



The Amazing Bontrager Family of Northern Indiana

Swiss Anabaptist Genealogical Association

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Loren L. Johns



Johann Martin Bornträger

1723-1802

- ▶ In September 1723, Johann “Martin” Bornträger was born to Lutherans Johann Caspar Bornträger and Anna Marie Antebring in Treysa, Germany.
- ▶ Martin was baptized in the Lutheran church there on September 12, 1723.
- ▶ When Martin was in his 20s, he began working on the Kirschbacherhof near Hornbach for Andreas Leyenberger, who was an Anabaptist.
- ▶ Martin was impressed by the integrity of Andreas’s life and witness as an Anabaptist and they had many conversations about life and faith.
- ▶ Martin and Anna Elisabeth Hanauer were married in 1751 by Pastor Götzen, the Lutheran pastor in Hornbach.
- ▶ When recording the marriage, the pastor noted disapprovingly that they planned to leave the Lutheran church and join the Anabaptists.

Johann “Martin” Borntraeger’s Ancestry in Germany

						Klaus Bornträger
					Philip Bornträger	
				Kasper Bornträger (-1656)		
			Hieronymus Bornträger (-1664)			
		Johann Philip Bornträger (1642-1687)				
	Johann Casper Bornträger (c. 1681-1751)					
Johann "Martin" Borntraeger (1723-1802)						

Immigration

- ▶ Martin Bornträger arrived in Philadelphia October 5, 1767, on “Sally.”
- ▶ A widely accepted tradition has it that his wife died at sea.
- ▶ Martin’s children were three boys under the age of 16 (Andrew, John, Christian) and possibly two girls (Hannah, married Johannes Graybill, and Barbara, married Johann Georg Feich/Fike).

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Martin Bornträger". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid, with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.



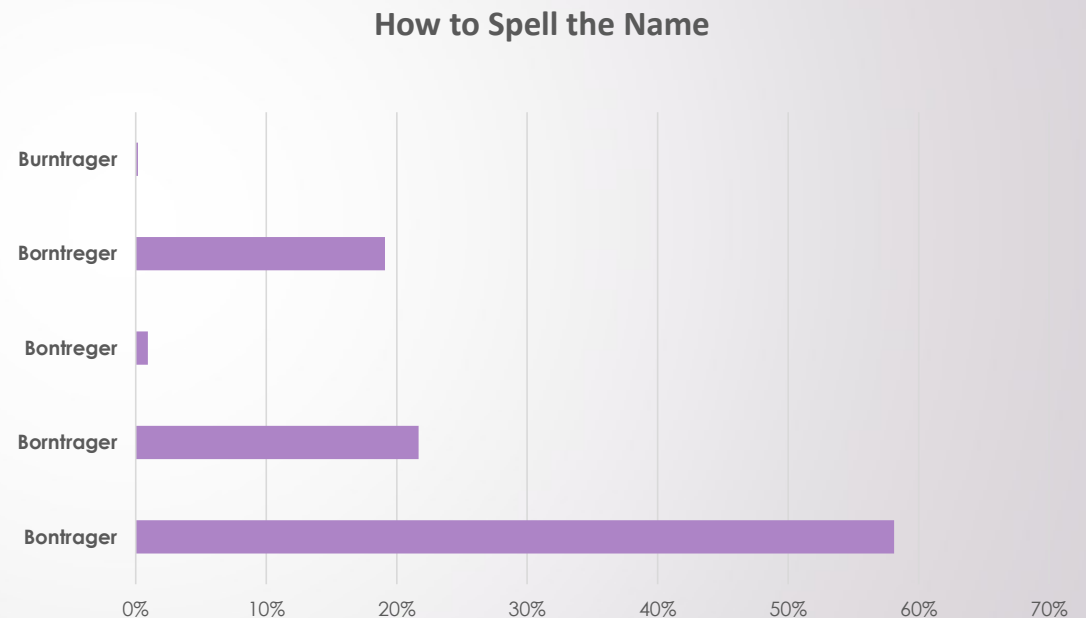
Johann Martin Borntraeger

A Significant Amish Progenitor

- As of Tuesday, 336,394 of the people in my database of 1,015,471 descend from him, including the spouses who married into the family (33.1%).
- *Most* of the Amish who live west of Pennsylvania likely descend from him (over 50%).

How to spell Bontrager / Bontreger / Borntrager / Borntreger / Burntrager, etc.

