

# Henry Vornkahl, Harrison Township, Lee County, Iowa, U.S.A. a.k.a. Johann Heinrich Christian Vornkahl, Hoheneggelsen, Germany

Carol J. (Loges) Sturdivant, Roy A. Johnson, and Ulrich Schröder

Johann Heinrich Christian Vornkahl, known in the United States as Henry Vornkahl, was probably twenty-five years old when he emigrated from Germany. It is thought that he came to this country in 1846.<sup>[2989]</sup> Today we can only guess at his reasons for leaving his home and moving to the United States. An often stated reason that millions of Europeans emigrated from their homelands in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was their desire for a better life. Such an explanation is not unreasonable for Henry Vornkahl. He was one of ten children of Johann Joachim

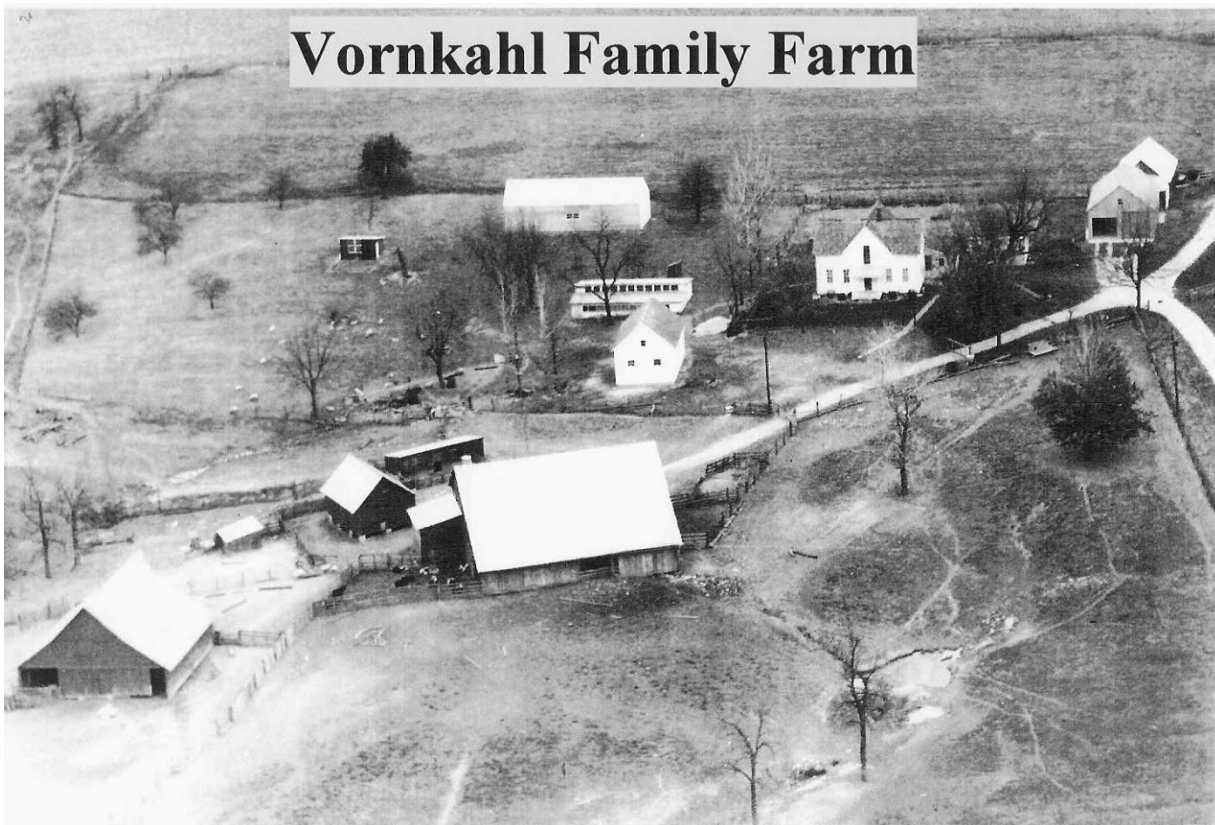


Figure 41. Aerial photograph taken in 1950's. The house in the center of the upper right quadrant and the large barn in the center of the photograph are original structures.

Friedrich Conrad Vornkahl and had an older half-brother who would inherit the family farm in Germany. This left Henry with little opportunity to have his own farm unless his brother was incapacitated or he could marry a farmer's daughter. Emigration to the New World became an attractive alternative. We should remember that this is just speculation. Henry's family in Germany is described in the chapter, "Johann Heinrich Christian and Ernst Vornkahl's Family in Germany."

