

REISINGER or RISINGER. The Risinger family of Center township, Indiana county, now represented by James M. and William P. Risinger, brothers, and Michael H., and Daniel E. Risinger, brothers, is descended from John Risinger, the Pioneer settler of the family in Indiana county.

The Risingers have been settled in Pennsylvania for almost one hundred and seventy-five years. The first of the name in America was Hans Nicklaus Risinger, or Reisinger as it was formerly written, who emigrated from Germany to America in 1749. He came with his son John Peter in the ship "Dragon," George Spencer, master, with 563 passengers, foreigners from the Palatinate and Zweibrucken, Germany. He is also mentioned in Rupp's "Thirty Thousand German Immigrants." The Palatinates were a thrifty and industrious people who lived in the lower regions of the Rhine, and Prowell in his history of the Palatinates and their emigration says: "The burghers of its cities were wealthy merchants. Its fertile fields and vine-clad hills brought competence and comfort to its people. Religion and education were so well diffused that there were no other people of their day to whom in these respects the Palatines stood second. The situation of their native country, the highway of France into the heart of Germany, together with its beauty and fertility, made it a Naboth's vineyard to Louis XIV, of France, whose ambition was colossal." The revocation of the Edict of Nantes had driven thousands of Protestants from France into Germany, where they found a most needed asylum among their brethren of the Reformed and Lutheran faiths. The war of the Spanish succession gave to Louis XIV, the long-sought excuse to wreak a terrible vengeance on the inhabitants of the Palatinate. He sent an army of 50,000 men, with orders to its commander to ravage the country with fire and sword and to make the land a desert. The French went through the length and breadth of the country destroying cities, burning villages, stripping the people of their possessions, compelling them to pull down their walls, to stand by and see their wealth perish in the flames, and then driving them to the fields, there to perish with hunger and cold. In one day the elector, standing on the walls of Mannheim, counted twenty-three villages in flames, and to this day the picturesque ruins along the Rhine river tell but too plainly the story of the terrible disaster that laid waste the beautiful fields of the Palatines. The inhabitants, left without homes or land, turned to England for assistance. England offered them homes in the new world, and with their wives and families they migrated to America.

Lorentz Schmahl, arriving in 1743 in York county in what was then the province of Pennsylvania, wrote back to Hans Nicklaus Reisinger in glowing terms of the opportunities that the new world held out for the homeless peasants in Germany. Hans Nicklaus Reisinger, who was a widower, at once prepared to make the journey, arriving in York county Sept. 26, 1749. Shortly after his arrival Lorentz Schmahl died, leaving the widow and a grown daughter, Eva Schmahl. About the year 1751 Hans Nicklaus Reisinger married the widow Schmahl, and his son John Peter Risinger shortly after married the daughter. They were prosperous and soon had a comfortable home.

John Peter Risinger, born near Essenheim, Germany, who had married Eva Schmahl, served as a private in the 3d Battalion, York county militia, in the

Revolutionary war; it was organized in 1775 and commanded by Col. Richard McAlister. McAlister commanded under Washington in the campaigns around New York and in the battles of Trenton and Princeton. This regiment had enlisted for six months, but served two months longer than that. The children of John Peter Risinger were, sons, Jacob, John Henrich, Peter and Henry, and daughters who married George Spangler and Isaac Lowmaster, the latter being a celebrated gunsmith of the Revolutionary period.

John Henrich Risinger was born in York county, Pa., March 18, 1768, being the second son of John Peter Risinger and Eva Schmahl. He married Magdalena Myers about 1789. Their children were named as follows: John, Jacob, George, Henry, Daniel, Michael, Joseph, Polly (married John Lininger), Lydia (married to Peter Rhodes), Elizabeth (married to Andrews) and Mary (married to Jacob D'Armen).

