

Bibliography: The Bontrager Settlement of Northern Indiana

LOREN L. JOHNS • APRIL 26, 2025

Amish Heritage Committee

- 1992 *Amish and Mennonites in Eastern Elkhart and LaGrange Counties, Indiana, 1841–1991: Anniversary Edition Commemorating 150 Years in Indiana, Elkhart-LaGrange Counties, 1841–1991*. Goshen, IN: The Amish Heritage Committee. This booklet is an expansion of Hansi Borntrager’s booklet below. Revised in 2009. Available from the Northern Indiana Amish Library (hereafter NIAL) at 440 W 100 S, Lagrange IN 46761 for \$5.

Bontrager, Eli J.

- 1953 *My Life Story*. Shipshewana, IN: Eli J. Bontrager. Eli was the son of Hansi (below), the grandson of Sep, one of the first settlers in 1841, the great grandson of John Borntrager Jr. (and Barbara Johns), the gg grandson of John Bontrager Sr. and of Joseph Johns, founder of Johnstown, PA, and the ggg grandson of the immigrant Johann “Martin” Borntraeger.

Bontrager, Marion G., ed., John E. “Hansi” Bontrager

- 1979 *Descendants and Ancestors of Martin Borntraeger: Of Treysa, Province of Hesse, Germany, Althornbach, the Palatinate, Meyersdale and Johnstown, Pennsylvania*. Hesston, KS: Marion G. Bontrager. This revised version of Hansi Bontrager’s genealogy contains a new introduction reflecting the important research done on the Bontragers in Europe by Martin L. “Marty” Schlabach in the early 1970s (3rd printing by Dan A. Hochstetler in 1993.) Marion is a great grandson of “Lame John” Bontrager IV, the grandson of John Borntrager Jr. (and Barbara Johns). A few of the third printing (new copies) are available for \$20 from NIAL. Extensions of this basic Bontrager genealogy have been published following different branches of the tree.

Borntrager, John E. “Hansi”

- 1907 *Eine Geschichte der Erste Ansiedelung der Amishschen Mennoniten und die Gründung ihrer ersten Gemeinde im Staate Indiana: Nebst einer kurzen Erklärung über die Spaltung die in dieser Gemeinde geschehen ist*. Elkhart, IN: Mennonite Publishing Company. Reprinted in 1986 by Pleasant Ridge Printers, Middlebury, IN. Available from NIAL for \$0.75.
- 1923 *Descendants of Martin Borntraeger, the Emigrant of 1767*. Scottdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House. The foundational genealogy of the Bontrager family.

Borntrager, John E. “Hansi”, translated by Elizabeth Gingerich in 1977

- 1988 *A History of the First Settlers of the Amish Mennonites and the Establishment of their First Congregation in the State of Indiana, along with a Short Account of the Division which Took Place in This Church*. Topeka, IN: Dan A. Hochstetler. Originally published in 1907. Available from NIAL for \$2.75.

Buschen, Helen Mary Borntrager

- ? *The Family of Borntrager*. Referred to in third edition of Hansi Borntrager’s Bontrager genealogy. Her obituary refers to her 300-page manuscript, but I have not been able to further identify or locate this genealogy. Perhaps it remains unpublished. Marion says she traces a “later immigration” of Bontragers. FamilySearch.org (mistakenly?) identifies her descending from a Johann Konrad Bornträger (1749–1822), the son of immigrant Johann “Martin” Bornträger.

Gingerich, Hugh F., and Rachel W. Kreider

- 1986 *Amish and Amish Mennonite Genealogies*. Gordonville, PA: Pequea Bruderschaft Library. The “Bible” of 18th and early 19th century Amish and Amish-Mennonite genealogies. Revised with additions and corrections in 2007.

Hostetler, Herbert J.

- n.d. *History of the Family of Andrew Borntrager (ca 1752–1798), Son of Johann Martin Bornträger, the Immigrant of 1767*. Little River, SC: Herbert J. Hostetler. While not connected to the Bontrager settlement of Indiana in 1841, Hostetler traces the long-neglected and largely unknown lineage of immigrant Johann Martin Bornträger’s son Andrew.

Krabill, Russell

- 1991 "The Coming of the Amish Mennonites to Elkhart County, Indiana." *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* 52 (January): 1–4. Available online at <https://dn790003.ca.archive.org/0/items/MennHistBull1991v52/MennHistBull1991v52.pdf>.

Landing, James E.

- 1969 "The Old Order Amish Settlement at Nappanee, Indiana: Oldest in Indiana." *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* 24 (October): 5. Landing corrects the widely disseminated claim that the LaGrange/Elkhart settlement of June 1841 was the oldest settlement of Indiana by the Amish.

Lehman, Marty, and Marilyn Lehman

- 2011 "Uneasy Inheritance: The Trail of Death." *Anabaptist World* (December 1). Available online at <https://anabaptistworld.org/uneasy-inheritance-trail-death/>. Ponders the ethics of Amish Mennonites benefitting from the unethical and violent expulsion of native Americans.

Meyer, Rich H.

- 1999 "Why Don't We Tell the Beginning of the Story? Native Americans Were Here First." *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* 60 (July): 1–8. Online at <https://archive.org/details/MennHistBull1999v60>.

Meyers, Thomas

- 2022 "A Demographic Profile of the Elkhart-LaGrange Old Order Amish Settlement." In *Journal of Plain Anabaptist Communities*, vol. 3, no. 1. November 29. Pp. 65–82.

Meyers, Thomas, and Steven M. Nolt

- 2004 *An Amish Patchwork: Indiana's Old Orders in the Modern World*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. An in-depth exploration of Indiana's Amish and Old Order Mennonite communities.

Miller, Devon Ezra

- 2017 *Changing Landscapes: Ambiguity, Imaginations, and Amish Settlers in Northern Indiana, 1825–1850*. A dissertation submitted to Michigan State University for a Ph.D. in anthropology. A fascinating ethnohistorical analysis of the 1841 Amish settlement of Northern Indiana.

Pratt, Dorothy O.

- 2004 *Shipshewana: An Indiana Amish Community*. Bloomington, IN: Quarry Books.

Schlabach, Martin L.

- 1973 "Family History of Bornträger." A paper written for the course "The Americanization of Charlie Brown(owski): Immigration and Ethnic Conflict," Prof. David Osher at Franconia College (New Hampshire). This important research corrects the Bontrager family tradition (in 1923 Bontrager genealogy, corrected in 1979 edition) that the Bontrager family came from Switzerland. Marty is a great grandson of John E. "Hansi" Bontrager and a ggggg grandson of the immigrant.

Strassburger, Ralph Beaver

- 1934 *Pennsylvania German Pioneers: A Publication of the Original Lists of Arrivals in the Port of Philadelphia from 1727 to 1808*. Ed. William John Hinke. Norristown, PA: Pennsylvania German Society. Martin Bornträger's name is the eighth name in List 264c (vol. 1, p. 714).

Yoder, Edna O., and Marion G. Bontrager

- 1984 *Descendants of John J. Bontrager IV and Fanny Kauffman, 1834–1980*. Middlebury, IN: Edna O. Yoder. This significant extension of the original Bontrager genealogy contains good historical information as well as maps detailing the first four settlements.

Young Center, Elizabethtown College

The Young Center interprets the cultural and religious heritage of Anabaptist and Pietist communities to the general public. It attempts to maintain up-to-date statistics on Amish communities across the United States. See <https://groups.etown.edu/amishstudies>.

Swiss Anabaptist Genealogical Association databases (<https://www.saga-omii.org/>) have over 337,000 descendants of immigrant Johann Martin Bornträger.