- Bontrager: 58%
- Borntrager: 22%
- Borntreger: 19%
- Bontreger: 1%
- Burntrager: 0%





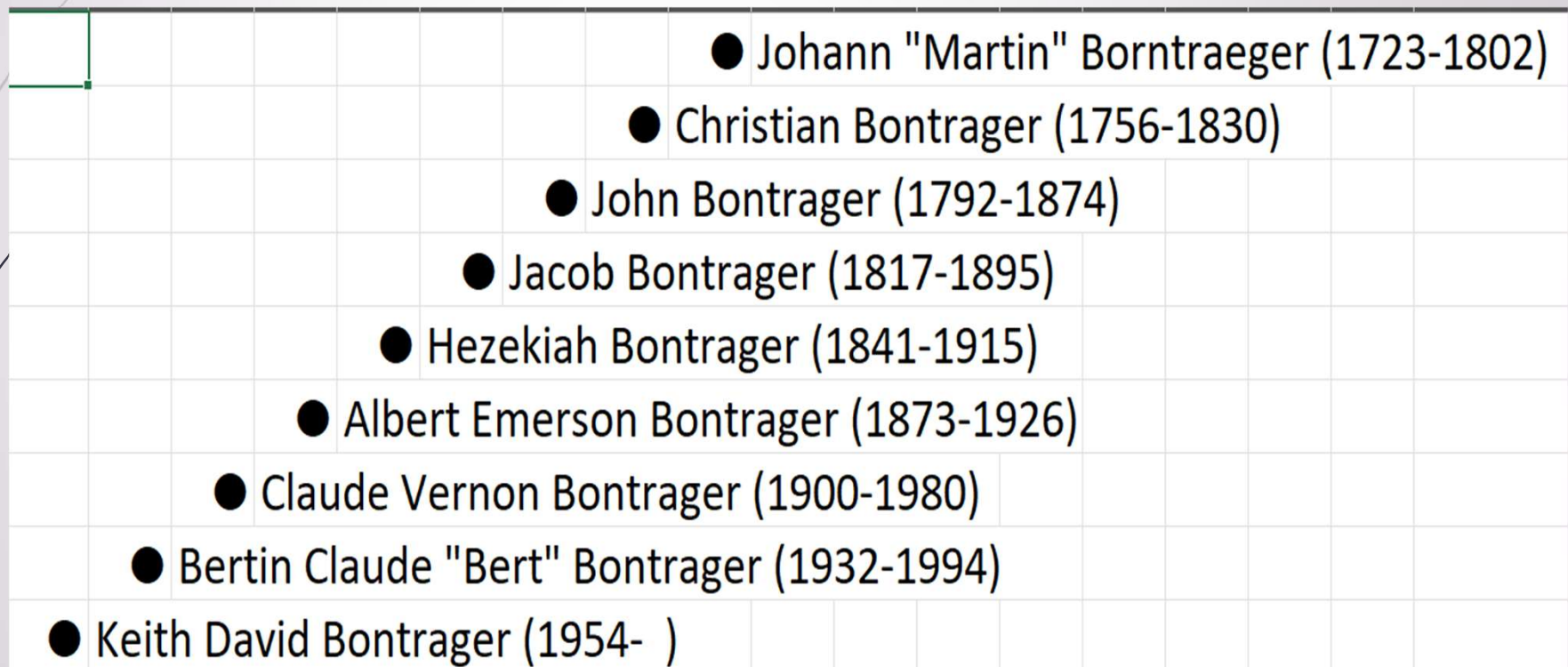
Settlement in Meyersdale, Somerset Co., PA

- ▶ Martin and his sons started the first flour mill at Meyersdale.
- ▶ Son Andrew later moved to Virginia.
- ▶ Son John stayed in Somerset Co. for a time.
- ▶ Son Christian later moved to Indiana County, PA, then later to Ohio. He died in Leavittsville, Ohio.
- ▶ Keith David Bontrager of Bontrager Bicycles (bought by Trek) descends from Christian and is a 7th cousin to Floyd R. Miller and the children of Perry “Jay” Bontrager.

