



Thom Mazetis is the keeper of Butterhof family history. Like Egg Harbor City, Butterhof's Shady Brook Farms.



Johann Butterhof

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THOM MAZETIS

City history continues to grow with generations of Butterhofs

By NANETTE GALLOWAY
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EGG HARBOR CITY — A year before Egg Harbor City celebrates its Sesquicentennial, Butterhof's Shady Brook Farms turned 150 years old.

Fourth-generation farmer Albert Butterhof carries on the tradition started by his great-grandfather Johann Butterhof, who emigrated here in 1853 from Bismarck, Germany on the ship "Elizabeth" with his wife Anna Fuelner Butterhof. Before settling in Egg Harbor City a year later, the Butterhofs spent time in New York City and Cincinnati, Ohio, Egg Harbor's "sister city," according to family historian Thom Mazetis. "Johann owned property on Fifth Avenue before it was fashionable," Mazetis said.

Listed on immigration documents as a farmer and butcher, Butterhof purchased 60 acres over the Mullica Twp. border, but lived in a house in "Cardonia's Garden," where the Wachovia Bank drive-through is now located.

Butterhofs were prudent "recyclers" by nature, and after Johann built a house on the farm, he turned it into a chicken coop. The wood frame house, which pre-dates the stately sandstone house that was first built as a winery, still stands.

"It started as a winery, but when prohibition came, they changed the name to Shady Brook Farm and we started making apple cider," Butterhof, 56, said.

Johann took a second place ribbon at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition for his Catawba grapes, Mazetis said.

Butterhof still farms the land that once produced eggs, chickens, sauerkraut and pork products, but now he raises apples and vegetables to sell in the roadside stand. "There's a lot of traffic, but the cars are not going by too fast because they are coming out of a 35-mile-per-hour zone. It's our location that keeps us going," he said.

A museum is also located on the property and local school children visit it during the harvest season.

Every year on the second Sunday in August, Butterhof welcomes to the family farm about 170 of his close and distant relatives for a family get-together. A second reunion is held at Renault Winery in the spring, which attracts an older crowd.

Mazetis was nominated to send out the invitations. "The picnic at the farm is a good way to get the young kids to learn their roots," he said. "The family is so large that I know my generation, but the next generation down may not be aware of their heritage. It allows us to keep up with who's having children."

Mazetis also took on the challenge of documenting the family lineage and has about 900 entries in his computer so far. "Three generations are completely done. It's the fourth and fifth that still need work, and remember, the fifth generation is still creating the sixth generation."

The family conducted a cemetery tour during a recent reunion. His cousin Elaine Butterhof Frick, who takes care of Johann's grave and marker, suggested it, he

said. "It's not

macabre, but a good way to remember aunts and uncles and recall their stories," he said.

He keeps indexed marble notebooks to record stories he hears by word of mouth. One of them includes a story that Katherine Kressmann Butterhof is somehow related to ace pilot Manfred von Richthofen, who is also known as the Red Baron. The Red Baron was shot down over France during World War I. Records show she attended a funeral in Germany at the same time von Richthofen was being honored with a hero's funeral. "Is it true they're related? Who knows," he said.

The Butterhofs also enjoyed political clout throughout the years, he



Anna Fuelner Butterhof

said. Several were Atlantic County freeholders, mayors of Mullica Twp. and Egg Harbor City and currently Jonathon Farrell is a city council member.

When you hear all the surnames connected to the Butterhof family, you realize how many people in town share the same roots. Butterhofs have infiltrated the Mohr, Weisbecker, Schairer, Thurston, Mazetis, Weiler, Roesch, Guenther, Norton,

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Recording history of the Butterhofs

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Scanga, Guerrieri and Farrell families, just to name a few. "It branches out through marriage to the Sorgs, Wimbergs and Fricks," Mazetis said.

"My grandmother always told me, if you're German and from Egg Harbor City, and you've been here for 75 years, somehow you're connected to the Butterhofs."

Mazetis has recording family history for the last 10 years, a task his mother Louisa bestowed on him. He collects Census data, obituaries, wills, funeral cards and Mormon Church documents, and makes notations in his Family TreeMaker software program. "Sometimes it's a pain in the neck, but overall it's fun to do. I meet so many people and lots of relatives," he said. "As long as people keep having children, it will be a never-ending project."