

# 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 second edition of the chronicles of the Besse family "The Mayor of Hornbach Isaac Besse (1652-1725), Ancestors and Descendants". The new book is being promoted by John and Greg Besse, the former and current Presidents of the BESSE FOREST PRODUCTS GROUP COMPANIES in Gladstone, Michigan.



*In 1981, Maria Besse, born in Mönchengladbach in 1958, heads the Research Center "HDW - Dictionary of the German immigrant's language" - a project of the Mainz Academy of Sciences and Letters. In addition, she is in charge of the "Palatinate Studies Dictionary" archive in Kaiserslautern. The main focus of her studies is on leonard and interference research (German-Romanian linguistics, semantics and dialectology).*



*Thomas Besse, administration graduate, born in Lahnstein-Dilsdorf in 1938, has worked in the National Ministry of the Interior, Family, Women and Sports for more than 35 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 does photography, web design and sports.*

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.

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. Henry's 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 an economic system against England in 1809/10. The agent in England then gave the family copies instead of genuine bank notes and appointed the money to his own use.

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 lots of information about the Emigration to America contributed by Linda Senne from Butternut.



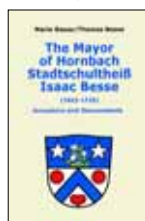
Maria Besse and Linda Senne in front of the street sign „Vers-chez-la-Besse“ in St. Croix in Switzerland. PHOTO 2002

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 additional pages and the authors did not add every scrap of paper discovered in the Archives but only the best material.



**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. PHOTO: Thomas Besse

- *The Mayor of Hornbach Isaac Besse (1652-1725), Ancestors and Descendants, second edition, 263 pages, hardcover, 140 photos, ISBN 978-3-93743603-6, price 30 Dollars, to order, contact Thomas Besse, Germany, [thomas@besse.de](mailto:thomas@besse.de) or Linda Senne, Butternut, phone (715) 661-3891.*



For more information see the website [www.besse.de](http://www.besse.de).

**Riegelsberg, den 15. November 2008**  
**PD Dr. Maria und Thomas Besse**