Bontrager Bikes



Ancestry of Keith David Bontrager, Founder of Bontrager Bicycles



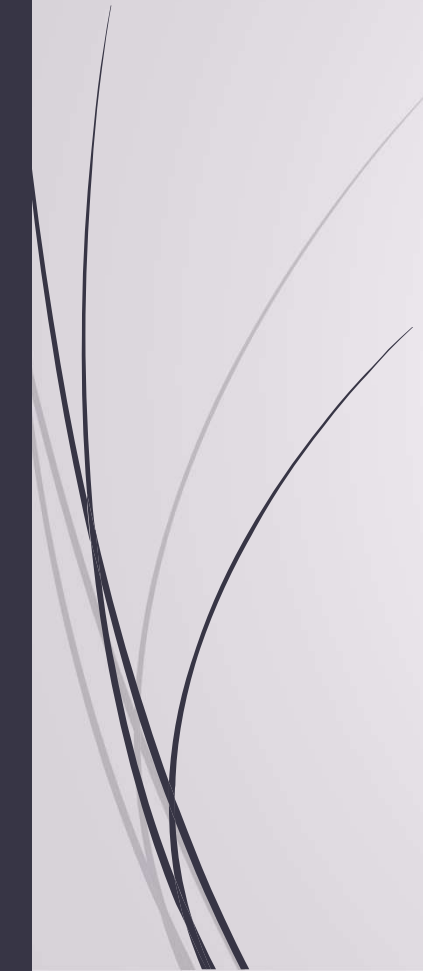


Settlement in Meyersdale, Somerset Co., Pennsylvania

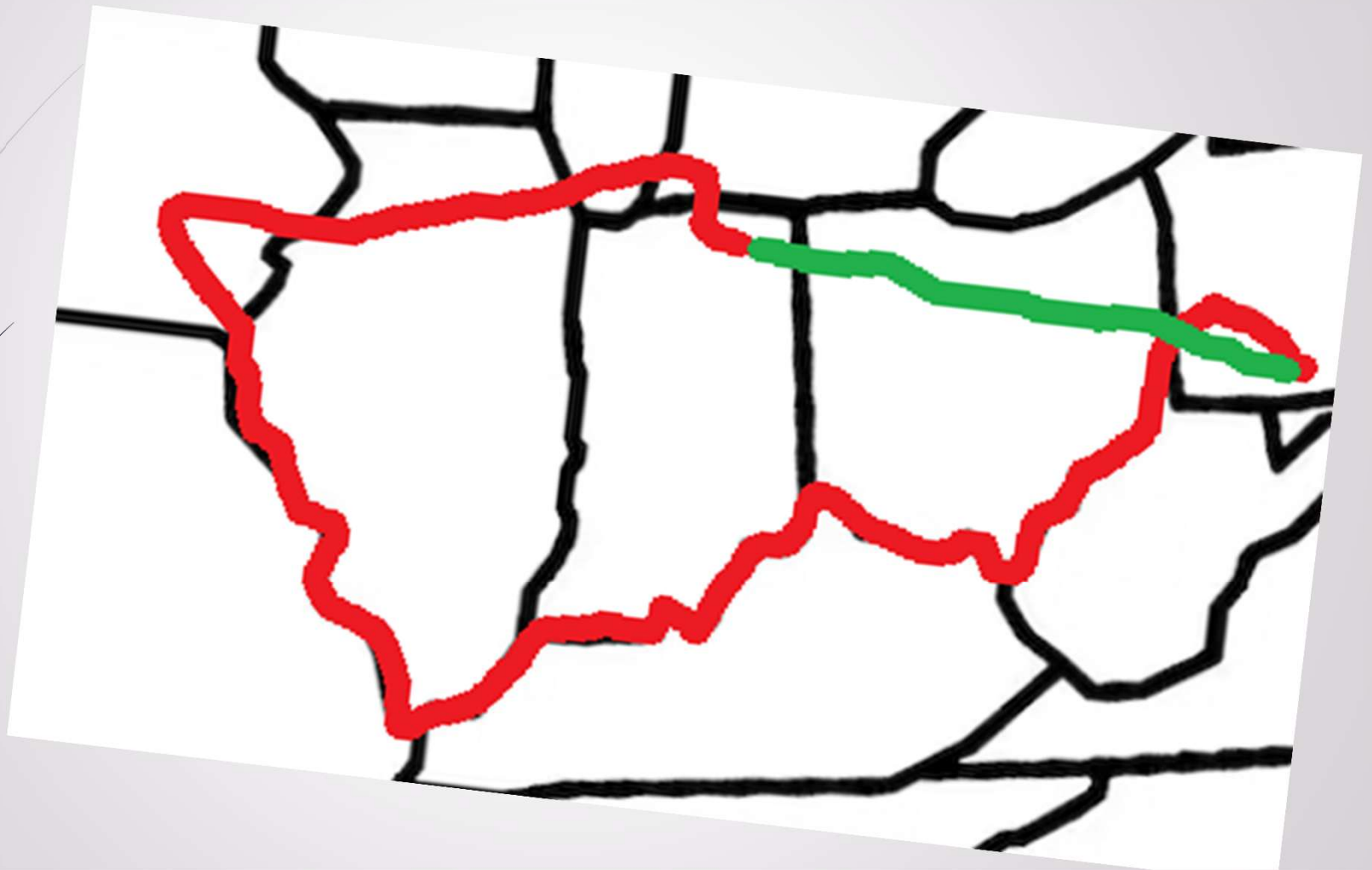
- Son John Sr. later moved to Conemaugh Township in northern Somerset Co. in 1798.
- Later still John Sr. moved to Tuscarawas County, Ohio, where he died in Shanesville.



In 1840 Four Men Scouted for Land in the West

1. Daniel S. Miller (1806-1886)
 2. Preacher Joseph Miller (Daniel's brother; 1808-1877)
 3. Nathan Smiley (1797-1872)
 4. Joseph Speicher (1797-1862)
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The Two-Month Scouting Trip in 1840



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2. Preacher Joseph Miller (Daniel's brother; 1808-1877)
3. Nathan Smiley (1797-1872)
4. Joseph Speicher (1797-1862)

The first two were among those who left Somerset County with their wagons and their families on June 3, 1841, and arrived in Elkhart County on June 29.

Nathan Smiley did not come: his wife was 8 months pregnant when the group left.

Joseph Speicher did not come: his wife was 7 months pregnant when the group left.

With wives and children, the first Amish to settle in Indiana were a group of 24.

Instead of Smiley and Speicher, two of Daniel and Joseph's first cousins (themselves brothers as well) made the trip in 1841. All four were grandsons of John Bornt. Sr.

