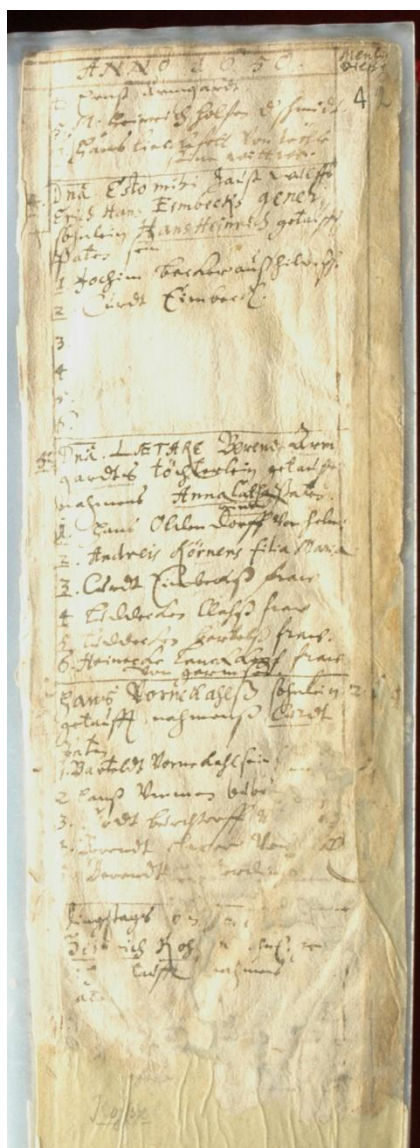


VORNTAHL

VORNKAHL

A Record of the Family Name, 1406-1906



Collected, transcribed, abstracted and written by
Roy A. Johnson and Ulrich H. Schröder
1998-2017

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Shown on the title page is the earliest complete entry in the Nettlingen Kirchenbuch (1649-1735) in which the Vornkahl name appears. The entry, fourth from the top of the page, records the birth of Curdt Vornekahl, son of Hans Vornekahl, in the year 1650. The first of five gevattern (godparents/witnesses) is Bartoldt Vornekahl. Note: the book page is enclosed in a plastic covering.

In Memory of:

Ronald Robert Fornkahl

Lydia Johnson

Magdalene Schröder

Earnest Melburn “Mel” Vornkahl

Henry Lee Vornkahl

Contents

Figures	page xii
Acknowledgement	xv
Preface	xvi
Introduction and use of this book	1
Alphabetical list of Vornkahls in Nettlingen, Groß Himstedt, Hannover, Helmersen, Hoheneggelsen, Dingelbe, Nordassel, and Hackenstedt	5
Spouses of Vornkahl men and women of Nettlingen and neighboring villages	77
Genealogy charts 1-7B (Nettlingen and neighboring villages)	83
Alphabetical list of Vornkahls in Berel, Adenstedt, Barbecke, Bochenen, Bruchmachtersen, Gifhorn, Grasdorf, Hohenassel, Holle, Langlingen, Lesse, Luttrum, Müden an der Aller, Sillium, Söhlde, Sottrum, and Westerlinde	111
Spouses of Vornkahl men and women of Berel and neighboring villages	128
Genealogy charts 8A-8B (Berel and neighboring villages)	129
Alphabetical list of Vornkahls in the United States of America	135
Spouses of Vornkahl men and women in the U.S.A.	158
Genealogy charts 9-16 (U.S.A. Vornkahls)	160
Accounts of Vornkahl families in the U.S.A. Andreas Christian Vornkahl (Andrew Vornkahl), West Point, Illinois	173
Carl Henry Vornkahl and Else Frieda Minna (Vornkahl) Hesse	184
Conrad Vornkahl, Cape Girardeau, Missouri	185
Ernst Vornkahl, Grant Township, Clark County, Missouri	207
Ernst Adolph Friedrich Wilhelm Vornkahl (William F. Vornkahl), Westport, Connecticut	214
Johann Heinrich Vornkahl (Henry Vornkahl), Millheim, Texas	216
Johann Heinrich Christian Vornkahl (Henry Vornkahl), Primrose, Iowa	220
Johann Heinrich Christian and Ernst Vornkahl's family in Germany	236
Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Vornkahl (Henry Vornkahl), Warsaw, Illinois	261
John A. Vornkahl, Carlinville, Illinois	267
Paul Vornkahl and Paul Hermann Vornkahl, Chicago, Illinois	271
Vornkahl stories and photographs of Germany	272
Heinrich Schrader – Legends and truths the old folks told	272
The Friedrich Vornkahls – Bakers in Sehle	278
Vornkahls and Bocks in Berel	282
Auguste Johanne Emilie (Vornkahl) Berking	286
Miscellaneous Photographs	287
Vornkahls in history, 1406-1906	291
The Holy Roman Empire, Bishoprics, and Duchies	292
Duchy of Saxony and Duchy of Braunschweig-Lüneburg	294
Bishopric of Hildesheim	295
An Incident in 1400	296
Vornkahls before 1649	297
Vornkahls in Berel	301
Johannes Vorncalius, Lutheran Pastor	304
Kurt Vernekale – Rogue or Robin Hood?	307
Demise of Henry Vornkahl, a Railway Worker in Australia	307

