

ERIE GERMAN SETTLERS & FACTS



From early records, we have determined that the 1st German settlers in Erie County in all probability came from the Rhineland-Palatinate region of Germany and had been settled in America for almost a century before coming northwest. It was their letters to the families in the fatherland that brought even more settlers.

Not all the German immigrants to Erie county settled in the fledgling city, but rather turned to the rural, forested lands surrounding the city.

In 1830, the first known German settler to arrive in Erie was Wolfgang Erhart who built his home on what is now the corner of East 10th and State Streets. He was soon followed by his brother Stephen and W. F. Rindernecht.

By 1880, of Erie's inhabitants were 5,800 German immigrants, 7,700 foreign born and 6,500 who were native born. The early Germans settled originally in the area of Parade Street from East 10th and Holland Street down.... And as typically found they had a Church in its center. St. Mary's Church was built from wood that was cleared in St. Boniface, transported down through Marvintown, then into the City. The original beam can still be seen in the ceiling of the Church.

Early business man Adolph Brugger had his residence and Funeral Parlor on East 9th Street just east of Parade Street. The original home was closed in 2007, but the family business remains in two locations on East and West 38th Streets.



Adolph Brugger



The Brugger Family
Front Row: Charles H., Wilfred, Emma T.
Back Row: Adolph , Boniface, Lillie, Linius, Emma
Weber

Marvintown

It was originally part of a farm owned by Elisha Marvin and later sold off in smaller parcels. The heart of Marvintown is located at the junction of Wattsburg Road, Old French Road and Parade Street, east to Ash Street, north to 26th Street, west to German Street and south to 28th Street.

The present East 28th Street from Ash to Parade Streets was known as Schuldebuckel or Mortgage Hill. The Marvin Home stood on the NW corner of 28th and Parade Streets. St. John's Hall is now the present home of the Pulakos Candy Store.

28th Street West from Parade was known as Hogan's Alley. Hogan's Brickyard was located at 28th & German Street. There was a picnic grove nearby and the more romantic souls liked to call it 'Lovers' Lane.



Herman and Johanna Karsh with daughter Gertrude in 1894 about 1 year after arriving in Erie.



Karsh's Grocery in 1905 – Store was opened in April 1898 five years after their arrival in Erie and remained in the family until 1985.



Elizabeth Pfeiffer taught elementary school for 52+ years



Early Firemen



Early Firemen



German Band before they began their trek to Waldameer for the German Day Picnic



Cattaragus Club a.k.a. Marvintown Athletic Club that met at the Knights of St. John Hall on 26th & Parade Street

St. Boniface – Hammet Green Township

First Settlers

The earliest settlers in Greene Township were Peter Himebaugh and Conrad Wineman, two Pennsylvania Germans, who took up lands in 1800 along Le Boeuf Creek and remained there the balance of their lives.

The first German emigration was in 1833, when the Hirts, Pringles, Kellers and others settled on and near the Wattsburg road. Mr. Kuhl and sons removed from Mill Creek in 1835.

St. Boniface is a German settlement on the Wattsburg Plank Road, seven miles from Erie, which derives its name from the Catholic Church there located. The congregation was organized in 1857 by Rev. J. A. Oberhofer, with a congregation of some forty families. Rev. Oberhofer remained in charge of the church until 1867, and again in 1871 became its pastor, and sustained that relation with the congregation until the summer of 1873.

Rev. Oberhofer's Resting Place at Trinity Cemetery

Founder of St. Joseph's and St. Boniface Churches.

Fr. Oberhofer, son of a German brewmeister, undertook the construction of a brewery which would continue to operate until it was destroyed by fire in 1887. The brewery was located behind the Church's Cemetery, on a small creek that ran through the property.

In defense of the parish operating a brewery, it was stated: "Beer formed a very necessary part of the social life of the people of this race, and in order to satisfy that need, so that these Germans might maintain an affable frame of mind, he had the brewery constructed and he himself saw to it that its product was manufactured properly.

He also saw it as a means of bringing industry into the area and providing a market for grain grown on nearby farms. When it made a profit, it was separated from the Church and Joseph Schlauer served as the Brewmaster.

The brewery was constructed of native stone and shaped "like a modern hangar."



Martin Warfel, Founder of Warfeltown

In 1832, he and his bride built their homestead in the center of a 130 acre farm which extended from Buffalo Street (18th) to Water Street/Arbuckle Road (28th Street) and from the present East Avenue to Elm Street. The home still stands on East 23rd Street just east of East Ave. St. Stephen's Lutheran Church was built there to serve that community. A burial ground of the Eriez Indians was discovered in the gravel banks between 25th and 28th Street and east of East Ave.

