records from 1820 to 1830 are nowhere to be found, so much valuable data on births, marriages and deaths of this period is unavailable.

The Federal Census of 1820 for Indiana shows the following, Proof M) in the Michael Ehler family were one son over 26 years, Michael Ehler and his wife, both men engaged in agriculture. In the Thomas Ehler family, (same source also page 112) were besides Thomas and his wife, both under 26 years, a daughter under ten years, and Thomas was a farmer. The daughter listed must have been Rosanna because she was the oldest daughter, born May 23, 1820 (Proof Q).

We learn the following about this later couple (Proof G) Ehler, Thomas, son of Michael and Marie Magdal. Ehler, born Dennis, born Aug. 14, 1796 in Jonestown, Lebanon County in Pennsylvania. Baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran Church by Pastor Salash. Married 25 Feb. 1818 with Catherina Fasnacht in Jonestown by Pastor Venhof (also Proof O). He moved to Germantown, Ohio, then later to Jackson Township, Dearborn County, Indiana, 1819. 13 children, 7 died. His wife died after 45 years. He, himself died 14, Feb. 1876, 2 o'clock in the morning, after 15 months, of apoplexy. 42 grandchildren, 4 great grandchildren, Buried 15 Feb. 1876. Catharina Ehler, born Fasnacht, born 1798, 2nd July in Jonestown, Lebanon County, Pa. 1818 the 25th Feb. married with Thomas Ehler. In their marriage they had 13 children now still 6 living. 1818 she moved with her husband to Germantown, Ohio and 1819 ----- where they lived for 42 years. One day after Pentecost she got sick with gallstones. She died 2nd Nov. 1861 after she took on 22nd of Oct. holy communion at the age of 63 years, 3 months and 5 days. Buried the 3rd of Nov.

To Thomas and Catherine Ehler were born thirteen children, six living at the time of their deaths:

Michael-who died in infancy

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pg. 8 * Rosana-someplaces spelled Rosianna born May 23, 1820 and died June 15, 1888.

William D.-born December 1, 1823

Jesse

Catherine

Pauline-born Feb. 15, 1831, died June 17, 1855 (Proof G, page 197)

Elizabeth-born Sept. 11, 1834

Eda Jane-born March 17, 1836

Since we are principally concerned with Rosana she will be treated of last. Information about William D. Ehler's family is from his family bible, now (1966) in possession of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Zimmer and is as follows:

William D. Ehler born 12/1/1823 married Rachel E. Cutshall born 1/7/1832 on February 18, 1855 and their children were,
Frank

Charles

Melvin E. Ehler, 4083 Mallard Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45245

Catherine who married Wm. Brockley on Sept. 29, 1881

William T.-born 6/2/1856 and married Julia Ann Jackman on Dec. 13, 1894.

Carrie Josephine-born 6/15/1873 died February 1949 two days after being last seen by Walter Zimmer. She was found by him, frozen and seated in a rocking chair with two pet cats in her lap. She was the last of the Ehler family to own and occupy the original homestead. The Zimmers now own the tract. The house was in very poor condition at the time of her death, floors and supporting framing rotted. After several more years of vacancy the house was so shaky that several of the neighbors pulled it down and the rubble can be seen from the road.

A nephew, Roland F. Ehler (whose son?) was raised by Carrie and is said to live in Mt. Healthy, Cincinnati, Ohio (1966)

Leander Bertram married Winifred Dolman on June 26, 1899.

Corrintha Nizette-born 2/28/1858

Jesse married Mary Alden and in the early 1870's homesteaded in Kansas.

Catherine married Jonathan P. Alden, probably Mary's brother and homesteaded in Missouri.

Eda Jane (3/17/1836-12/5/1909) married George Needs and had

George --- no data available on these children

Henry --- no data available on these children

Louise --- no data available on these children

Isabel who married John Kenefri and had two children.

Eda Jane's death was tragic. A gasoline stove exploded, instantly enveloping her in flames. Before assistance could reach her she was fatally burned and lived only a few hours.