John Martin Borntraeger Sr. and Mary Falb

► John and Mary had eight children:

1. John Bontrager Jr. (1781-1856) married Barbara Johns (1782-1870)
2. Elizabeth Borntreger (1782-1840) married John Lehman (c. 1780-1852)
3. Barbara Borntreger (c 1783-c. 1852) married Joseph "Sep" Miller (1762-1839)
4. Mary Borntreger (1785-1882) married Jacob Lehman (1776-1863)
5. Christian Bontrager (1788-c. 1830) married Elizabeth Hartzler (1788-)
6. Margaret Bontrager (1790-1850) married David Schrock (1791-1867)
7. __ [daughter] Borntraeger (c 1793-)
8. Veronica "Frany" Bontreger (1796-1881) married Samuel Walter (1793-1867)

Highlighted because the majority of Amish and Mennonites today who have Bontrager ancestry descend from this couple.

John Martin Borntrager Jr. and Barbara Johns

► John and Barbara had nine children:

1. Veronica “Frany” Borntreger (1803-1887) m. David Schlabach (c.1803-1887?)
2. John B. Borntreger III (1805-1891) m. Anna Yoder (1808-1848)
3. Margaret Borntreger (1807-1882) m. Christian Miller (1807-1842), John J. Miller (1791-1861), and John Eash (1802-1891)
4. Maria Borntreger (1808-1896) m. David S. Schrock (1808-1893)
5. Joseph “Sep” Borntreger (1811-1908) m. Barbara Yoder (1811-1888)
6. Gertrude Borntrager (1814-1891) m. John J. Schrock (1811-1890)
7. Christian Borntrager (1816-1907) m. Elizabeth Baumgardner (1816-1903)
8. Barbara Borntreger (1819-1902) m. Tobias C. “Dick Christal” Yoder (1816-1875)
9. Amos James Borntreger (1826-1899) m. Lydia Ann Miller (1828-1898)



John Martin Borntraeger Sr. and Mary Falb

Four grandsons settled in Indiana in June 1841.

- John Borntrager Jr. and Barbara Johns

 - Deacon Joseph “Sep” Borntreger

 - Christian Borntrager

- Barbara Borntreger and Joseph “Sep” Miller

 - Daniel S. Miller

 - Preacher Joseph J. Miller

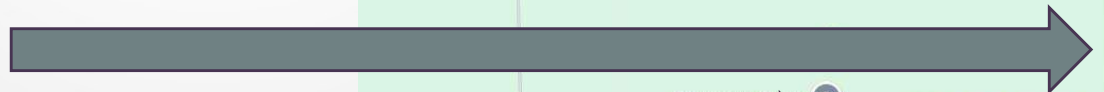
- ***We probably could call it the 1841 **Bontrager** Settlement of Indiana.***

Joseph “Sep” Borntrager and Joseph Miller Settled in Clinton Twp., Elkhart Co., Indiana

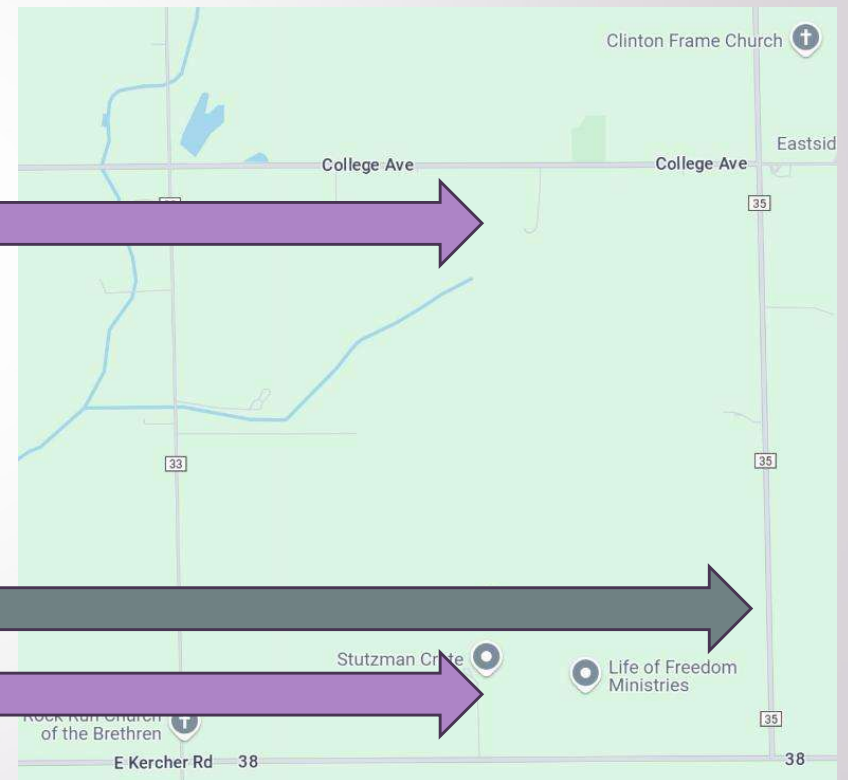
Joseph “Sep” Borntrager’s Farm



Misplaced Marker



Joseph Miller’s Farm



Daniel S. Miller and Christian J. Bontrager Settled in Newbury Twp., LaGrange Co., Indiana