Johann Vornekahl, Mercenary in the British Army.....	308
The Memorable Baptism of Margarethe Vornkahl of Nordassel	309
Three Tales of Marriage in the Old Days	312
Michael's Story: A Marriage Makes the Pastor Happy.....	312
Heinrich Georg's Story: The Engagement Trap.....	319
Maria's Story: Proving Your Husband is Dead Before Remarrying.....	320
Vornkahls in Poland.....	322
Appendix 1. Records of the von Saldern Enfeoffments of 1494 and 1629.....	323
Appendix 2. Record of Enfeoffments by St. Michael's Abbey of Hildesheim, 1613.....	332
Appendix 3. Enfeoffment Document of 1768	335
Appendix 4. Documents for which Johannis Vorncalius is Author, Coauthor, or Contributor	336
Sources and References.....	343
Nettlingen births, church book, 1649-1735	343
Nettlingen births, church book, 1735-1802	365
Nettlingen births, church book, 1803-1834	399
Nettlingen births, church book, 1835-1852	437
Nettlingen births, church book, 1853-1902	455
Nettlingen marriages, church book, 1649-1735	479
Nettlingen marriages, church book, 1735-1802	481
Nettlingen marriages, church book, 1803-1838	483
Nettlingen marriages, church book, 1839-1852	488
Nettlingen marriages, church book, 1853-1907	490
Nettlingen deaths, church book, 1649-1735	499
Nettlingen deaths, church book, 1735-1802	502
Nettlingen deaths, church book, 1803-1838	509
Nettlingen deaths, church book, 1839-1852	516
Nettlingen deaths, church book, 1853-1907	518
Nettlingen civil records, 1808-1815	529
Nettlingen data, Dehart/Hesse	551
Nettlingen data, Friedrich-Karl Krental	552
Spouses of Nettlingen Vornkahls	553
Ahnentafelen for Anna, Otto, and Robert Vornkahl.....	560
Genealogy charts from the Archives of Landkreis Hildesheim, Werner Beermann	560
Hoheneggelsen births, marriages, and deaths, church records, 1800-1928	561
Hoheneggelsen civil records, 1808-1815	569
Dingelbe parish records, 1651-1855	571
Dingelbe/Nettlingen data, Ruther/Sturdivant	575
Nordassel, Hohenassel, Burgdorf, and Luttrum data, church records, 1650-1812	575
Nordassel civil records, 1808-1813	580
Sarstedt data	582
Berel births, church records, 1661-1856	583
Berel marriages, church records, 1661-1865	592
Berel deaths, church records, 1661-1761	595
Berel civil records, 1808-1813	597
Bruchmachtersen data, Günther Freutel	600
Bruchmachtersen data, Ulrich Schröder	603
Berel data, Ulrich Schröder	603

