

Henry Vornkahl, Millheim, Austin County, Texas
a.k.a.

Johann Heinrich Vornkahl, Nettlingen, Germany

Photographs courtesy of Susan Vornkahl Paige

Henry Vornkahl emigrated from Germany in January, 1849,^[2976] and settled in the community of Millheim in Austin County, Texas. Earlier German immigrants had settled in this area in 1831-34.^[2977] Judging from the 1850 U.S. census, Henry worked briefly as a ranch hand for the horse wrangler, Ernst Clayberg, in Austin County.^[2978] Soon thereafter, he bought his own ranch as described in a 2002 press release. The press release announced that the Vornkahl family was to be honored for 150 years of ownership of the Vornkahl Ranch in Austin County, Texas, under the Family Land Heritage program of the Texas Department of Agriculture:^[2979]

“Enticed by freedom and open country, Heinrich Vornkahl left Germany and came to Texas, and the Vornkahl ranch began with approximately 150 acres that Heinrich purchased from David and Rebecca Portis in 1851.

The founder was a member of the Cat Spring Agricultural Society and donated land for the Millheim Harmony Hall. He raised everything from pecans to corn, cotton, hay and silage, in addition to cattle and operating a dairy.

Through the generations, the Vornkahl family moved into the business side of agriculture. For example, Walter Vornkahl, who inherited the ranch in 1923, managed a cotton gin in Millheim as well as a blacksmith shop and tractor repair service. He even assumed responsibility for Millheim school bus maintenance.

Thanks to the hard work, through the generations, of families like the Vornkahls, Texas is the agricultural giant that it is today.”

Henry Vornkahl was born in the village of Nettlingen in the province of Niedersachsen, Germany. His birth in Nettlingen is recorded in the parish records on 15 Apr 1917.^[957,2980] He was the unehelich (illegitimate) son of Johanne Christine Henriette Vornkahl and Johann Silvester Conrad Strube, both of Nettlingen, and his recorded name was Johann Heinrich Vornkahl.^[957] His maternal ancestors are shown in a family tree outlined in Chart 1. Interestingly, his mother in 1819 married a man also named Johann Heinrich Vornkahl (see Chart 4) and had at least three more children.

As noted above, by 1851 Henry was the proprietor of his own farm^[2979] and on 15 Jul 1852^[2981] he married Christine Maria Friederike Persky.^[2982] Christine Persky was the daughter of Christian Heinrich Persky and Sophia Epke and was born 18 Aug 1830 in Belitz, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Germany.^[2982] Henry died 4 Mar 1894 and Christine died 12 Oct 1903.^[2981]

The listing of Henry Vornkahl’s family in the 1860 U.S. census has an unusual entry. First names were not recorded so we see only an entry for C. Vornkahl appearing after the couple’s three children. C. Vornkahl was a female of age 60 and of German birth. A possible explanation is that this was Henry’s mother visiting at the time of the census; she may have gone by the name Christine Vornkahl. It is not a perfect fit because she should have been seventy-four years old in 1860.

Henry and Christine’s descendents in the United States are listed below in a traditional genealogical register report and can also be seen in Chart 14.



Figure 38. L. to r., Anna (Riniker) Vornkahl, Henry Vornkahl, Christine Marie Friederike (Perski) Vornkahl.

Descendants of Johann Heinrich Vornkahl

Generation 1

1. **Johann Heinrich Vornkahl**-1. He was born on 15 Apr 1817 in Nettlingen, Niedersachsen, Germany.^[1957,2980] He died on 4 Mar 1894.^[2981]

Notes for Johann Heinrich Vornkahl: Johann Heinrich (Henry) Vornkahl entered the United States on 10 Jan 1846 as stated in his letter of intent to file for citizenship (filed 12 Sep 1849). He was granted citizenship on 9 Nov 1853. - Henry Lee Vornkahl

In the 1850 U.S. Census,^[2978] Henry Vornkahl (Varnkahl) is enumerated in the household of Ernst and Louise Clayberg of Austin County, Texas. Clayberg was described as a "horse raiser" and Henry is listed as a laborer.