Forks Mennonite Church

Daniel S. Miller's Farm

Christian J. Bontrager's Farm



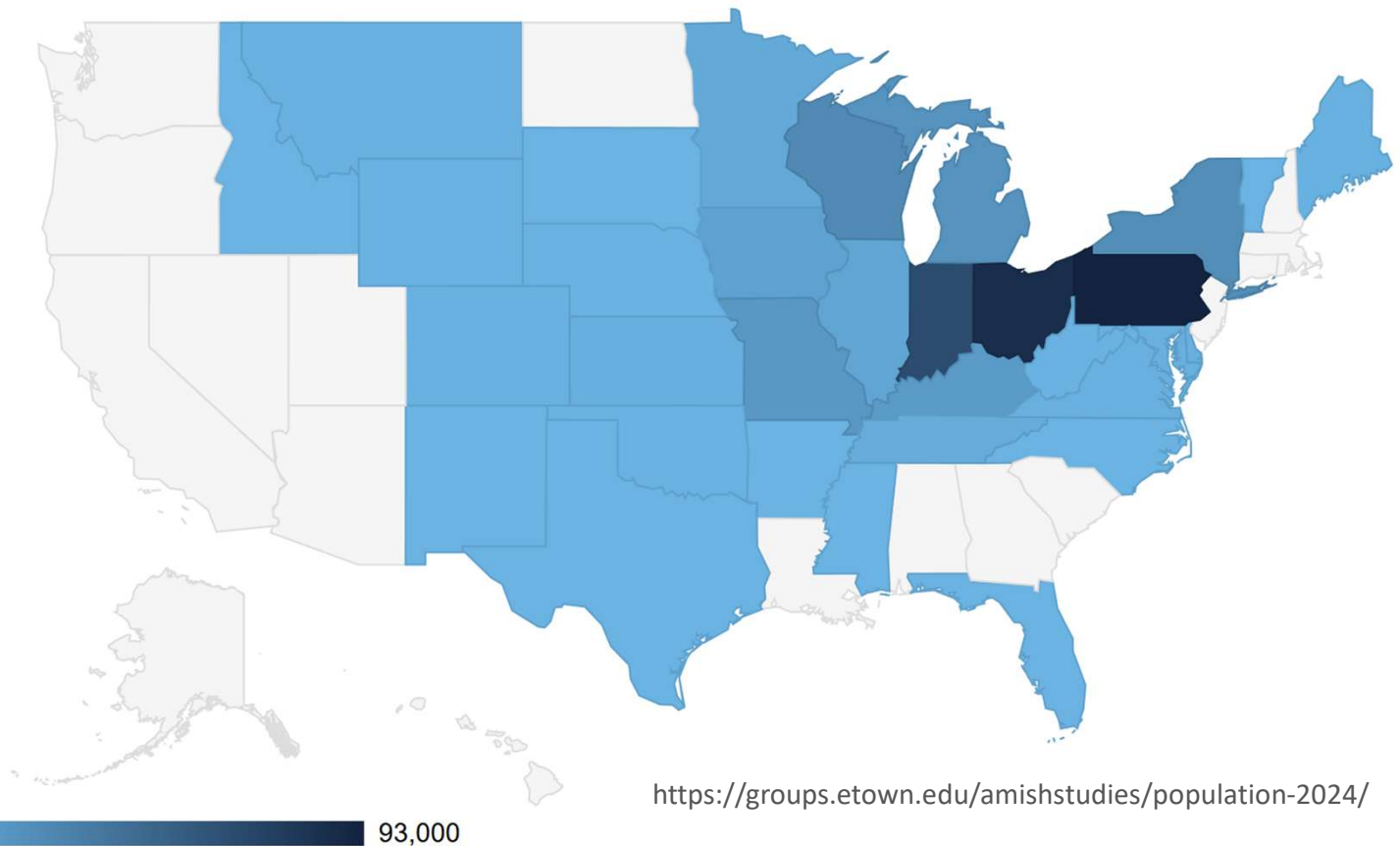
Migrations West: Comparing Amish Populations with Bontrager Descendants

	State	Amish Population		State	Bontrager Births		Bontragers as % of Amish	
1	Pennsylvania	92,660	1	Indiana	81,201	1	Iowa	132%
2	Ohio	85,965	2	Ohio	56,491	2	Indiana	124%
3	Indiana	65,540	3	Wisconsin	21,342	3	Missouri	101%
4	Wisconsin	26,365	4	Missouri	17,726	4	Illinois	99%
5	New York	24,325	5	Michigan	15,765	5	Wisconsin	81%
6	Michigan	20,690	6	Iowa	13,914	6	Michigan	76%
7	Missouri	17,635	7	Pennsylvania	13,256	7	Ohio	66%
8	Kentucky	15,915	8	Illinois	8,930	8	Kentucky	32%
9	Iowa	10,540	9	Kansas	5,524	9	New York	18%
10	Illinois	9,050	10	Kentucky	5,046	10	Pennsylvania	14%