About the year 1801 John Henrich Risinger's brother Peter, accompanied by his uncle, John Small, moved to Beaver county, Pa., which was then considered the "far West". They sent back to York a glowing description of the lands along Beaver creek. John and his wife and family made up their minds to move to this county and take up land sufficient to give each of their boys a farm. In true pioneer fashion they began the overland journey, reaching Brushvalley, in Indiana county, in the fall of 1806. Here the mother and boys made up their minds they would go no farther and settled in that township on what is now the Dinsmore Dick farm. The following year the mother died. John married his second wife, Elizabeth Lininger, about 1810. Later he took up a tract of land in Center township, north of the present town of Homer City. He died in 1844, at the home of his son Daniel, which was on a part of this tract.

Michael Risinger was born near York, Pa., in 1798, son of John Henrich Risinger and Magdalena (Myers). Coming with his father to Indiana county, they located in Brushvalley township, but later moved to Center township. In 1823, he married Rebecca Williams, who was born in Brushvalley in 1802, a daughter of Capt. Benoni Williams, who had recruited a company and served in the war of 1812. For two years after their marriage they lived on the Runyan farm in Brushvalley. He then purchased from James Wilkens the tract of land in Center township lying between the waters of Twolick and Yellow creeks, on which is now located the mining town of Lucerne. This land was then covered with heavy timber, walnut and white oak. Locating a spring near the waters of Twolick he began to chop down the forest and build a log house. Hardy and industrious, he pursued this arduous labor until a few acres of the ground were cleared, a log house erected and corn growing in the field. Those were years of trials and hardships. Their neighbors were few, and at night the cry of wolves was frequently heard in the forest. For several seasons the corn crop was in part destroyed by deer, and the chicken were kept in the cellar of the house to insure their safety from mink and weasel. Michael

Risinger's children were: Matilda, married Rev. J. W. Plannette; Josiah, married to Margaret McKesson; Elizabeth, married to J. W. Kerr; Eva, who died at the age of twenty-one; and William, married to Nancy E. Orr. The father died in 1883, the mother's death occurring but two months later in the same year.

William Risinger was born in Center township, on July 24, 1841, and attended the public school located near the present site of Upper Homer school. From boyhood he worked on the farm of his father, clearing the timber from the land and quarrying thousands of yards of stone, a part of which was used in the construction of the Indiana Branch railway, which passed through this farm. During the year 1868 he erected the frame house in which he lived until his death. Here he engaged in general farming and stock raising and in 1890 became associated with his son James in the latter line. Mr. Risinger became one of the largest breeders and raisers of Jersey cattle in the country. He also became extensively interested in the dairy business and continued in that line up to his death. In 1883 his fine frame barn was destroyed by fire, and he soon rebuilt it. In 1905 most of the homestead farm was sold to the Buffalo & Rochester Coal Company, and on its site is built the coal mining town of Lucerne, containing a population of over three thousand, with all the benefits of churches and schools, and where a large plant was erected for coal mining purposes. It is the largest coal mining town in the county and in 1912 the largest coal tippie in the world was erected there. During a business trip to Indiana, on May 29, 1908, and while transacting business in the store of William R. Loughry, Mr. Risinger was stricken with an attack of apoplexy. He was taken to the "Indiana House": and there died. He was buried in Greenwood cemetery, Indiana. Mr. Risinger was a man well known and respected and noted for his high moral character. He was well-read, independent in his views and actions, held progressive views, and took an active part in public matters, serving as school director of his township and also as tax collector and auditor. He took a deep interest in the local public schools and in anything for the benefit of his township and county and the people. He was one of the organizers and charter members of the Homer City National Bank, and succeeded his son William P. Risinger as member of its board of directors, serving as such until his death.

On Oct. 29, 1868, Mr. Rising married Nancy Elizabeth Orr, who was born in Armstrong township, Indiana county, July 9, 1845, daughter of James and Hannah (Kimmel) Orr. They had two children, James M. and William Perley. Mrs. Risinger now resides with her son James. She is a member of the Lutheran Church at Homer City, a woman noted for her charity and her devotion to her family.