

Jacob Billman / Marian Bast history

Text taken from my mother Rose (Billman) Konechne notes, and

Some from the **Elizabeth Hitcherick history**

Written September, 2009 by Anita (Frohlick) Rieger

Mr. Jacob Billman was born July 17 1878, at Speier , South Russia. (I am going to assume now called Ukraine)

Son of Simon Billman and Theresa Schmidt.

The colony, Speier was founded in 1810, in the Beresina Valley, 106 miles west of Kherson the capitol city.

In the fall of 1809 the first settlers arrived. The place was a wild wide steppe, overgrown with weeds and brushwood and infested by wolves, fox and other predatory animals.

As there was no time at that late seasons of the year to construct real houses, because there was no building material on hand, The poor settlers had to dig holes in the hillside or dig basements, cover them with branches and weeds and call them their homes.

This indeed was a most primitive beginning. After the experience of that most uncomfortable winter, the new settlers worked together in groups the following spring and erected through the help of the government, more substantial homes.

Every colonist received 60 Dissiatine or 162 acres of land ,besides a free lot and the common pasture around the colony for all the cattle.

Within a few years orchards and vineyards were planted for which the German colonists became famous. The king sized pumpkins that they raised are unknown anywhere in the world, as were the Arbuse for their taste & sweetness.

In the course of time the colony Speier was not one of the least in the Beresina Valley.

It is said that within less than 100 years, since the founding of Speier 357 families emigrated from this colony, alone, to the US and another 143 families to Siberia to find new lands and new homes.

The parents and grandparents of Jacob Bollman were natives of Speier. His greatfather Egidis Billman came to Speier with his wife Elizabeth Wingerter, from Winzenbach, Elsass Germany in the beginning of the (18th) century.

Editors note to clarify- Mr. Jacob Billman was born July 17 1878, at Speier , South Russia He was raised there and at the age of 21 was drafted into the Russian army where he served for 3 years & 8 months at Warsaw Poland which at that time was part of the Russian empire After he was released from the army, he entered marriage Nov 6 1901 at Eigengut, with Miss Marian Bast. The marriage ceremony was performed by Ft John Beilman at St.Clement church.

Marian Bast born Feb 1st 1882. At the hutor, Winichretski, near Felenburg.
She was the daughter of Jacob Bast (a native of Speier) and Christine Boehm at Katherinental.

The paternal grandparents of Mrs. Jacob Billman (Marian Bast) were Phillip Bast and Katherine Acker.

The maternal Grandparents were Stephen Boehm and Mary Eve Bullinger.

The Bast family came to the Ukraine from Kuhardt Rheinpfalz and the Boehm family from Ruelzheim Rheinpfalz.

Jacob Billman had three brothers Mike, John and Nicodemus. Three full sisters, Katherine Margaret and Elizabeth and 2 half sisters- Catherine Frances
Elizabeth is the one that came to Canada that My mom/me and Aunt Beatrice/Doug went to visit. Elizabeth Hitcherick

Mrs. Jacob (Marian Bast) Billman had two brothers, Mike and Stephen. Two half brothers Adam and Jacob and 5 half sisters.

Clemintine wife of Matt Huck:

Barbara, wife of Joseph Schoch,

Catherine, wife of Nicodemou ? Billman.

Rose Mary, wife of Anton Hagal,

and Helen, wife of Phillip Wirtz.

After their marriage Jacob Billman farmed with his dad for a year.

Early in 1903 Mr. and Mars. Jacob Billman left Russia and arrived in Dickinson ND May 31st 1903.

Editors note Marian had an ear infection when she arrived in the US and they almost didn't let her off the ship.

For five years they made their home in Dickinson where Jacob Billman was employed at various jobs.

On Jan 20th 1908 they took up a homestead four miles north east of the St Pious church in Sheffield. Their first home was of prairie stone.

In light of present day farmers 160 acre was indeed a small unit. But when we remember the power the early settlers had in tilling the virgin soil consisted mostly of one team of horses or a yoke of oxen and a single share plow, we can understand that the acreage they planted was small.

Only as they increased their horsepower and made use of bigger plows could they seed more acres of land.

The pioneers did not have the convenience of the later and modern farmers.

They walked after the plow and harrow and planted their seeds by hand.

By 1913 Mr. and Mr. Jacob Billman were fortunate enough to sell their homestead and buy a three quarter section farm two miles south of St Pius Parish. On those 480 acres they farmed more extensively and raised more cattle. There was a time they ran 80 to 100 head of sheep on their land also. During their 35 years on the farm, they saw good and bad years, like it still is today on the farm.

In Nov of 1943 they moved to Sheffield.
Dec 1953 they moved to Dickinson
Feb 22 1956 Jacob Billman passed away.
1957 Mrs. Jacob Billman went to the old folks home
She passed away Feb 17 1967

Bits a pieces of notes I found later that my mother wrote in 1945.

Jacob Billman's dad Simon died April 16 1916
His mother Theresa died June of 1895
Marians dad died Dec 28,1893
Her mother died Nov 20 1920

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Simon Billman was married 3 times. Simon's parents were Egidis Billman and Elizabeth Wingerter. Elizabeth was born in Wenzelback, Elsass, Germany.

From his first wife , Simon had two children Frances & Catherine.

From his second wife, Theresa (Schmidt), he had seven children, Katherine (Ebberts), Margaret (Resch), Mike, John and Nicodemus Jacob and Elizabeth

Simon remarried in 1900 to Christina Boem Bast (Marians mother ?)

Six children born to Jacob and Marian died in infancy
Anna 8/24 1902-9 1902---Ludwig-Oct1904---Christian Nov 1905---Eva-Jan 1906---Katie 5/6-1915- 3/20
1927- tooth infection

Composed by Kenny Konechne 5-31 2022

More interesting links below

History of the colony of Speier

<http://www.questforancestors.com/speier.htm>

1812 CENSUS OF SPEIER, BERESAN

Interesting

<https://www.grhs.org/pages/speier>

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Maps- <http://www.questforancestors.com/maps.htm>

Speier : the catholic colony of Speier, Russia

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/752186?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

<https://www.germansfromrussiasettlementlocations.org/>