

## Bio: Christian Germann

Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2019

According to the 1850 Census of Erie county New York, Christian German (sic) was born about the year 1800 in Switzerland. He was living in the community of Black Rock, which today is incorporated into the city of Buffalo New York. Christian Germann was a gunsmith, and in his household were his wife, Lana, and three young children - Susan, Alfred, and Lewis German. From family "lore" we understand that Christian's wife was Magdalena Zimmerman, and we also learn that Christian German died from pneumonia about the year 1854, when his little son Alfred was seven years old.



To this point no records have surfaced related to Christian Germann's Swiss hometown, or the timing of his immigration to America. But, there are some tantalizing clues that should be followed.

Christian Germann's wife, Magdalena Zimmerman, claims her birth about 1825 in France. Living next door to Christian and Magdalena Germann, in the 1850 census, is a George Zimmerman who was born in 1782 in France. He is a good candidate for Lanah's father.

Family stories provide the clue that Magdalena Zimmerman Germann, "eventually sold the farm and gunsmith tools, took her children and went to live with her brother, John Zimmerman, and his family in the state of Ohio." John

Zimmerman has been difficult to identify, but a Jacob Zimmerman, born about 1810 in France, does appear in the 1850 and 1860 census of Sandusky county Ohio, along with his wife and children.

Like Black Rock New York, Sandusky county Ohio, rests along the Lake Erie shoreline, but it is almost two hundred and fifty miles to the west. It appears that Jacob Zimmerman was a farmer, outside the town Fremont, the Sandusky county seat. In the 1860 census Jacob's family is not far from Henrich (Henry) Arnold Determan, the man that Magdalena Zimmerman Germann had married in 1858.

The 1860 census gives a clear picture of the recently combined Determan and Germann families. The family is shown as Arnold Determan, age 35; Magdelana Determan, age 34; Susan German, age 15, Alfred German, age 13; Lewis German age 11; Henry Determan, age 9 (son of Arnold); Mary Determan, age 1; and Lousia Determan, age 5 months.

A few years after the census was taken, young Alfred Germann went off to serve in the Union Army during the Civil War. He returned to his mother's family after the war, and by 1870 the Determans appear in the 1870 census of Belleville in St Clair county Illinois. Alfred Germann and his new bride are living next door. By 1880 Magdalena Zimmerman Germann Determan has died, and her husband has moved with their daughters to St Louis Missouri. Burial locations for Christian Germann, his wife Magdelana, and members of the Determan family have not been determined.

Do you want to know more?

[Link to Christian Germann in the database](#)

About the photo:

The Gunsmith Shop; Edgar Melville Ward, c.1890; located through Wikimedia commons.

**Bio of Christian Germann compiled by Pamela Hutchison Garrett for the Family Stories website; 2019.**