After arriving in the United States, Henry settled in Lee County, Iowa,<sup>[2990]</sup> although he may have stopped or resided briefly in Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin before reaching Iowa.<sup>[2991]</sup> Within a year or two of his arrival in Iowa, Henry married a young woman of German origins named Dorothea Wilhelmina Greve. She was born 7 Feb 1830 in Sarstedt, Germany.<sup>[2485]</sup> The date and place of their marriage are as yet unknown to us. A reasonable

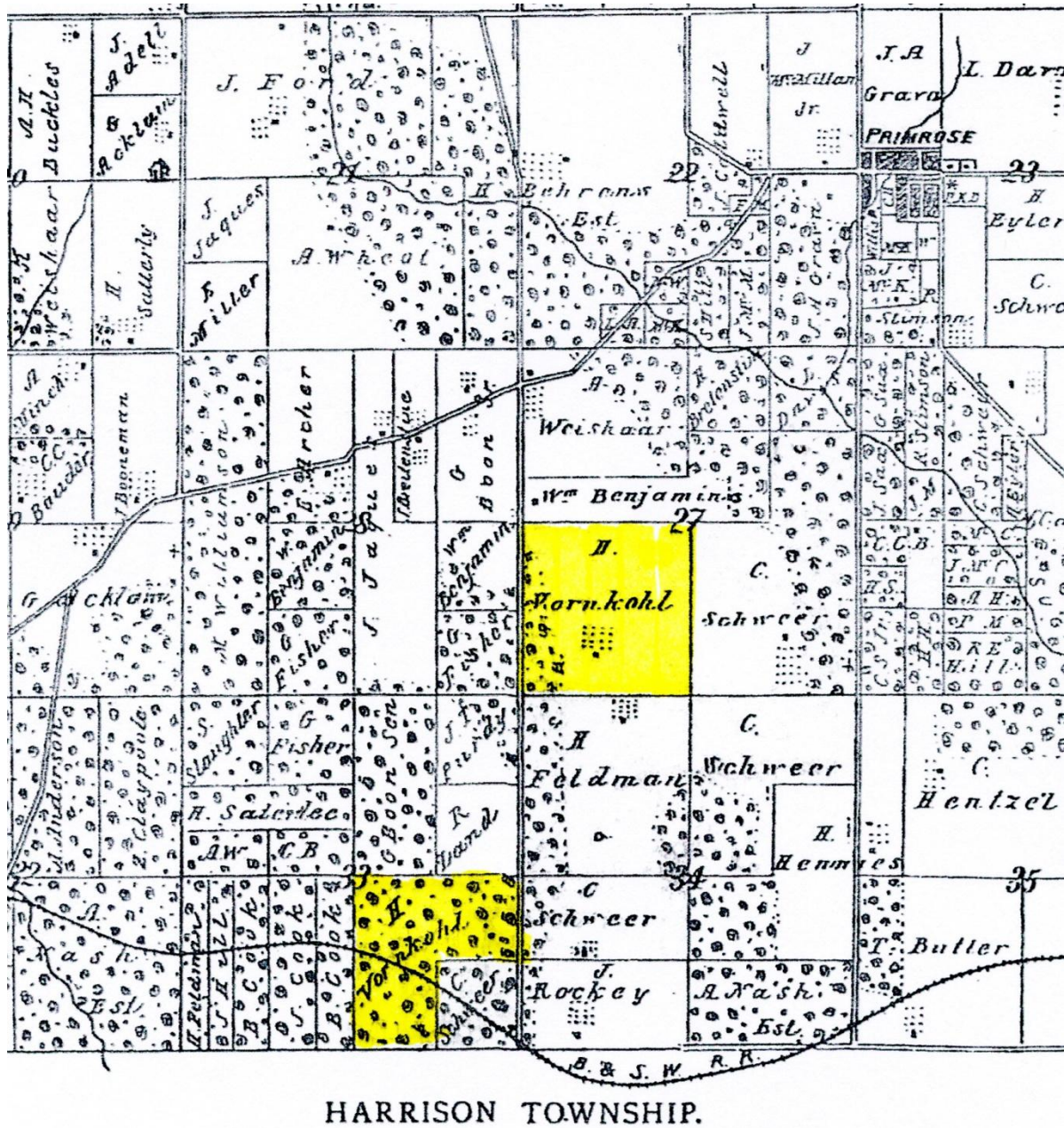


Figure 42. Partial plat map of Harrison Township, Lee County, Iowa, showing the Henry Vornkahl farm in 1874.

assumption is that they were married in 1846 or 1847 since their first child was born 25 Jan 1848.<sup>[2992,2993]</sup> From the available information, it is clear that Wilhelmina was a farmer's daughter. Her parents were Conrad Greve and Juliene Schaper who had emigrated from Germany some years earlier.<sup>[2994]</sup> According to old records they are said to have lived in northern Missouri before re-settling in Lee County. On 17 Mar 1840, Conrad purchased 160 acres of land from the United States government.<sup>[2995]</sup> The land is in Harrison Township, Lee County, and is located near the village of Primrose. The farm remains in the family to the present time. An aerial photograph shows the farm as it appeared in the 1950s (Figure 41). The legal description of the land is the S.E. ¼ of Section 27, Township 68 N, Range 7 W (see Figure 42).

Although clearly spelled Greve on his daughter's birth record in Sarstedt, Conrad's surname on legal documents, in church records, and on his grave stone<sup>[2994]</sup> (see Figure 66 in the Appendix) in Iowa is spelled Grava. Perhaps because the German pronunciation of the vowel "e" sounds like the English pronunciation of



Figure 43. Primrose Evangelical church, destroyed by fire in 1965.

the long “a”, the name came to be recorded as Grava at the time of entry into the United States. Other spellings found for the name are Graeve, Grave, and Grebe.