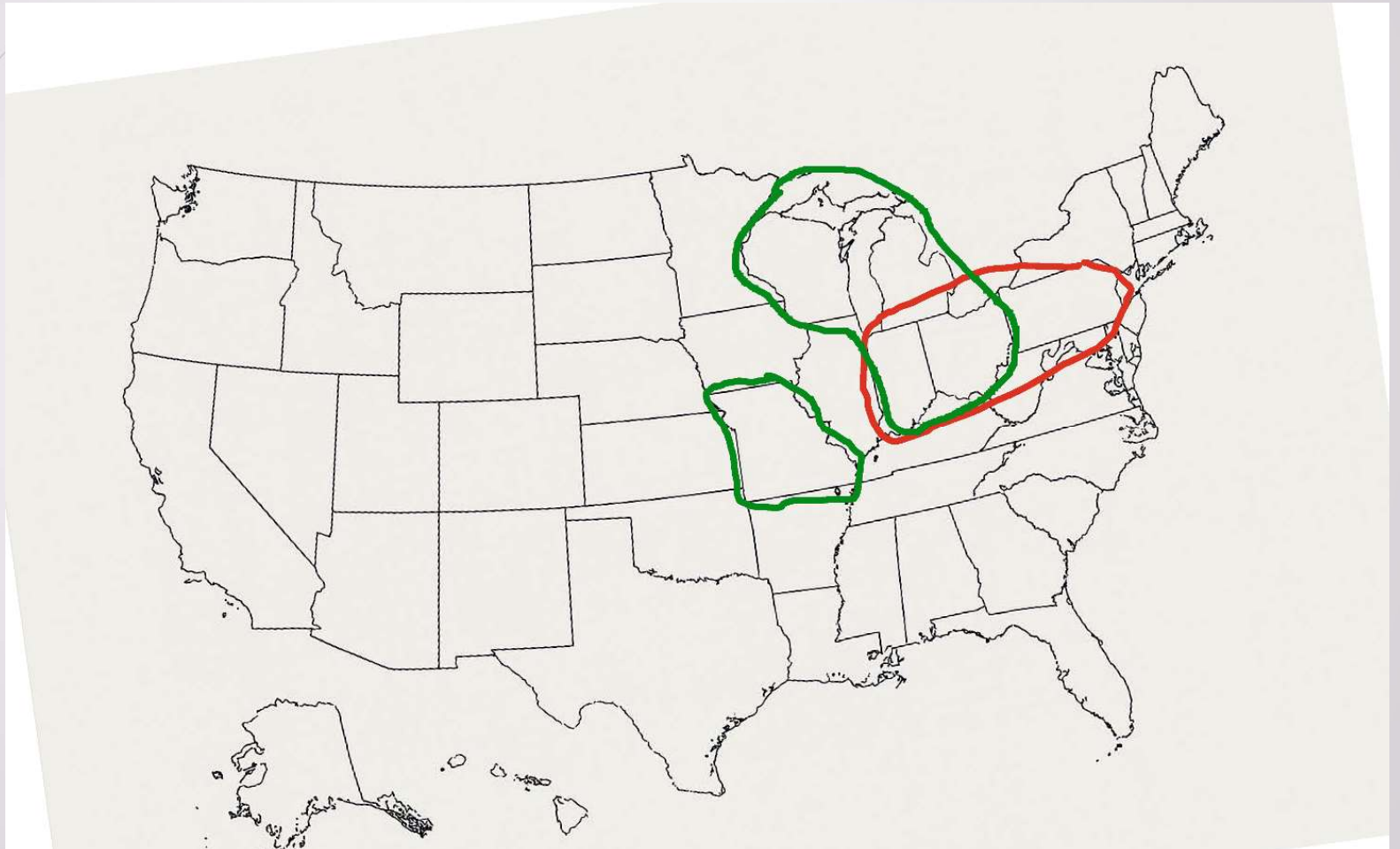
>100%? 1. Not all Bontragers are Amish. 2. Amish population is current; Bontrager births over 250 years.