Christine Maria Friederike Perski was the daughter of Christian Heinrich Perski and Sophia Epke. She was born on 18 Aug 1830 in Belitz, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Germany.^[2981] She died on 12 Oct 1903.^[2981]

Johann Heinrich Vornkahl and Christine Maria Friederike Perski were married on 15 Jul 1852 in Millheim, Texas.^[2981]



Figure 39. L. to r.: Sam, Walter, Henry, Jr., Charles, Henry, Anna (Riniker), Irma, and Annie Vornkahl.

Children:

2.
 - i. **Louise Lina Vornkahl.** She was born on 29 Nov 1855 and died on 23 Jun 1898.^[2982]
 - ii. **A. Vornkahl.** He was born 1858.^[2983]
 - iii. **Henrietta Vornkahl.** She was born Abt. 1860.^[2982,2983]
 - iv. **Henry Vornkahl.** He was born 27 Dec 1862 and died on 10 Jan 1929.^[2981] He married Anna Riniker (see Figures 38 and 39).
 - vi. **Charles (Carl) Vornkahl.** He was born 4 Jan 1866.^[2984] He died on 7 Feb 1888.^[2984]
 - vi. **Sophia Vornkahl.** She was born on 16 Feb 1869.^[2985] She married John Hoff. They were married on 16 Jan 1890.^[2985]

Generation 2

2. **Louise Lina Vornkahl** She was born on 29 Nov 1855.^[2982] She died on 23 Jun 1898.^[2982]
Charles Carl Himly.
 Louise Lina Vornkahl married Charles Carl Himly.
 Children:
 - i. **Helena Himly.** She was born May 1877.^[2982]
 - ii. **Lina Himly.** She was born on 17 Sep 1881.^[2982]
 - iii. **Frieda Himly.** She was born on 2 Sep 1882.^[2982]
 - iv. **Ida Himly.** She was born on 11 Aug 1884.^[2982]
 - v. **Paul Himly.** He was born on 26 Sep 1887.^[2982]
 - vi. **Ella Himly.** She was born on 16 Feb 1889.^[2982]
 - vii. **Selma Himly.** She was born on 8 May 1891.^[2982]
 - viii. **Max Marcus Himly.** He was born on 31 Jul 1892.^[2982]
 - ix. **Charles Himly.** He was born on 28 Aug 1893.^[2982]
3. **Henry Vornkahl** He was born on 27 Dec 1862.^[2981] He died on 10 Jan 1929.^[2981]
Anna Riniker. She was born on 30 Nov 1860 in Schinznach-dorf, Switzerland.^[2981] She died on 24 May 1936.^[2981]



Figure 40. Henry and Minna (Schumann) Vornkahl.

Henry Vornkahl and Anna Riniker were married on 31 Dec 1885 in Milheim, Texas.^[2981]

Children (see Figure 39):

- i. **Irma Vornkahl.** She was born on 05 Dec 1886.^[2986]
 - ii. **Charles Vornkahl.** He was born on 30 Jun 1889.^[2984] He died on 29 Dec 1945.^[2984]
 - iii. **Henry Vornkahl.** He was born on 15 Feb 1892.^[2981] He married Minna Schumann. They were married on 04 Jan 1917 (see Figure 40).^[2981] He died on 14 Jul 1964.^[2981]
 - iv. **Walter Vornkahl.** He was born on 17 Jul 1894.^[2984] He died on 25 Jan 1961.^[2984]
 - v. **Annie Vornkahl.** She was born Jul 1899.^[2987,2988]
 - vi. **Sam Vornkahl.** He was born on 15 Oct 1903.^[2984] He died on 29 Aug 1981.^[2984] He was married to Ella Engelking.^[2984] They had one son, Weldon Everett Vornkahl.^[2984]
4. **Sophia Vornkahl** She was born on 16 Feb 1869.^[2985]
- John Hoff.** He died on 21 Apr 1959.
- John Hoff and Sophia Vornkahl were married on 16 Jan 1890.^[2985] They had at least one child.
- i. **Henrietta Hoff.** She was born on 7 Aug 1893.^[2985] She married Albrecht Engelking on 31 Oct 1911.

References and Notes are found in the Sources section of this book.