Conrad and Juliane (spelled Juliana in Iowa) deeded their farm to Henry on 23 Dec 1850.<sup>[2997]</sup> Conrad, born 28 May 1797,<sup>[2994]</sup> lived another eleven years, dying on 8 Feb 1861 at the age of sixty-three years, eight months and 12 days.<sup>[2998]</sup> Juliana, born 26 Apr 1801 in Darmstadt, Germany, lived an additional twenty-seven years before her death on 18 Apr 1874.<sup>[2994],[2996]</sup> Juliana signed the deed transfer document with an “X”.

Henry became a naturalized citizen of the United States on 6 Apr 1855.<sup>[2999]</sup> He applied for a passport on 10 Sep 1862<sup>[3000]</sup> but no evidence has been found suggesting that he used a passport to travel outside the country. A “personal description” accompanying the application reads: age, 43; stature, 5 feet 10 inches; forehead, high; eyes, blue; nose, common; mouth, small; chin, small; hair, dark; complexion, fair; face, slim.

At some time, Henry expanded the farm by adding 120 acres in Section 33 in Harrison Township. The location of the farm can be seen on the 1874 plat map of the township (see Figure 42). For the 1860 U.S. census, Henry valued his real estate at \$4,200 and his personal estate at \$1,649<sup>[3001]</sup> and for the 1870 census, the corresponding values were \$8,100 and \$1,400.<sup>[3002]</sup> Another picture of the Vornkahl farm can be obtained from the 1856 Iowa census that included an extensive census of agricultural production. The census taker asked the farmer for a variety of crop and livestock information. The following<sup>[3003]</sup> were recorded for Henry’s farm:

Acres in meadow, 25; tons of hay, 25.  
 Bushels of grass seed, --  
 Acres of spring wheat, 11; bushels harvested, 148.  
 Acres of winter wheat, -- ; bushels harvested, --.  
 Acres of oats, 20; bushels harvested, 1,000.  
 Acres of corn, 38; bushels harvested, 1,520.  
 Acres of potatoes, 1/3; bushels harvested, 50.  
 Number of hogs sold, 10; value of hogs sold, 150.  
 Number of cattle sold, 5; value of cattle sold, 177.  
 Pounds of butter manufactured, 600.  
 Pounds of cheese, --  
 Pounds of wool, --  
 Value of domestic manufacture, --  
 Value of general manufacture, --



Figure 44. Seven of Henry and Wilhelmina Vornkahl's children. Only Frederick (front center) and Matilda (front right) are identified in this photograph.

Between 1848 and 1862, Henry and Wilhelmina were the parents of eleven children (Figure 44), including two sets of twins.<sup>[2993]</sup> Of the eleven children, ten were girls. Neither Henry nor Wilhelmina lived to see their first grandchild. Wilhelmina died in 1864 at the age of 34 years<sup>[3004]</sup> and Henry died in 1871 at the age of 50.<sup>[3005]</sup> The records show that eventually they were the grandparents of 53 grandchildren (of whom 9 died in childhood) and an incomplete count shows them having over 90 great-grandchildren.<sup>[3006]</sup>

At the time of Henry's death, his mother-in-law, Juliana Grava, was still living and his son, Frederick, was 18 years old and a minor. Henry wrote in his will that Frederick was to inherit the farm with the provisions that (a) management of the farm was to be overseen by an executor until he "became of age" (presumably, age 21), (b) he was to pay the value of the farm to his sisters in equal shares, and (c) he would not receive title to the land until after the death of his grandmother, Juliana.<sup>[3007]</sup> Further information about Frederick is given later below.

### The Children of Henry and Wilhelmina Vornkahl and Their Families.

The eleven children of Henry and Wilhelmina are listed below in order of birth. Basic information, such as dates of births, marriages, deaths, their spouses and children, can be found by looking at the tabulation of U.S. Vornkahls found on pages 135-158. Much of the information there and in the listing below is from obituaries from local newspapers that have been collected by Carol Sturdivant from the Donnellson, Iowa, Public Library. The newspaper from which the clippings were cut is not always identified although in most cases is the local Donnellson newspaper.

**Louisa Vornkahl** (1848-1894)<sup>[2992]</sup> married **Jacob Haffner** on 21 Sep 1869,<sup>[3008]</sup> a farmer whose home was located in Section 20 of Franklin township (1897 plat map, not shown). He was the son of Frederick D. and Barbara A. (Faeth) Haffner.<sup>[3009]</sup> Three of Louisa's four children did not marry and lived on the family farm, which was operated by son Peter after the death of his father in 1913.<sup>[3010,3011]</sup> Jacob Haffner, his father Frederick Haffner, and his grandfather Peter Haffner are the subjects of a brief biographical sketch in "The History of Lee County, Iowa." published in 1879.<sup>[3012]</sup>

**Sophia Vornkahl** (1849-1878) married **August Hennies**,<sup>[3013]</sup> a farmer in Section 36 of Harrison township (1897 plat map, not shown), Lee County, Iowa, on 2 Mar 1871. August (b. 6 Aug 1843) was the son of Christian Hennies (b. 9 Nov 1805) and Dorothea "Dora" (last name unknown) who emigrated with their children to the

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Figure 45. August F. Wirsig.  
Photo courtesy of Jared McDade.



Figure 46. Johann Gottlieb Wirsig.  
Photo courtesy of Jared McDade.

