

the NAFZGER Heritage News

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Two Brothers Arrive in America

Perhaps no other community in the United States can boast of more Nafzgers per capita or per square mile than Hopedale in Tazewell County, Illinois. Part of the reason so many Nafzgers live in and around Hopedale today can be traced to Bishop Christian Nafziger. He acquired his release from the Castle Weilbach estate in Germany on May 4, 1840, to leave the confines of the estate for America. Together with his brother John, Christian sail to America in 1840. The crossing was made by sail and

and approximately 43 days later, he set foot in America at New Orleans. They travel ed by foot along the Mississippi River via Peoria to Tazewell County. It can be assumed that Christian was 21 or 22 years old and John was 14 or 15 years old when the journey was made. Christian married Elizabeth Zehra in 1851. Elizabeth was born in Alsace and made the journey to America in 1849.



The First Burial: The above picture is the tombstone and burial site for the first burial made in the Hopedale Mennonite Cemetery, just west of Hopedale, Illinois. As can be seen from the inscription, it was Christian Nafziger and his wife, Veronica. Christian was the head of the family featured in this issue of The Nafzger Heritage News.

It is not clear just when John Nafziger married Mary Burkey, but it would appear to have been around 1860. A few years after Christian and John made the difficult journey to America, they enabled their parents, Christian and Veronica to make the trip. The boys worked for \$6.00 a month so that the rest of the family could join them in their homeland.

By 1854, John made his first acquisition of land in the area by purchasing one quarter section of land in Tazewell County. Later, John was to acquire 160 acres for each his six children, much of which still remains in the possession of Nafziger today. The practice of providing land for the children is a practice that accounts for so many Nafziger in Tazewell County today.