Müden-an-der-Aller and Wehrstedt data, Andreas Schröder	603
Wehrstedt data	608
Grasdorf data, Günther Hartmann	609
Hackenstedt	610
Miscellaneous data, Bettrum, Burgdorf, Gr. Escherde, Hannover, Kl. Lobke, Luttrum, Söhlde, Sottrum, Westerlinde; Amsterdam (The Netherlands)	611
Handels- und Gewerbe-Adressbuch der Provinz Hannover, des Grossherzogthums Oldenburg und des Freistaats Bremen, 1898	616
Einwohnerbuch des Stadt- und Landkreises Celle für 1927/28	618
Data from Holle, Sillium, and Bockenem	618
Fritz Gruhne, "Auswandererlisten des ehemaligen Herzogtums Braunschweig ohne Stadt Braunschweig und Landkreis Holzminden, 1846-1871"	619
Lesse/Gr. Vahlberg	620
Hoheneggelsen data, Friedrich Lassalle	621
Groß Himstedt	623
Gifhorn	625
Adenstedt	625
Berel, additional data	626
U.S.A. Vornkahls: Sources and References	
Andreas Christian Vornkahl (Andrew Vornkahl), West Point, Illinois	629
Carl Henry Vornkahl and Else Frieda Minna (Vornkahl) Hesse	630
Conrad Vornkahl, Cape Girardeau, Missouri	630
Ernst Vornkahl, Grant Township, Clark County, Missouri	634
Ernst Adolph Friedrich Wilhelm Vornkahl (William F. Vornkahl), Westport, Connecticut	635
Johann Heinrich Vornkahl (Henry Vornkahl), Millheim, Texas	635
Johann Heinrich Christian Vornkahl (Henry Vornkahl), Primrose, Iowa	636
Johann Heinrich Christian and Ernst Vornkahl's family in Germany	640
Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Vornkahl (Henry Vornkahl), Warsaw, Illinois	641
John A. Vornkahl, Carlinville, Illinois	642
Paul Vornkahl and Paul Hermann Vornkahl, Chicago, Illinois	644
Vornkahl Stories and Photographs of Germany: Sources	644
References to Vornkahls before 1649	644
The Memorable Baptism of Margarethe Vornkahl of Nordassel	648
Three Tales of Marriage in the Old Days	648
Vornkahls in Poland	649
Enfeoffment Documents: Endnotes	649
Glossary	651

Figures

1. Four Vornkahl generations.....	page 173
2. Detail from 1874 St. Albans township plat map showing site of Andrew Vornkahl's land	174
3. Charles Henry and Emma Weghenkel Vornkahl	176
4. Charles Vornkahl family	178
5. Vornkahl family and others.....	179
6. Maud Vornkahl.....	179
7. Lulu Vornkahl.....	179
8. Clara and May Vornkahl.....	179
9. Daniel and Anna (Vornkahl) Mensendick	180
10. May Vornkahl	180
11. John and Maud (Vornkahl) Brunenn, 1910.....	180
12. Earl, Leo, and Mavis Brunenn, 1924	180
13. John, Mavis, Leo, Maud, and Earl Brunenn.....	181
14. Copy of 1881 offer of land for sale to C.H. Vornkal	182
15. Grave marker for Charles and Emma (Weghenkel) Vornkahl	183
16. Hanover Lutheran Church, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.....	186
17. Index entry for record of land purchase by Conrad Fernkahl in 1854	187
18. Satellite photograph of Section 5, Randol Township.....	188
19. Detail of 1901 plat map showing Section 5, Randol Township.	189
20. Detail of 1930 plat map showing Section 5, Randol Township.....	189
21. Township plat map, 1930, Randol Township, Cape Girardeau County, Missouri	190
22. Entry in the Hackenstedt parish book recording the death of Johann Heinrich Vornkahl.....	191
23. Entry in the Hackenstedt parish book recording the death of Johanne (Göcken) Vornkahl.....	191
24. Christian and Wilhelmina (Fornkahl) Lowes and daughter, Wilhelmina	193
25. Ernst Vornkahl.....	208
26. Elizabeth (Rikeberg) Vornkahl.....	208
27. Original house on the Ernst Vornkahl farm, Grant Township, Missouri.....	208
28. Plat map from 1930 of the western part of Grant Township, Clark County, Missouri.....	209
29. William Herman Vornkahl	210
30. Sadie Brewster Vornkahl	210
31. Ernst and Elizabeth Vornkahl and family	210
32. Elmer Ernest and Bertie Ann (Clifton) Vornkahl and son Marvin Eston	211
33. Shucking fodder on Vornkahl farm.....	211
34. Ada and Effie Vornkahl.....	212
35. Aerial view of Vornkahl farm.....	212
36. Grave marker for Ernst and Elisabeth Vornkahl.....	213
37. St. Nicolai church, Gifhorn.....	214
38. Anna (Riniker) Vornkahl, Henry Vornkahl, Christine Marie Friederike (Perski) Vornkahl.....	217
39. Sam, Walter, Henry, Jr., Charles, Henry, Anna (Riniker), and Irma Vornkahl.....	218
40. Henry and Minna (Schumann) Vornkahl	219
41. Aerial photograph of Vornkahl farm taken in 1950's	220
42. Partial plat map of Harrison township, Lee County, Iowa, showing the Henry Vornkahl farm in 1874	221
43. Primrose Evangelical church, destroyed by fire in 1965.....	222
44. Seven of Henry and Wilhelmina Vornkahl's children	223
45. August F. Wirsig.....	224
46. Johann Gottlieb Wirsig.....	224
47. Frederick Wilhelm Vornkahl, about 1900	225
48. Maria Dorothea Schweer.....	225