United States from the kingdom of Hannover in the fall of 1854. Both Christian, who died on 24 Oct 1865, and Dora, who died on 15 Mar 1885, are buried in the Primrose Cemetery, Lee County, Iowa.<sup>[3014]</sup>

August and Sophia had three children (see pages 155-156) before Sophia died on 18 Mar 1878 at the age of 29.<sup>[3015]</sup> August remarried and had two additional children before he died on 3 Jan 1882.<sup>[3016]</sup> The Hennies farm came into the hands of August H. Hennies, son of August and Sophia, at the time he reached adulthood.

August had an older brother, Heinrich, born on 9 Nov 1835 whose son, Otto August, married Martha Emilie Vornkahl, daughter of Frederick Vornkahl (see entry below).<sup>[3014]</sup>

**Julia Vornkahl** (1851-1915)<sup>[3017]</sup> married **August F. Wirsig**<sup>[3018]</sup> (Figure 45) on 25 Feb 1872. August was the son of Johann Gottlieb (Figure 46) and Hannah Christine (Gruender) Wirsig.<sup>[3019]</sup> Johann and Hannah were the parents of twelve children, eleven of whom were born in Rothwasser, Germany.<sup>[3020]</sup> The family emigrated from Germany in 1856 and arrived in Lee County in August of that year. Three of the Wirsig siblings married into the Vornkahl family. August, whose given name was Karl Friedrich August (b. 2 Oct 1839) married Julia Vornkahl as already noted. **Emma** Ida Augusta (b. 8 Feb 1850) married Frederick Vornkahl (see below) and Herman Paul, who was known by the name Paul H. (b. 14 Feb 1855), married Ellenora Vornkahl (see below).

The obituary for August F. Wirsig tells that “in 1864 he, with several companions, emigrated (from Lee County) to the gold fields of California, where he remained seven years, again returning to Lee County.”<sup>[3021]</sup> After his return, he and Julia Vornkahl were married in 1872.<sup>[3021]</sup> They first lived near Ft. Madison, Iowa, before settling on a farm near Farmington, Iowa. They were the parents of six children, two of whom died in childhood. Four sons lived to adulthood, married and had families. Youngest son, Orville, operated a drug store in Donnellson from 1926 until the time of his death in 1943.<sup>[3019]</sup>

August and Julia continued to farm until their retirement. August died on 31 Dec 1920<sup>[3021]</sup> and Julia died on 28 Oct 1915.<sup>[3017]</sup> Both are buried in the Primrose cemetery.

When the Wirsig family came to the United States, they brought with them a rose bush that continues to be propagated by a great-granddaughter as well as cuttings that are being grown by the great-great-grandchildren.

**Emma Vornkahl** (1851-1917)<sup>[3023]</sup> married **Henry Wendt** of Ft. Madison, Iowa.<sup>[3024]</sup> Henry was born in Germany, 1843, the son of Johann Ludwig Heinrich Wendt and Henrietta E. Oelker.<sup>[3025]</sup> Heinrich was born in Groß Himstedt,<sup>[3026]</sup> a village in the vicinity of both Nettlingen and Hoheneggelsen from where many of the Vornkahl immigrants in the United States originated. Heinrich and Henrietta emigrated from Germany in 1854, residing briefly near Primrose in Lee County, Iowa, then for 21 years near Hillsboro in Henry County, Iowa, and finally in 1876 on a farm near Primrose.<sup>[3026]</sup> The location of their farm at Primrose was on the south side of the Vornkahl farm (1897 plat map, not shown). Following their marriage on 8 Dec 1870, Henry and Emma lived in several locations in Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri before settling in Chautauqua County, Kansas.<sup>[3024]</sup> They were the parents of eight children. Julia died at her home in Sedan, Kansas, on 12 Aug 1917.<sup>[3023]</sup>

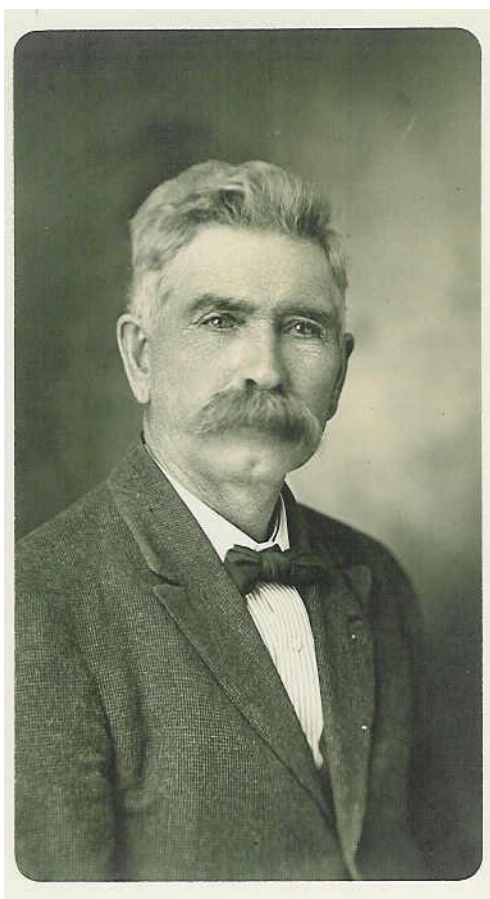


Figure 47. Frederick Wilhelm Vornkahl, about 1900.