Elizabeth (9/11/1834) married Dr. Pierre Fermier on April 3, 1857 He was an experienced physician and had established his practice at Hubbles Corner (Proof C pages 706-08) where the newlyweds set up housekeeping and remained through life, members of St. John's Lutheran Church there, and are interred in the church cemetery. Fourteen children were born to this union, several of whom must have been stillborn or at best lived only a short while. Their family account follows:

Elizabeth Ehler (9/11/1834-2/7/1897) married Dr. Pierre George Fermier (?-8/31/1896) on April 3, 1857 and their children were:

Effie Elenore (10/1/1858-7/4/1935) married Aaron Keller (6/5/1852-9/30/1938)
 Ionia (10/28/83-12/28/1933) married Samuel Sanders - no children
 Drusilla (7/27/1885-7-17-1966) not married
 Mabel (1/21/1887- (Mrs. Anderson Hennike's copy) not married
 Orlando (10/16/1888- married Edna Bobrink
 Robert (6/29/1923-

Flora Jane (6/16/1860-12/9/1862)
 Jacques (2/17/1862-2/17/1862)
 Amante Auguste (1/11/1863-3/9/1864)
 Cordelia Celestine (7/25/1864-6/11/1919) not married.
 Pierre Gerold (9/2/1866-1/19/1933) married Lulu M. Rowley on 6-20-1895.
 Nancy Elizabeth married Lloyd Moser--no children.
 George Lucian (3/4/1868-11/19/1898) not married. He was in the Navy and was killed. George Lucian-died aboard the U.S.S. Petral, which was the ship to which he was assigned, and it was stationed at Shanghai, China. His body was cremated in that city, and the ashes returned to this country and buried at Hubbles Corner in the Fermier family plot.
 Emile Jerome (10/7/1869-12/19/1927) married Nora E. Barnhart on 6-8-05.
 Florence Elizabeth (dec.) not married
 George Franklin (1/12 dec) married Bidy Wilkins
 Robert Paul
 John William
 Emilie Judson married Rudolf Bretz
 Peter
 Michael
 Bonnie
 Wendy
 Bertha Ann (died age 11)
 Alma Elizabeth (1/4/1872-8/26/1956) not married
 Richard H. (9/2/1873-12/7/1933) married Ida May Maley on May 4, 1899.
 Mildred Marie (12/27/1902-) married Pearce Noland
 and had no children
 Evelyn Maley (2/11/1908-) married Richard Kellner
 Richard Fermier Kellner (5/20/1941-

Irene Geraldine (7/10/1913-) married Fletcher Mountain
 Dan Maley Mountain (6/19/1944-

Son- unnamed - b & d 4/20/1875
 Son- unnamed - b & d 8/29/1876
 Oscar Edmund- (8/2/1877-5/8/1878)
 Son unnamed- b & d 4/7/1879

Rosana Ehler (5/23/1820) who married William O'Brien on August 15, 1847. More about this marriage and family later.

Catherina Fasnacht Ehler died Nov. 2, 1861 (Proof G, p. 208) and Thomas Ehler died Feb. 18, 1876 (Proof G, p. 231) and are buried in the church cemetery at Hubbles Corner. A. J. Cotton (Proof N, p. 461-2) writes thus of Hubbles Corner: "John Taylor, Bryant Connely, Esq., Alvin J. Alden, George Anderson, and Thomas Ehler are about all the early friends left here. Friend Ehler is one of the few paying friends, whom I have with ministerial duties served at the burial of his dear children, and deserves well to be enrolled upon that list of friends whom I have found to be, like angel's visits, few and far between."

The Ehler farmstead was deeded to John and Christina Peterman and they deeded it to Thomas and Catherine's son, William D. on January 27, 1872. Thomas Ehler's will was contested. (Proof I-Will)

Looking around we find the third root of the family tree, which like the others, flourished in Dearborn County, Indiana. Written authority for it is not available. The story, as told by a grandson and greatgrandson is as follows.

Patrick H. O'Brien was born in Kevin Killislander Township of County Kildare, Ireland. As a stripling, he stowed away on a sailing ship bound for America. New York was the port but bad winds changed their course and the ship put in at New Orleans. Patrick was not discovered until several days at sea so was allowed to continue the journey with the most difficult labor enforced as punishment, and also to pay for his keep and passage. Be that as it may he attained his goal, America.

Patrick was kicked off the ship at New Orleans and gradually made his way north to Indiana. On the way he worked at anything available-logger, sawmill hand, barrel cooper, even as a field laborer on a cotton plantation.