2024 Amish Population

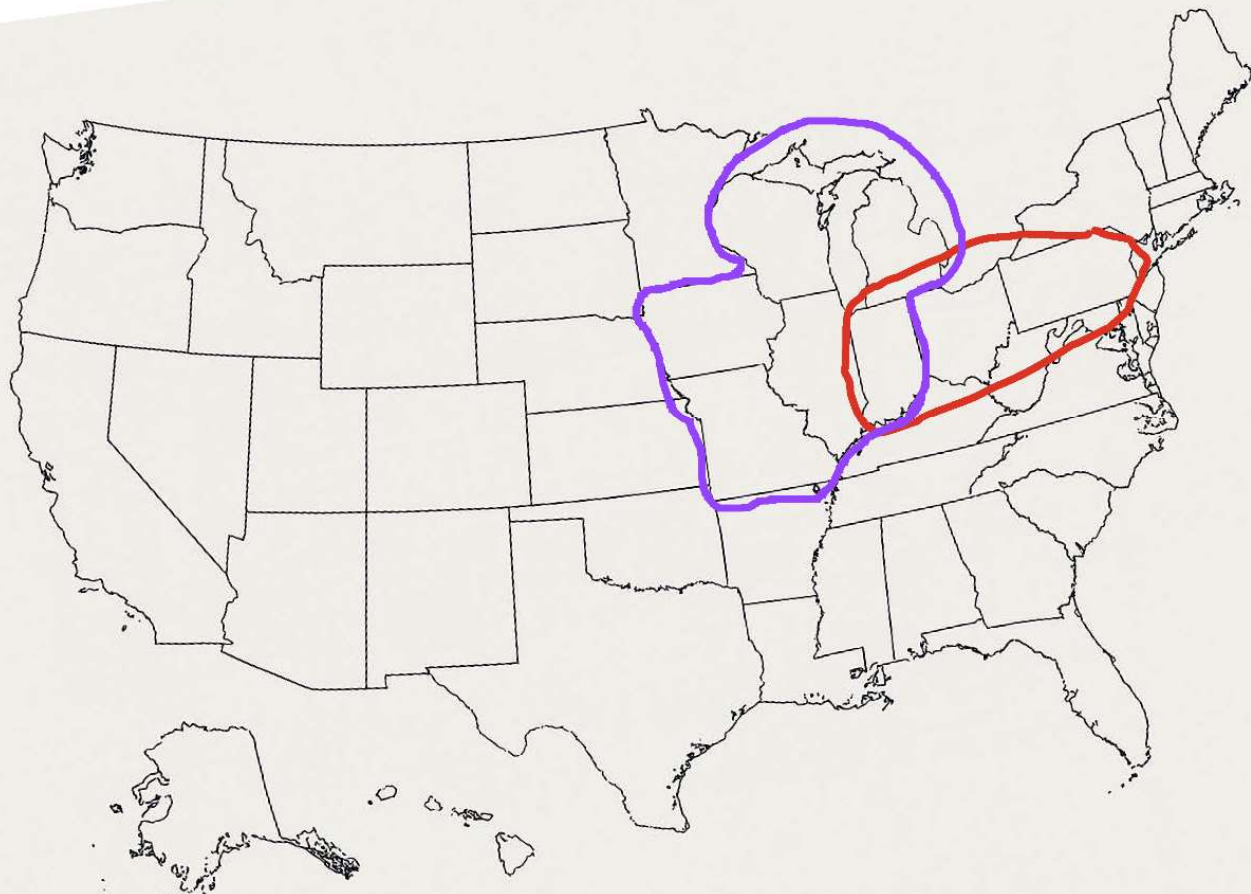
According to the Young Center, Elizabethtown College