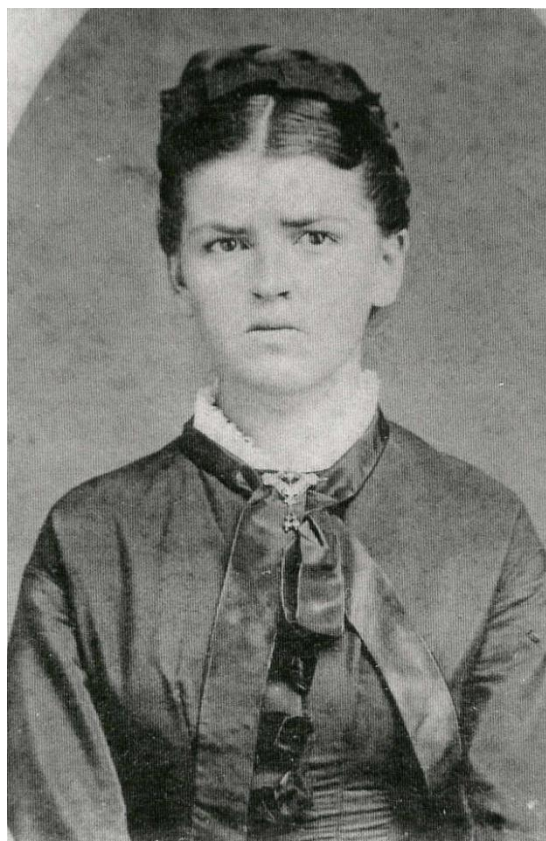


Figure 48. Maria Dorothea Schweer

**Frederick Wilhelm Vornkahl** (1853-1932)<sup>[3027,3028]</sup> was just eighteen years old when his father died in 1871. Frederick was named in his father's will as heir to the family farm but first had to reach the age of 21. He also could not take over the farm until after his grandmother, Juliana Grava (Greve), died and her estate was settled. A final requirement was payment to each of his sisters of an eleventh of the value of his father's estate.<sup>[3007]</sup> Consequently, title of the farm was not transferred to Frederick until 29 Dec 1876.<sup>[3029]</sup>

On 17 Dec 1874, a passport was issued to Frederick by the U.S. Department of State. The document, a single page, gives a description of Frederick: age, 21 years; stature, 6 feet 2 inches; forehead, medium; eyes, gray; nose, medium; mouth, large; chin, round; hair, sandy; complexion, medium; and face, oval.<sup>[3030]</sup> The passenger list of the steamer, *Suevia*, arriving in New York on 4 Aug 1875 from Hamburg and Le Havre includes a 22 year-old male farmer, Friedr. Vornkahl.<sup>[3031]</sup> From this information it is reasonable to conclude that Frederick traveled to Germany in 1875 to visit his relatives in and around the village of Hoheneggelsen.

Frederick (Figure 47) married **Maria Dorothea Schweer** (b. 18 Oct 1856; Figure 48) on 22 Apr 1877.<sup>[3032]</sup> She was the daughter of Conrad Schweer whose land bordered the Vornkahl farm on the east (see map, Figure 42). In addition to his activities as a farmer, Mr. Schweer was a state representative in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> general assemblies (1872 and 1874) of the state of Iowa.<sup>[3033]</sup> Frederick and Maria were the parents of six children, four of whom lived to adulthood (Figure 49), before Maria's untimely death on 25 Mar 1886 at the age of 29.<sup>[3034]</sup> On 15 Sep 1887, Frederick married **Marie Therese Thews**.<sup>[3035]</sup> The couple were parents of one daughter, listed below, before Maria died on 4 Nov 1888 at the age of 28 years. Frederick married **Emma Ida Augusta Wirsig** on 9 Jun 1889.<sup>[3036]</sup> Emma's brothers, Karl Frederick August and Paul H. Wirsig, married sisters of Frederick.



Figure 49. Daughters of Frederick and Maria Vornkahl. Clockwise from top: Sophia, Emilie, Emma, and Maria.



Figure 50. Christofer and Sophia (Vornkahl) Refior.

Frederick and Emma sold their farm to his daughter and son-in-law, August and Emma (Vornkahl) Loges, on 6 Aug 1910.<sup>[3037]</sup> Frederick and Emma purchased a home in Donnellson, Iowa, on 1 Mar 1912 and moved from the farm into town. Emma died later in the same year on 10 Dec 1912. Frederick married **Anna Christine J. Kluender** on 20 Jul 1922<sup>[3027]</sup> (Figure 56). He died 15 Apr 1932, age 79 years,<sup>[3027]</sup> and Anna died 6 Jan 1947.<sup>[3038]</sup> The farm has remained in the Loges family to the time of this writing.

Frederick Vornkahl's children listed in chronological order of birth:

**Sophia Magdalena Vornkahl** (1878-1964) married **Christopher Refior** (1867-1948) (Figure 50) on 22 Mar 1911,<sup>[3039]</sup> the son of Jacob Refior and second wife, Elizabeth Anton.

Christopher and Sophia were parents of three children (see page 156). Sophia carried on a written correspondence with a second cousin, Albert Rüter, living in Germany. Two letters she received in 1948 from Albert and Ida Rüter of Töpingen, Germany, are transcribed and translated in Appendix 3 of the chapter: "Johann Heinrich Christian and Ernst Vornkahl's Family in Germany." The first letter is of interest because it provides a brief but stark reminder of the aftermath of World War II in Germany. The second letter is of interest because it provided Sophia with the birth dates of her grandfather (Henry Vornkahl) and of three great-aunts and a great-uncle. The letters were handed down by Sophia to her youngest daughter, Anna Refior, and were obtained from the estate by Carol Sturdivant following the death of Miss Refior in 2003. Sophia died on 21 Oct 1964<sup>[3039]</sup> and Christopher died on 22 Dec 1948.<sup>[3040]</sup> Both are buried in the Primrose cemetery, Lee County, Iowa.