The luck of the Irish, a strong back and thrift, learned in his childhood lean years in Ireland, put money in his pockets. With a song on his lips and a twinkle in his eye he captivated the girl of his dreams, Phoebe. One cousin says she was a Scottish lass named Hart, while another claims she was French and named Lorre. The date and place of marriage is not known, but they were said to have lived at or near Harrison, Indiana. The first record of land purchased by him was in 1825 in York Township of Dearborn County, Indiana.

May I digress? There is a little family story of Phoebe Hart's sister, Polly, who, when about eighty years old could put her hand on a five rail fence and jump over. Not very ladylike, but such agility! How many of us could do the same today?

Polly was the wife of Judge Jacob Burnet who first lived in a fine home occupying the block bounded by Third, Fourth, Race and Vine Streets in Cincinnati. They later lived at the north-west corner of Seventh and Elm Streets, Cincinnati. The original home site became the location of the Burnet House, in its heyday considered THE finest hotel west of the Alleghenys. This hostelry was run for many years by Judge Burnet's sons. I can remember it about 1925, when it was mostly vacant with a few suites used for offices. The Union Central Annex now occupies the hotel location. Burnet Woods is named for the family. It is reputed that besides the fine home and much land the Judge had a bank account of \$80,000 and lost \$25,000 in the panic of 1826.

We do know (Proof I, Book 13, pp 498-500) that Patrick O'Brien's wife's name was Phoebe and that he preceded her in death, early 1854, this shown when his estate was settled in 1858. There is no information on Phoebe's death date nor where either one is interred, possibly like Michael and Marie Ehler, on their own farm.

Since we do not know precisely when or where they located near Harrison one can make no guess as to how long they lived there or which children were born there. We know from family tradition that the children born to this union were:

William O'Brien (8/5/1820) who married Rosana Ehler.

Solomon- whose wife was Samantha-----

Miles- who died in youth.

Hester Ann- who lived to maturity but did not marry.

Elizabeth- who died in infancy

Polly- who died at 18 years.

Experience- who married Issac Richardson

Patrick, Jr.- Who married Eunice----- *Sary*

The Indiana Census (Proof M) shows the Patrick O'Brien family to consist of three boys and one girl under ten, one male age range 26-45 no doubt Patrick and one female in the 16-26 age range, no doubt the wife of Patrick.

In the Dearborn County Recorder's Books (Proof I) are found the following records of land purchased by Patrick O'Brien:

- Sr.* Book F, p 157-Oct. 13, 1825- 40A-Sect. 18-Twp 6-Range- York Twp
Sr. Book C, p 310- Feb. 17, 1829-79 3/4 A-sect 22-Twp 7-Range 2- York Twp
Sr. Book R, p 465- Sept. 25, 1837- 40 A-Sect 25- Twp 8- Range 3- Jackson Twp
Jr. Book 8, p 433- Feb. 2, 1854-40-1/3A-Sect 19- Twp 7- Range 2-Jackson Twp

Some of this land was north of the Van Wedding Station area. Several families named Van Wedding had large farms around this part of the west fork of Tanners Creek, hence the name of the little hamlet.

Hill Road dead ended at Van Wedding Road and the other end dead-ended at the Thomas Ehler home with a nice young daughter. The road is never long when it travels between young lovers, so on August 15, 1847, Rev. A. J. Cotton, a circuit riding preacher from the Dover-Penntown area united William O'Brien and Rosana Ehler in marriage. (Proof- Marriage Certificate copy)

In the Dearborn County Recorders Books (Proof I) we find several land purchases credited to William O'Brien showing that he inherited his father's ambition and business ability. They are:
 Book 2, p 19- Dec. 4, 1847-Lot 88 in Lawrenceburg-Lawrenceburg Twp.
 Book 3, p418- Dec. 16, 1850-20 A-Sect 1 Twp 7- Range 3- Jackson Twp.
 Book 7, p400- June 25, 1853-20A- Sect 12 Twp 7-Range 3- Manchester T.
 Book 9, p129- Apr. 18, 1854-1/2 A-Sect 35 Twp 8-Range 3- Jackson Twp.
 Book10, p444- July 28, 1854-1/2 A-Sect 35 Twp 8-Range 3- Jackson Twp.
 Book11, p391- Apr. 19, 1856-157 A-Sect 30 Twp. 7 Range 2 Jackson Twp.
 Book13, p 161-Jan. 18, 1858-5 A-Sect. 30 Twp 8-Range 3- Jackson Twp.
 The two half acre lots were by the railroad so probably were where the store mentioned later was located.