49. Daughters of Frederick and Maria Vornkahl: Sophia, Emilie, Emma, and Maria	226
50. Christofer and Sophia (Vornkahl) Refior	226
51. August and Emma (Vornkahl) Loges.....	227
52. Frederick and Maria (Vornkahl) Krebill	227
53. Otto and Emilie (Vornkahl) Hennies	227
54. George and Julia (Vornkahl) Schrepfer.....	227
55. Frederick Vornkahl and family.....	228
56. Frederick and Anna (Kluender) Vornkahl.....	230
57. Matilda Vornkahl	230
58. Henry Reitz	230
59. Matilda (Vornkahl) Reitz	230
60. Henry Reitz family	231
61. Adam and Ellenora (Reitz) Gack	231
62. Frederick William and Mabel Kansas (South) Reitz	231
63. Edwin O. Reitz.....	232
64. Wilhelmina (Vornkahl) Bonnell.....	232
65. Paul H. and Ellenora A. (Vornkahl) Wirsig.....	233
66. Grave marker for Conrad Grava, father of Wilhelmina (Greve) Vornkahl	235
67. Grave for Heinrich Vornkahl	235
68. Grave marker for Juliana Greve, mother of Wilhelmina (Greve) Vornkahl	235
69. Paternal ancestors of Henry and Ernst Vornkahl (chart)	237
70. Baptism of Johann Joachim Friedrich Conrad Vornkahl recorded in the Dingelbe parish record book.....	238
71. Aerial photograph of Vornkahl farmstead No. 35 at Weidhof 10, Hoheneggelsen	239
72. House at Wiedhof 10, Hoheneggelsen, on the site of the old Vornkahl farmstead	240
73. Else Lehrke, Lotti Othmar, and Henni Brandes	241
74. Postcard enclosed with letter from Albert Rüter to Sophia (Vornkahl) Refior in 1948	242
75. Chart illustrating two cousins of Henry and Ernst and the children who became residents in Hoheneggelsen.....	243
76. Nr. 118, Hoheneggelsen. Presently the Heimat Museum.....	244
77. House Nr. 139, Hoheneggelsen	244
78. Photograph showing part of the page on which the birth of Hanß Matthias Vornkahl is recorded.....	245
79. Map of Helmersen, about 1830, hand-drawn by Ernst Hüpsel.....	246
80. Photograph showing part of the page on which the birth in 1711 of Henni Matthias Vornekahl is recorded	248
81. Detail from Nettlingen Kirchenbuch 1649-1735 in which the birth of Henni, son of Curdt, is recorded	249
82. Hermann Brandes in Hoheneggelsen.....	255
83. Cover of Ehestiftung for Hanß Matthias Vornkahl and Marie Dorothee Kiel	260
84. Notice of the death of Henry Vornkahl, son of Henry and Marie Vornkahl of Warsaw, Illinois.	263
85. Meta (Jacke) Vorn Kahl, Erwin Fred Vorn Kahl, Jr., Lillian (Kallas) Vorn Kahl, Erwin Fred Vornkahl, Sr	265
86. Grave marker for Frederick Vornkahl, Oakland Cemetery, Warsaw, Illinois.....	266
87. Grave marker for Henry, Marie, and George Vornkahl, Oakland Cemetery, Warsaw, Illinois.....	266
88. Seige of Vicksburg, 4 Jul 1863. Lithograph (1888)	267
89. Headstone for John A. and Conradine Vornkahl, Carlinville City Cemetery	269
90. Typical 19 th century homestead, Flettmar	273
91. St. Petri church, Müden on Aller	274
92. Wedding party for marriage of Heinrich Schrader and Anna Köhler, 5 May 1922.....	275
92.1 Heinrich Schrader with work group	276
93. Heinrich Schrader, 1970	276
94. Great grandparents (Friedrich Vornkahl).....	278
95. Grandfather Friedrich Vornkahl	278
96. Lina (Kreibohm) Vornkahl	279
97. Friedrich and Marie (Plesse) Vornkahl.....	279
98. Friedrich Vornkahl	279
99. Hanna (Warnecke) Vornkahl	279

