The Besse family history is a typical migration story, which happened many times in Europe in the past. Since the 17th century, there have been emigrations from Switzerland to Belgium, Germany, England, Holland and France as well as from the Palatinate to United States in the 19th century. After the Thirty Years' War, the Swiss Isaac Besse immigrated into the German duchy Palatinate-Zweibrücken in 1682. However, it was not a workman who immigrated, but the son of a Swiss notary from the French-speaking canton Vaud. As the nobly appointed Mayor (Stadtschultheiß), Isaac Besse held a public office in the town of Hornbach near Zweibrücken (Two Bridges/Palatinate). This academic study includes numerous old documents from different archives which provide interesting insight into early modern times. The documents tell of the imposing inheritance from the Governor Francis Best (François Besse) from the Island of Jersey/England, the quarrel over a dowry, French lifestyle and more. On account of the good quality of the documentary material in the Swiss archives, the Besse/Paillard family tree can be traced back over 21 generations until 1397. At the period of the French Revolution Carl/Charles Besse went to Tholey as a forester; he is the ancestor of the numerous families named Besse who live in Saarland today. The book contains 13 chapters. 5 chapters inform about the areas where the family lived: Sainte-Croix, Hornbach, Zweibrücken, Tholey, Saarland and the emigration to America. A register of names of people and names of places completes the book.

New in the 2nd edition 2008
- Marriage of Susanne and Sophia Besse, daughters of the Hornbach Mayor Otto Friedrich Besse to the brothers Stommel from Cologne, descendants of a old knights dynasty from Jülich near Cologne,
- Advices to the death of Francis Best in London from the archives of the Bank of England Will Extracts,
- Marriage of Friederika Besse and the Zweibrücker master builder Christian Krumm,
- Ludwig Besse from Zweibrücken and his career path to a treasurer in Passau/Bavaria; studies of his sons at the university in Landshut and the Bavarian patriotic song “My Home”,
- The life of the Besse family in Zweibrücken from 1801 until 1830 according to the Zweibrücken notary files,
- Advocate Christian Zink, husband of Friederika Besse,
- Death of Forest council man Dippel in 1789 and guardianship invoice for his children by Kabinettssekretär Friedrich Besse according to files from the Speyer archives,
- Notary and Justice of the Peace Ludwig Besse in Annweiler and emigration of his children to America according the Annweiler and Bergzabern Notary files,
- Map of the Kastellaun town wood Hoeberik copied by forester Carl Besse,
- Carl Besse's widow and his sons Peter and Philipp Besse in Tholey in the 19th century with emigration to Brasil according the Tholey notary files,
- Some supplements in the chapter 6, emigration to America.

New in the 3rd edition 2010
- Seal of Isaac Besse from 1690 (p. 32 and p. 50),
- Information to Stadtschultheiß Otto Christian Schuel (pp. 49-50),
- Appeal of Mayor Lippes against the Justice of the Peace Besse (pp. 165-167),
- Lithograph of an Annweiler scenery of the Three-Castle Group from Ludwig Besse (p. 178),
- Immigration of Emilie Besse and Eugen Schleip to North America (pp. 243-244).
Story of an Immigrant
Chronicles of the Besse Family from Butternut republished

Butternut. The German authors PD Dr. Maria Besse and Thomas Besse from Riegelsberg/Saar in Germany have published the chronicles of the Besse family under the title “The Mayor of Hornbach Isaac Besse (1652-1725), Ancestors and Descendants” as second edition. The new book is being promoted by John and Greg Besse, the former und today President of the BESSE FOREST PRODUCTS GROUP COMPANIES in Gladstone, Michigan.

The name Besse is fairly well known in Butternut. Henry Besse Sr., a German immigrant, was one of the first men to settle in the area in 1877 and one of the founding fathers of Butternut.

The Besse family history is a typical migration story, which happened many times in Europe in the past: Since the 17th century, there have been emigrations from Switzerland to Belgium, Germany, England, Holland and France as well as from the Palatinate to the United States in the 19th century.

After the Thirty Years’ War, the Swiss Isaac Besse immigrated into the German duchy Palatinate-Zweibrücken in 1682. However, it was not a workman who immigrated, but the son of a Swiss notary from the French-speaking canton of Vaud. As the nobly appointed Mayor (Stadtschultheiss), Isaac Besse held a public office in the town of Hornbach near Zweibrücken (Two Bridges/ Palatinate).

Isaac Besse’s grandson Henry Besse from Annweiler, Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany emigrated to the United States in 1849 and served as postmaster in Butternut as did his son and grandson. Henrys father Ludwig Besse was Notary and Justice of the Peace in Annweiler and Bergzabern from 1805-1836 and lost a large inheritance deposited in the Bank of London presumably when Napoleon established a economic system against England in 1809/10. Then the agent in England gave the family instead genuine bank notes only copies and appointed the money to his own use.

This academic study includes numerous old documents from different archives which provide interesting insight into early modern times. The documents tell of the imposing inheritance from the Governor Francis Best (François Besse) from the Island of Jersey/England, the quarrel over a dowry, French lifestyle, a brief history to Butternut by Ruth Gear and lost of information to the Emigration to America contributed by Linda Senne from Butternut. On account of the good quality of the documentary material in the Swiss archives, the Besse family tree can be traced back over 21 generations to 1397. The second edition contains about 60 pages more than the first and the authors did not add each scrap of paper discovered in the Archives but only the bests.

Coat of Arms: The story of the Swiss Immigrant Isaac Besse - here you can see the family coat of arms - is described in the new book of the Besse family.