Chartered in 1848 the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad built a roadbed following Tanners Creek north from Lawrenceburg to Greensburg. The route which meandered close to the creek was subject to flooding. The track was a six foot gauge while standard track was 56 1/2 inches, and this made it impossible to haul cars from other lines. In 1902 these tracks were abandoned for a double track, standard gauge roadbed on higher ground, which bypassed Van Wedding Station which had been a whistle stop on the low roadbed.

Gold Rush fever hit*William O'Brien and he went to California in 1849 but returned the same year and in 1850 bought his first acreage. William and Rosana Ehler were also members of St. John's Lutheran Church at Hubbles Corner and records of this church show the birth and baptismal dates of some of the children which are accompanied by page number;

* He found gold but said there was no water to "pan" it. He brought a few bags home of him & Thomas O'Brien, his ~~grandson~~ ^{grandson} had it until it was stolen 62 yrs ago.

William O'Brien (8/5/1820-2/19/1899) married Rosana Ehler on August 15, 1847. Rosanna's dates (5/23/1820-6/15/1888) Some dates are from church records (Proof G) others from Bible.

Thomas Patrick- (6/7/1848-7/30/1868) not married
 Solomon- born 11/30/1849--baptized 3/4/1855--page 39 d. 8-22-1904 Mrs. Anderson's copy
 Cornelius- born 6/3/1851--baptized 3/4/1855--page 39
 Edward Marshall- born 7/21/1853--baptized 4/9/1854--page 37
 Mary Ann- died in infancy
 Else Viole-born 12/12/1854--baptized 3/4/1855-- page 39
 Adora Emiline- born 5/8/1856--died aged 18
 Rosannah- born 11/5/1858, died 2/22/1939
 Michael Fasnachts Douglas- born 10/27/1861, died 7/4/1930, mar. 12/31/81
 Leona Phoebe Catherine- born 8/8/1863 married 10/30/1880.

Family recall is that William O'Brien owned and operated a general store at Van Wedding Station, although no building exists today in the area that looks as if it might have been a store. A man named Lilly later operated this same store, according to Mrs. Eliz. Dieselberg whose grandmother was a Van Wedding and who still lives on Van Wedding Road.

William O'Brien, in opposition to his wife's wishes became a Mason at Manchester, Indiana (Proof P) which was the nearest town to have a lodge, Burns #55. This lodge has now been absorbed by the Sunman lodge. The records show that William took degrees in 1852 and 1853. Also that Patrick O'Brien, probably William's father received degrees in 1849 at Burns #55 Manchester, Indiana, but was suspended for non-payment of dues in 1856, the year he died. Could have been Patrick O'Brien, Jr. his brother.

William O'Brien's daughter, Else, who was born at Van Wedding Station, told this story of a 'brotherly love' act that happened to her father. He had a cancerous tumor on his back which was quite painful. However he continued to operate his store at Van Wedding Station. A doctor, name forgotten, came through town and stopped at the store for directions. Don't know if he got off the train or was traveling on horseback. In the ensuing conversation each learned the other was a Mason.

William complained of his back saying that he could not afford so costly an operation nor the trip to where some surgeon would be available to operate. Whereupon the visitor offered to perform the operation free for a brother Mason. The kitchen table was immediately prepared for the surgery. William's wife, Rosana, who had learned much medical dexterity from her mother stood by as surgical nurse, using instruments sterilized in an iron kettle on the kitchen range. The tumor was excised and the patient recovered and lived until 1899.

The acreage which William O'Brien bought in both Dearborn and Ripley Counties had fine virgin timber which he logged off to clear the land for farming. Timber of these large dimensions was in great demand for building, especially the oak which was in great demand for interior trim. The last land purchased in this area was 1858. The last child born was in the summer of 1863 so apparently the family was complete before leaving the Van Wedding area.

The Civil War was in progress. Morgan's Raiders had gone through southern Indiana and Ohio and Van Wedding Station had it's share of depredation--stolen horses and food and even the killing of an unarmed civilian right at the Station.