100. Heinrich Vornkahl (1841-1913) and Friedrich Vornkahl (1867-1955)	280
101. Vornkahl house, Sehde	280
102. Friedrich Vornkahl (1867-1955) with firewood for bakery.....	281
103. Three generations of Friedrichs, grandfather, author, father.....	281
104. Hermann Bock, 1676-1949	282
105. Hermann Bock, 1903-1992.....	282
106. Aerial view of Berel, 2014	282
107. House Nr. 36 (1930), ancestral Vornkahl homestead in Berel	283
108. Part of farmstead at Nr. 36 in Berel, 2007	283
109. Occupants of Berel farmsteads in 1540.....	284
110. Occupants of Berel farmsteads in 1743.....	285
111. Heinrich and Emilie (Vornkahl) Berking	286
112. Heinrich and Emilie Berking with children	286
113. Unk.; Heinrich and Anna (Berking) Giesemann & children; Emma Sophie Christine (Vornkahl) Hantelmann	286
114. Emilie (Vornkahl) Berking, daughter Ida, and son-in-law Ludwig John	286
115. Emilie (Vornkahl) Berking with granddaughter	286
116. Historic (1581) Wassermühle (watermill) of Nettlingen.....	287
117. “Steins Vornkahl” farmstead, Nettlingen.....	287
118. 1683 baptism record for Heinrich Georg Vornekahl.....	288
119. Plaque marking the site where Klein Berel once existed	289
120. Oldest house in the village of Berel, dating to 1500s	289
121. St. Marienkirche, Nettlingen.....	290
122. St. Michaeliskirche, Dingelbe.....	290
123. St. Martinkirche, Hoheneggelsen	290
124. Ev. –luth. Kirche, Berel	290
125. Detail from road map (2000) showing Hildesheim and vicinity	291
126. Central Europe, 919-1125 (map)	292
127. Stylized map of the Holy Roman Empire of 1400	293
128. Detail from map of Figure 127 showing Duchy of Braunschweig-Lüneburg and Bishopric of Hildesheim	294
129. Old map of the Duchy of Braunschweig-Lüneburg.....	295
130. Detail from old map of the Bishopric of Hildesheim	296
131. Bell of Heyersum church tower (1645) with inscription including name of Heinrich Vornkahl.....	306
132. Entry in Nordassel Kirchenbuch for birth and baptism of Margarethe Vornekahl, 26 Mar 1711	311
133. Marriage of Johann Conrad Vornkahl and Ilse Lucie Maseberg recorded in Nettlingen Kirchenbuch, 1813	315
134. The birth of Anne Margarethe Vornkahl as recorded in the Berel Kirchenbuch, 1665	316
135. Pastor’s comments concerning conception of child out of wedlock, 1665.....	317
136. No caption	318
137. Pastor’s comments concerning conception of second child out of wedlock, 1669.....	318
138. Marriage of Heinrich Vornekahl and Ilsa Büring, Berel Kirchenbuch, 1706.....	319
139. Marriage of Maria Vornkahl and Everd Marten, Berel Kirchenbuch, 1666	321
140. Plan of Thorn from 17 th century engraving by Merian.....	323
141. Enfeoffment Document of 1768.....	334
142. Gratulatio Musarum of 1579 title page	336
143. The first four pages of Gratulatio Musarum.....	337
144. Narratio Historica, title page.....	338
145. The epigram of Narratio Historica by Johannes Vornkalus	339
146. Cantica Germanica elegantissima, title page	340
147. Cantica Germanica elegantissima, introductory page.....	341
148. Kothsasshof Nr. 11; Luttrum chapel	615

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Seit Anbeginn dieses Projekts hat unsere Forschung stark von der Beteiligung anderer Mitglieder der erweiterten Familie Vornkahl und weiterer Personen durch den Austausch von Informationen, genealogischen Daten, Fotos und Geschichten profitiert. Wir führen diese Mitwirkenden nachfolgend auf und möchten unseren wärmsten Dank für ihre Beiträge zum Ausdruck bringen. Zusätzlich haben wir manche Beiträge dort noch einmal hervorgehoben, wo sie im Buch auftreten.