Figure 51. August and Emma (Vornkahl) Loges.



Figure 52. Frederick and Maria (Vornkahl) Krebill.



Figure 53. Otto and Emilie (Vornkahl) Hennies.



Figure 54. George and Julia (Vornkahl) Schrepfer.

**Emma Wilhelmina Vornkahl** (1879-1969)<sup>[3041]</sup> married **August Frederick Loges** (see Figure 51). August was the son of Christian Henry Loges, Sr., and Johanna Dorothea Wilhelmina Remling. Christian was born in Lengede, Germany, 5 Mar 1824. The following description is



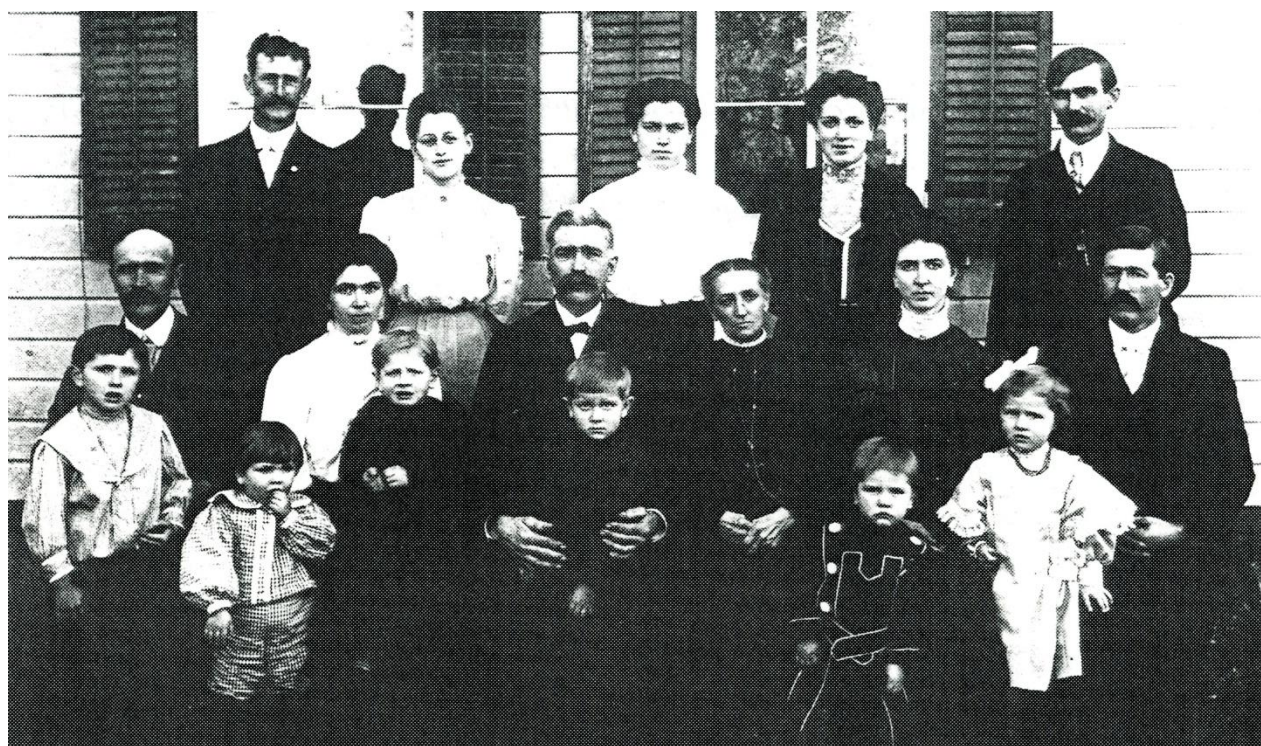


Figure 55. Left to right, front row: Frederick Loges, Herbert Loges, John Loges, Leonard Loges, Raymond Krebill, Mildred Krebill; middle row: August Loges, Emma (Vornkahl) Loges, Frederick Vornkahl, Emma (Wirsig) Vornkahl; Mary (Vornkahl) Krebill, Frederick Krebill; back row: George Schrepfer, Julia (Vornkahl) Schrepfer, Sophia (Vornkahl) Refior, Emilie (Vornkahl) Hennies, Otto Hennies.

from a Register Report written for the Loges family.<sup>[3042]</sup> “Christian Henry Loges came to America in 1852 from Hannover, Germany, as a stow-away on a ship (a cattle boat) because he didn't want to serve in the German army. Until the day he died he refused to tell anyone anything about his family or his background for fear he would be forced to go back and serve in the army. He married Johanna Dorothea Wilhelmina Remling on 6 Jan 1857 and they were blessed with 10 children.