William O'Brien professed no religious affiliation. He believed that if one lived up to the Golden Rule, kept the Ten Commandments and accepted Christ as Redeemer that was sufficient. He was violently opposed to war and paid someone else to serve in his place--a blot on the family pride. It is purely the author's opinion, but the Van Wedding area was pretty badly hit by Morgan Raiders. Since William O'Brien paid someone to do military service in his place while his father-in-law volunteered for active duty at age 65, that local feeling might have been high and unpleasant enough for him to want to leave. At any rate, family recall has them next several miles away at Stumpkey's Corner in Ripley County, about 2½ miles north of Milan on State Route 101 at a sharp right angle turn to the east. They could have rented land with the privilege of logging and sawmill operations to clear the land, while the family lived in a nearby log cabin; no purchase recorded.

November 17, 1863 saw the family again on the move a little farther south and west in Ripley County to Poston, now called Dabney. Here Rosana O'Brien purchased 143 acres.

August 24, 1864 William O'Brien bought a section of land and occupied the building at the corner of U. S. 50 and Old Michigan Road, an Indian portage trail, as the family home. This corner has quite a story. As a two story log tavern it was known as 'Nasty Corner' because of the bloody fights between white settlers and Indians, both well oiled and 'likkered'.

Soon after the purchase the house was "modernized" by covering the logs with clapboard siding, still leaving the logs exposed in the rooms. This exterior finish was rather elegant for so remote an area and the name changed from Nasty Corner to Clapboard Corner. Gradually these logs were removed--took some skill!--leaving very large rooms which were lathed and plastered. A daughter, Elsie, is said to have pitied her mother because of the rough home, this said in later life but probably at the time neither she nor her mother had known or been around so called well finished or well furnished homes by today's standards.

Somehow, by trade or purchase, William O'Brien came up owning a cotton plantation at Vicksburg, Mississippi and some land in Trimble County, Kentucky across the river from Madison, Indiana. It could be that William's father Patrick O'Brien, while working his way north from New Orleans had acquired these properties and that William had inherited them upon his father's death in 1856. At age twelve or thirteen Elsie is supposed to have kept house for her father in this Trimble County wilderness-- too vague. Both of these parcels have a place in the story a little later.

Many large tracts were subsequently purchased and (Proof J) recorded in the Recorders Books 3, 4, 5, and 6 at the Court House at Versailles, Indiana. The purchases and acreage follow:

Rosana O'Brien-11/17/1863--	23 Acres--Sect 6-Twp 7-Range 11--	Otter Creek
Rosana O'Brien-11/17/1863--	80 Acres--Sect 1-Twp 7-Range 10--	Otter twp.
Rosana O'Brien-11/17/1863--	40 Acres--Sect 1-Twp 7-Range 10--	Otter twp.
William O'Brien-8/24/1864--	105 Acres--Sect 12-Twp 6-Range 10--	Otter twp.
William O'Brien-8/24/1864--	Sect 1-Twp 6-Range 10--	Otter twp.
William O'Brien-2/1/1865 --	320 Acres--Sect 26-Twp 6-Range 10--	Shelby twp
	Sect 27-Twp 6-Range 10--	Shelby twp
William O'Brien-3/11/1865--	120 Acres--Sect 23-Twp 6-Range 10--	Shelby twp
William O'Brien-11/27/1865-	10¼ Acres--Sect 1-Twp 6-Range 10--	Shelby twp
William O'Brien--5/15/1866-	80 Acres--Sect 28-Twp 8-Range 12-	Franklin twp
William O'Brien 2/12/1867--	320 Acres--Sect 26-Twp 6-Range 10--	Shelby twp
	2/12/1867-- 80 Acres--Sect 25-Twp 6-Range 10--	Shelby twp
	2/12/1867-- 80 Acres--Sect 27-Twp 6-Range 10--	Shelby twp
William O'Brien-3/23/1867--	Poston--no acreage given.	

Some of the timber was hauled by ox sled over the mud roads to Madison, Indiana where it was put on boats bound for Cincinnati. Some was hauled by oxcart to Cincinnati via Harrison and Warsaw, now part of Price Hill, in Cincinnati. A family named Wessels were the tollgate keepers at Warsaw and on one trip William took his daughter, Elsie, with him, stopped to clean up and visit with the Wessels. Elsie was so tired that she was about to give up her dream of going to the big city and working. Mrs. Wessels invited her to stay and work for her, which she did. Later she worked for the Stix family on West Fourth Street as dining room girl.