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Preface

The German surname, Vornkahl, is very unusual. The origins of the name remain obscure but the name is found as early as 1406 in Nettlingen and 1540 in Berel, two neighboring villages in the state of Lower Saxony (Niedersachsen), Germany. The name is found consistently in Nettlingen from that early date to the present time whereas in Berel the name disappears after about 1840. Other nearby villages in which the name has been found are Hoheneggelsen, Dingelbe, Nordassel, Groß Himstedt, Bruchmachtersen, Bettrum, Hackenstedt, Grasdorf, and Heersum. The appearance and concentration of the name in Nettlingen lead to the assumption that the name originated in this village. Because it is rare, a genealogical study of the name is feasible.

Both of the authors, Roy A. Johnson (RAJ) and Ulrich H. Schröder (“Ulli”), have Vornkahl ancestors. In the case of RAJ, his last ancestor with the name Vornkahl was a great-grandmother, Mathilda Vornkahl. Her surname changed with her marriage to Henry Reitz in 1876. Mathilda was the daughter of Johann Heinrich Christian Vornkahl who was born in Dingelbe, Germany, in 1821 and emigrated from Germany to the United States of America in 1846. In the case of Ulli, his last ancestor to have the name was a great-great-grandmother, Christine Sophie Vornkahl. Her surname changed with her marriage to Johann Heinrich Meyer in 1843. Christine Sophie was the daughter of Carl Heinrich Vornkahl and was born in Berel, Germany, in 1821.

The authors met via the Internet in 1998; Ulli was exploring the fate of Vornkahls who emigrated from Germany while RAJ was beginning a search for Vornkahl ancestors. A continuous dialog, primarily via e-mail, has followed and a small network of individuals interested in Vornkahl genealogy and history has been established. In addition to expanding our individual genealogy records, two goals have guided our research on the Vornkahl name. One has been to document the fate of those Vornkahls who emigrated to the United States. The second, related, goal has been to determine the genealogical history of the Vornkahl name in Germany.

At first, we found our information in sources such as the U.S. census records, the archives of the Evangelical church in Germany, and microfilm available via the Family History Centers of the church of Latter Day Saints (LDS). Then, in September, 2007, the authors together with Friedrich Vornkahl met in Nettlingen with the goal of obtaining a photographic copy of the Nettlingen parish records of births, marriages, and deaths for the period of 1649 to 1902/7. Permission for this project was graciously granted by the parish pastor. With the photographic copies of the Nettlingen records in hand, we abstracted all data concerning persons with the Vornkahl surname in the period of 1649-1902/7. This abstracted data is found in the Sources section of this book.

In addition to the data from Nettlingen, we have been aided in obtaining data from the village of Berel by Eike Bock, the village archivist and a Vornkahl descendent. Additional data from the parish records of Hoheneggelsen have been provided by Andreas Schröder, Carina Johnson, and Friedrich Lassalle. In the United States, much of the Vornkahl data has been provided by Carol Sturdivant, Earnest Vornkahl, Ronald Vornkahl, and Joe Vosage. The contributors of other data are acknowledged throughout the book.

From this collection of data we have compiled three lists that include all the Vornkahls we have found between 1649 and 1902/7. One list is for the Vornkahls of Nettlingen and neighboring villages, a second list is for the Vornkahls of Berel and neighboring villages, and the third list is for the Vornkahls of the United States. Although there is little doubt that the Vornkahls of these communities are related, we have found it helpful to list the three groups separately. Whenever possible we have searched for genealogical relationships among the persons in our lists. The results are shown in a series of genealogy charts following the lists of Vornkahl names.

Readers are welcome to use this data in their own compilations of genealogy. We encourage users to cite the sources of the data as given in the Sources section of this book.

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January 16, 2017