“Mr. Loges followed the trade of blacksmith for a while. The family lived at West Point, Primrose, and in Missouri. For 27 years they lived on a farm in Charleston Township. The past 25 years the family has lived in Donnellson. ‘Chris,’ as he was known, was struck by a train and killed between Donnellson, IA, and Farmington, IA, at the age of 91. It is said that the reason he was killed was that he and his wife had had a fight and he had started to walk to his son's house - about 9 miles - and had almost gotten there. He had grown very hard of hearing and did not hear the train coming, and so was killed. There is a moral here - no matter how old you are you need to hold on to your temper - it could kill you!!! Who knows how old he would have lived to be if he hadn't been killed? At the time of his death Edward Loges lived on the home farm in Charleston Township.”

August and Emma were married on 15 Apr 1903,<sup>[3043]</sup> after which they lived in Charleston, Iowa, for seven years. They were parents of four boys (see page 140-141). A story is told in the family about the third son, Herbert. “There was a railroad track north of their home and one day when the boys were all very young, the train whistle blew. With a mother's instinct, Emma was checking where all of her boys were – they could all be accounted for except Herbert. After looking frantically for him as any mother would, she spotted Herbert sitting on the railroad track. She ran toward him, dashed in front of the train, picked him up, and dashed off the track.

Emma and Herbert were safe, but the train snagged Emma's dress, tearing it off of her."<sup>[3044]</sup> In the spring of 1910, August and Emma moved their family to the Vornkahl farm where they lived briefly with Frederick and his third wife, Emma Ida Wirsig. August and Emma purchased the farm on 6 Aug 1910,<sup>[3037]</sup> remaining there until their retirement. The farm remains in the Loges family; first in the hands of son Herbert and then with grandson Roger Loges. Additional information about the Loges family may be found in a family history by Carol J. (Loges) Sturdivant.<sup>[3045]</sup>

**Maria Martha Vornkahl** (1880-1959) married **Frederick C. Krebill** (Figure 52) on 19 Oct 1904.<sup>[3046]</sup> Frederick was the eleventh, and last, child of Peter Krebill and Magdalena Fuchs of rural Donnellson, Lee County, Iowa. Peter was born at Messerschwanderhof, near Otterberg, in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. He came to the United States in 1834 with his parents and family. After the family had lived in Ohio for a number of years, Peter and his brother Jacob, moved to the Franklin Prairie near Franklin, Iowa.<sup>[3047]</sup>

Frederick and Maria were married on 19 Oct 1904 at the bride's home near Primrose. They were parents of five children (see page 152). Frederick died 23 Aug 1952<sup>[2993]</sup> and Maria died 23 Aug 1959.<sup>[3046]</sup> Both are buried in the Zion Mennonite Cemetery near Donnellson, Iowa.

**Martha Emilie Vornkahl** (1882-1960) married **Otto August Hennies** (Figure 53) on 2 Mar 1904.<sup>[3048]</sup> Otto was the son of Heinrich Hennies and the nephew of August Hennies who married Emilie's aunt, Sophia Vornkahl. Otto and Emilie were the parents of three sons, Henry, Harold, and Howard (see page 152). Otto died on 23 Aug 1958<sup>[2993]</sup> and Emilie died on 4 Nov 1960.<sup>[3048]</sup> Both are buried in the Primrose cemetery in Lee County, Iowa.<sup>[3014]</sup>

**Erna Elise Vornkahl** (1883-1884) died at the age of four months.<sup>[3049]</sup>

**Carl Erick Vornkahl** (1886-1886) died at the age of 1½ months.<sup>[2993]</sup>

**Julia Theresa Vornkahl** (1888-1972), daughter of Frederick and Marie Thews, married **George Adam Schrepfer** (Figure 54) on 27 Nov 1907.<sup>[3050]</sup> He was the son of Frederick Schrepfer and Caroline Schau, both natives of Germany.

George and Julia were the parents of six children (see page 149). George died on 4 Feb 1959 and Julia died on 22 Aug 1972. Both are buried in the Primrose cemetery.<sup>[3051]</sup>

Children of Henry and Wilhelmina Vornkahl, continued.

**Matilda Vornkahl** (1854-1935; Figures 57 and 59)<sup>[3052]</sup> married **Henry H. Reitz** (Figure 58) on 30 Aug 1876<sup>[3053]</sup> following which the couple raised their family on the "Hickory Grove Stock Farm" located in Section 15 of Van Buren township (1897 plat map, not shown).

Henry Reitz was the son of Conrad and Frances Reitz and was born 6 Nov 1854 in Williamsburg, Long Island, New York.<sup>[3054]</sup> Henry was the eldest child in a family of five sons and six daughters.<sup>[3055]</sup> Conrad emigrated from Eberstadt, Germany, in 1846. He also is referred to as Candel Reitz in the 1870 U.S. census. Frances emigrated from Baden, Germany, in 1852. Several variations in the spelling of her names are found in the records. Her family name has been given as Grunninger, Gruninger, or Gurmer. Her given name of Frances has at other times been written as Frantiska or Franziska. Conrad and Frances moved with their family from New York to Lee County, Iowa, in 1867 where they lived briefly in Ft. Madison before settling permanently in the small town of Franklin.<sup>[3056]</sup> Conrad's occupation was that of a stone mason.<sup>[3057]</sup>

Henry and Matilda (Vornkahl) Reitz were parents of six children, three girls and three boys (see Figure 60, born in the order listed below:

**Ellenora Wilhelmina Reitz** (1878-1937)<sup>[3058]</sup> married **Adam Gack** (Figure 61) in 1900.<sup>[3059]</sup> The family lived first in Dawson township, Greene County, Iowa, and then for thirteen years as renters of a 157.34 acre farm in Section 6 of Winfield township, Renville County, Minnesota.