All of the land purchased and listed on the preceding page totaled 1258 acres. How much may have been sold off gradually after clearing was not checked, but approximately one and one-half sections are now a part of Jefferson Proving Grounds.

Later in life William O'Brien bought cattle and hogs and drove them to Madison where he shipped them by boat to the stock yards in Cincinnati. He would accompany his stock to care for them enroute, then drive them through the streets to sell at the Stock Yards. With money in his pocket from the sale he would spend the next couple of days with his nephews, the Burnet boys at the Burnet House until the next boat left for Madison, Indiana. From Madison it was just a short walk of twenty-five miles to the homestead.

As the sons grew up and married he gave each one 150 acres. The daughters received nothing. Because there were several O'Brien sons right around the home place this crossroads became known as O'Brien's Corner, but it was never a town. William O'Brien's youngest son, Michael Douglas Fasnacht O'Briend received the home place and nearest land and it has been owned and occupied continuously by O'Brien descendants. Mr. and Mrs. Eldon Jackson now own and occupy the farm, Mrs. Jackson being a great grand-daughter of William O'Brien.

Thomas Patrick O'Brien, the oldest son of William and Rosana Ehler O'Brien was born 6/7/1848 and died 7/30/1868. There are two stories, both possible, about this son. One version is that William O'Brien sent Thomas Patrick, who at eighteen was extremely dependable and a good business man to the plantation at Vicksburg to salvage what he could after the Civil War had left the land and buildings burned or pillaged. He tried to get things going again with a few faithful slaves now freedmen. But yellow fever was epidemic and many were dying. It was told that trenches were dug and the victims of yellow fever were buried enmasse, so terrible were the number of dead.

Thomas Patrick fell ill, too, and in a few days died and was shipped home in a metal sealed casket, to prevent the spread of the contagious disease. His father then set aside one half acre as a family cemetery on the farm and this son was the first to be buried there. The cemetery lies close to the south side of U.S. 50 a few hundred yards west of Old Michigan Road, and is well Cared for.

After the epidemic had subsided William O'Brien is supposed to have gone to Vicksburg, sold the plantation and smuggled all the slaves he could to the land he owned in Trimble County, Ky., where one by one he brought them to Holton, Indiana. The K.K.K. was after him for this.

The other version is that Thomas Patrick was taking a large number of cattle and swine, bought up from neighboring farmers, to New Orleans to sell. Travel was by flatboat and slow. The Cholera epidemic had broken out and he became so ill that at Vicksburg he was put off the boat. The skipper continued to New Orleans, sold his cargo and returning with the money for Thomas Patrick's livestock expected to pick up a recovered passenger. Instead the sealed metal box containing his remains was put aboard. When the casket returned to Indiana William O'Brien set aside "God's Half Acre" as a family cemetery and Thomas Patrick was the first to be buried in it.

The first version is much more exciting. The second version is said to be a little unlikely as William O'Brien did not raise cattle or hogs except on a small home farm scale, and that he was not a cattle dealer. He had originally been a cooper but soon gave it up for logging and sawmill operations at the sites of his various land purchases. William O'Brien was the shrewd businessman, it is said.

Following Thomas' death his mother received two letters of condolence from those nearest to Thomas at Vicksburg. It was addressed to Poston which town was on the railroad and only one mile from the homestead. The letters follow:
7/31/1868 "Dear Madam, I will pen you a few lines of sad intelligence this morning. Your son, Thomas departed this life last night after a protracted illness. When Mr. Morrison received the last money he was too sick to go aboard of the steamer. We thought it better to keep him then and have him treated by two of the best doctors. But they could not save him. I can assure you that he had every attention his friends could give and that was all that he met with. As to Mr. Morrison he never did tire waiting on him, is grieved to give him up. Mr. S.S. Webster is here and gave thomas all the attention day and night that he could. He did not say anything about dying. He had the three conjestive chills and did not survive any more after the last. Madam, I can deeply sympathize with all and hope God will give grace and strength to bear up under this horrible stroke. Signed Jane N. Monteith.