Bontrager Births: The Top Five States

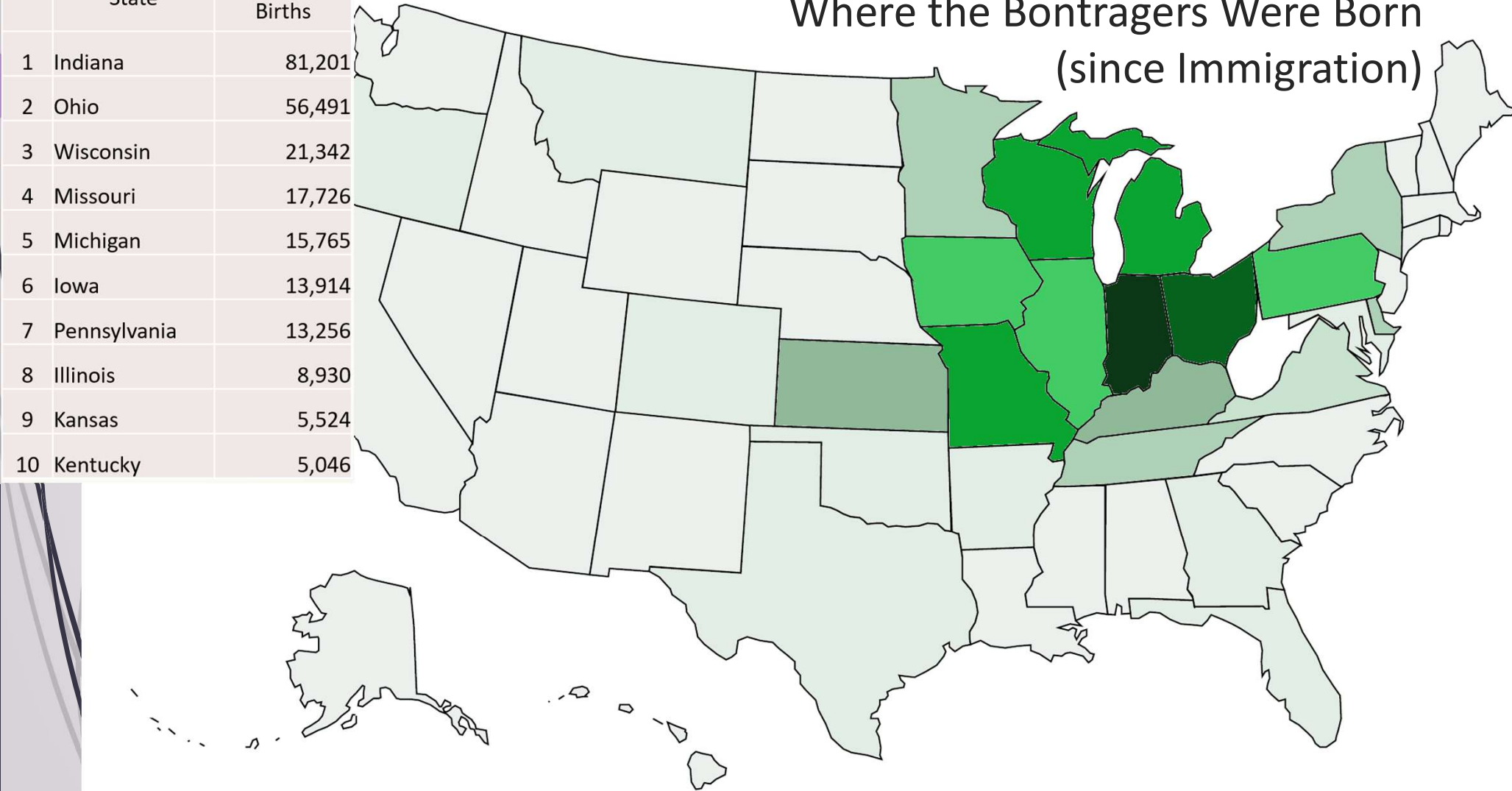


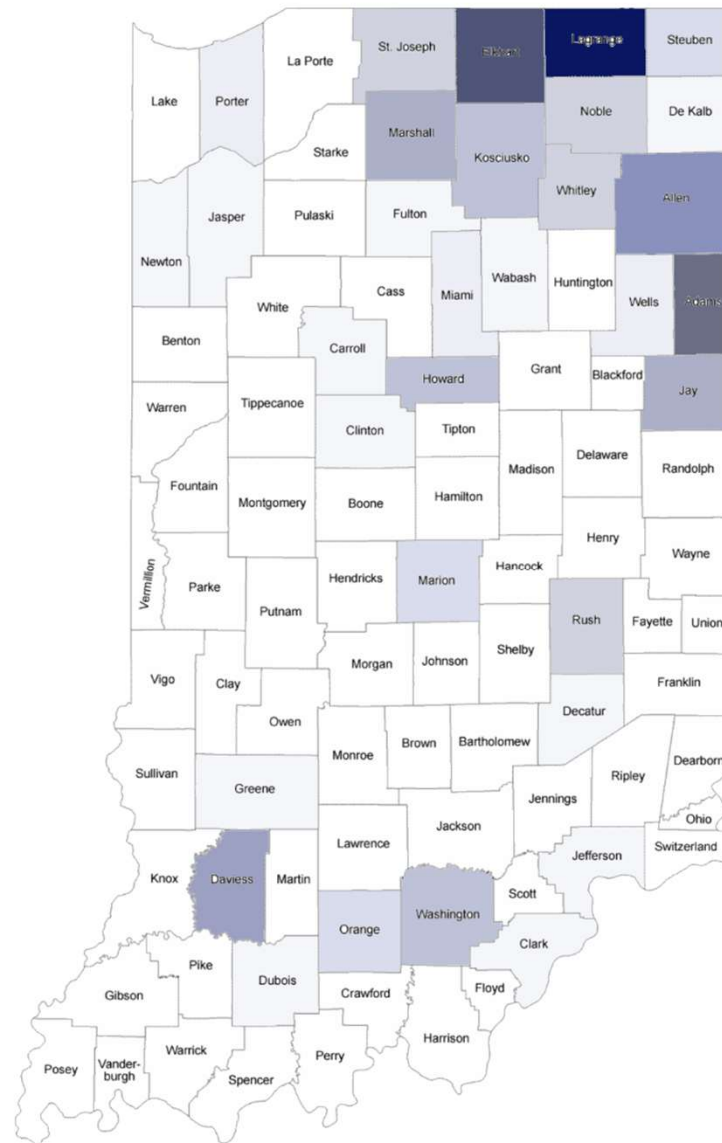
Bontrager Births as a Percentage of Amish



	State	Bontrager Births
1	Indiana	81,201
2	Ohio	56,491
3	Wisconsin	21,342
4	Missouri	17,726
5	Michigan	15,765
6	Iowa	13,914
7	Pennsylvania	13,256
8	Illinois	8,930
9	Kansas	5,524
10	Kentucky	5,046

Where the Bontragers Were Born (since Immigration)





Bontrager Births

Indiana Counties