

Story of an Immigrant

Chronicles of the Besse Family from Butternut republished

BUTTERNUT. The German authors PD Dr. Maria Besse and Thomas Besse from Riegelsberg/Saar in Germany have published the chronicles of the Besse family under the title “The Mayor of Hornbach Isaac Besse (1652-1725), Ancestors and Descendants“ as second edition. The new book is being promoted by John and Greg Besse, the former und today President of the BESSE FOREST PRODUCTS GROUP COMPANIES in Gladstone, Michigan.



Dr. phil. Maria Besse, born in Merzig/Saar in 1958, heads the Research Center „WDW – Dictionary of the German winegrower’s language“, a project of the Mainz Academy of Science and Literature. In addition, she is in charge of the “Palatine Dialect Dictionary” archive in Kaiserslautern. The main focus of her studies is on loanword and interference research (German-Romanian languages), onomastics and dialectology.

The name Besse is fairly well known in Butternut. Henry Besse Sr., a German immigrant, was one of the first men to settle in the area in 1877 and one of the founding fathers of Butternut.

The Besse family history is a typical migration story, which happened many times in Europe in the past: Since the 17th century, there have been emigrations from Switzerland to Belgium, Germany, England, Holland and France as well as from the Palatinate to the United States in the 19th century.



Thomas Besse, administration graduate, born in Lebach-Dürsdorf in 1958, has worked in the Saarland Ministry of the Interior, Family, Women and Sports for more than 25 years. He is responsible for the organization of European and municipal elections in the Saarland among others. The main focus of his research is on genealogy and regional history. Beyond this he likes photography, web design and sports.

After the Thirty Years’ War, the Swiss Isaac Besse immigrated into the German duchy Palatinate-Zweibrücken in 1682. However, it was not a workman who immigrated, but the son of a Swiss notary from the French-speaking canton of Vaud. As the nobly appointed Mayor

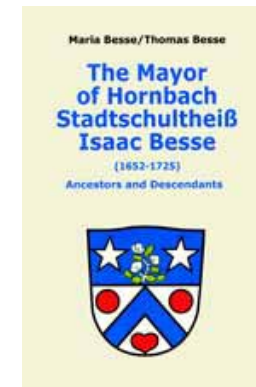
(*Stadtschultheiss*), Isaac Besse held a public office in the town of Hornbach near Zweibrücken (Two Bridges/ Palatinate).

Isaac Besse’s grandson Henry Besse from Annweiler, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany emigrated to the United States in 1849 and served as postmaster in Butternut as did his son and grandson. Henrys father Ludwig Besse was Notary and Justice of the Peace in Annweiler and Bergzabern from 1805-1836 and lost a large inheritance deposited in the Bank of London presumably when Napoleon established a economic system against England in 1809/10. Then the agent in England gave the family instead genuine bank notes only copies and appointed the money to his own use.



Coat of Arms: The story of the Swiss Immigrant Isaac Besse - here you can see the family coat of arms - is described in the new book of the Besse family.

This academic study includes numerous old documents from different archives which provide interesting insight into early modern times. The documents tell of the imposing inheritance from the Governor Francis Best (François Besse) from the Island of Jersey/England, the quarrel over a dowry, French lifestyle, a brief history to Butternut by Ruth Gear and lost of information to the Emigration to America contributed by Linda Senne from Butternut. On account of the good quality of the documentary material in the Swiss archives, the Besse family tree can be traced back over 21 generations to 1397. The second edition contains about 60 pages more than the first and the authors did not add each scrap of paper discovered in the Archives but only the bests.



- *The Mayor of Hornbach Isaac Besse (1652-1725), Ancestors and Descendants, 268 Seiten, Hardcover, 150 Photos, ISBN 978-3-93743603-6, Preis 20 Euro, zu bestellen bei Thomas Besse, E-Mail: thomas@besse.de .*