The second letter, written as a postscript to the above reads; Mrs. O'Brien, Respected friend, it is with deep regret that we are called upon to communicate this sad dispensation of God's providence. Thomas was a good boy, respected by all who knew him, and beloved by his many friends at home. We have given every attention to his earthly wants. Mr. Morrison has been as kind as a brother and given the closest attention day and night. Mr. and Mrs. Monteith have manifested all the kindness and provided for his comfort as well as they could for a near relative. Hoping the Blessed Saviour may assist you and yours to bear this sad bereavement with Christian fortitude, and that you may make an unbroken family in heaven is the sincere prayer of your friend. S. S. Webster.

The writer does not know what the final illness of Rosana Ehler O'Brien was, but Dr. Pierre Fermier a brother-in-law from Hubbles Corner was the attending physician. When the aptient's condition worsened another doctor from North Vernon was called in for consultation. Upon the consulting physician's advice Rosana was given a different medicine. Either the medicine was incorrectly compounded or the wrong medicine. At any rate Rosana reacted violently to the posionous substance and although antidotes were administered

she died agonizingly within a few hours in the homestead at "O'Brien Corners" in Ripley County on June 15, 1888. She is buried in the family cemetery nearby.

It is recalled by the family that when Cornelius O'Brien married he took the equivalent of his 150 acres in money and bought acreage at Dillsboro intending to raise beef cattle. After building a house and barn and buying stock, his cattle refused to drink the water because it was 'bad'. Discouraged, and not seeking advice of wiser heads he unloaded the land at a cheap price to a doctor who recognized the medicinal value of the 'bad' water and started the Dillsboro Sanitarium, a mineral water and health spa. With the receipts from this bad venture Cornelius bought an eight to ten acre plot with house just east of O'Brien's Corner.

William lived with one child and then another after his wife's death. While living with this son, Cornelius, he died on February 19, 1899 and is buried in the nearby family cemetery.

Some time later Cornelius and his wife moved to Holton where they lived until their deaths, and are buried in the family cemetery near O'Brien's Corner.

The O'Brien family's "tree" had seven branches who lived to maturity married and have born many twigs and leaves. Their descent is chronicled on the following pages as sent by those living now. It is hoped that dates and names are correctly recorded, and that as new data occurs all of the others will be informed so that it can be incorporated. In this manner this history will become a self-perpetuating record of the family.

Certainly, events that are occurring to those of us who are still living and making history must be just as interesting as that of bygone years. Maybe it is just that distance in time has lent enchantment.

or Rosanna

O'BRIEN, William(8/5/1820-2/19/1900 married Rosana Ehler (5/23/1820-
and died 6/15/1888). They were married 8/15/1847, and to this
union were born, as noted on page 10,

Thomas Patrick who died of yellow fever aged 19

Solomon - who married Georganna Aickins on 7-2-1876

Cornelius - who married Anna Chandler

Edward Marshall - who (died 1891) married Carrie Cairns (Who later
married a Mr. Laswell) on 10-30-1878

Mary Ann - who died in infancy

Elsie Viola (Mary Ellen) - who married Theodore Schomaker

Adora Emiline - who died aged 18.

Rosannah - who married Dr. Sanford Bundy Townsend

Michael Fasnacht Douglas - who married Arolla Kuhns

Leona Phoebe Catherine - who married Issac Harrell on 10-30-1880

PROOFS

- A-General Services Administration, Wash. D. C.-Photostat of Michael Ehler's Service Record.
- B-General Services Administration, Photostat of Thomas Ehler's Service Record.
- C-History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties (Indiana)
- D-Church Records of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster, Pa.
- E-Church Records of Zion Lutheran Church, Jonestown, Pa.
- F-Church Records of St. John's United Church of Christ, Jonestown, Pa.
- G-Church Records of St. John's Lutheran Church, Hubbles Corner, Ind.
- H-Egle's History of Lebanon County, Pa.
- I-Recorder's Books-Dearborn County, Ind. re: Wills of Thomas Ehler and Patrick O'Brien: land sales to Thomas Ehler and William O'Brien.
- J-Recorder's Books-Ripley County, Ind. re: land sales to William O'Brien
- K-Church Records of St. Henry Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- L-Church Records of St. Peter in Chains Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- M-Census Bureau, Wash.D.C. re:Ehler p.112, O'Brien p. 96, Roll 13.
- N-"Cotton's Keepsakes" by A. J. Cotton
- O-Family Bible of Fermier Family owned by Kellner-Trowbridge, Mass.
- P-Masonic Records of the State of Indiana-letter of information.
- Q-Family Bible of the William O'Brien Family.