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Figure 56. Frederick and Anna (Kluender) Vornkahl.



Figure 57. Matilda Vornkahl.



Figure 58. Henry Reitz.



Figure 59. Matilda (Vornkahl) Reitz.



Figure 60. Henry Reitz family. Seated, l. to r.: Matilda, Alma, Henry; standing, l. to r.: Oliver, Emma, William, Ellenora, Edwin.



Figure 61. Adam and Ellenora (Reitz) Gack.



Figure 62. Frederick William and Mabel Kansas (South) Reitz



Figure 63. Edwin O. Reitz



Figure 64. Wilhelmina (Vornkahl) Bonnell

The owner of the farm was Wilhelmina (Reitz) Schlueter, a sister of Henry Reitz. In 1917 the family moved to northern Minnesota where they owned a farm in Section 8 of Badoura Township, Hubbard County. Adam and Ellenora were the parents of eleven children, ten of whom lived to adulthood. A longer account of the Gack family maybe found elsewhere.<sup>[3055]</sup>

**Frederick William Reitz** (1879-1935)<sup>[3058]</sup> married **Mabel Kansas South** (Figure 62) on 11 Mar 1903 in Primrose, Iowa.<sup>[3060]</sup> They were the parents of eight children: Viola Emma Marie (1904-1995), Ruth Amelia Alma (1907-1978), Luther Edward (1909-1910), Cora Mabel (1911-1934), Elsie Matilda (1914-1980), Frederick William, Jr. (1918-1974), Fern Irene (1921-1988), and Willa Eileene (1924-?).

**Emma Martha Reitz** (1883-1934)<sup>[3061]</sup> married **Winton Pletcher** on 30 Mar 1910.<sup>[3062]</sup> They were the parents of five children: Lloyd, Leonard, Mildred, Howard, and Robert.

**Oliver Conrad Reitz** (1885-1947)<sup>[3063]</sup> married **Clara A. Fett** on 22 Mar 1916.<sup>[3064]</sup> The family made their home near Granger, Missouri, and according to his obituary, Mr. Reitz “spent the remainder of his life farming in Scotland, Clark, and Lewis counties, Missouri.” Mr. Reitz died 14 Jun 1947, three days short of his sixty-second birthday. Oliver and Clara were the parents of three children, Garnet, Carl (1921-1971), and Clarence (1923-1945).

**Edwin O. Reitz** (1887-1964)<sup>[3065]</sup> remained single and operated the Reitz farm in Van Buren township (Figure 63) after his parents, Henry and Matilda, retired and moved to Donnellson, Iowa.

**Alma Ida Magdalena Reitz** (1890 - ?)<sup>[3055]</sup> married **William F. Sass** on 16 Nov 1916.<sup>[3066]</sup> The marriage vows were exchanged in the Henry Reitz home in Van Buren township. The Sasses lived in Iowa City, Iowa, and were the parents of Marvin, Phyllis, Carroll, and Ila.



Figure 65. Paul H. and Ellenora A. (Vornkahl) Wirsig. Photo courtesy of Jared McDade.

Children of Henry and Wilhelmina Vornkahl, continued.

**Maria Mary Vornkahl** (1856-1873) died on 25 Oct 1873 at the age of 17.<sup>[3067]</sup>

**Ellenora A. Vornkahl** (1858-1949)<sup>[3068]</sup> married **Paul H. Wirsig** (Figure 65) who was brought to this country from Rothwasser, Germany, by his parents in 1856 at the age of one-and-a-half years.<sup>[3019]</sup> He is said to have been ill with a case of measles while on the ocean voyage to North America. His brother, Karl Frederick August, and his sister, Emma Ida Augusta, both were married to Vornkahls. Following their marriage on 27 Mar 1879,<sup>[3070]</sup> the couple soon settled on a farm of 131 acres divided between Sections 10, 11, 14, and 15 in Van Buren township in Lee County, Iowa (1897 plat map, not shown). The couple raised five children: Ellenora Elfrieda (1880-1972), Arthur Edmund Leonard (1882-1964), Arnold Oswald (1884-1953), Marvin A. (1886-

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1963), and Cordelia (1887-1970).<sup>[3071]</sup> Paul died on 28 Mar 1932 and Ellenora died on 24 Dec 1949. Both are buried in the Primrose cemetery, Lee County, Iowa

**Magdalena Vornkahl** (1860<sup>[3072]</sup>-1910<sup>[3073]</sup>) married **William C. Wendt** on 20 Oct 1881<sup>[3073]</sup> after which they lived on a farm in Section 34 of Harrison township (1897 plat map, not shown). William was the younger brother of Henry Wendt who married Magdalena's sister, Emma Vornkahl.

William and Magdalena were the parents of seven children, six of whom lived to adulthood (see page 151).<sup>[3074]</sup> Following the death of Magdalena at age forty-nine on 10 Feb 1910, Mr. Wendt married Emelie Roth of Farmington, Iowa; the couple then moved to California where Mr. Wendt died in Pasadena 9 Aug 1946.<sup>[3075]</sup> William C. Wendt's name is on the tombstone with his first wife, Magdalena, in the Primrose cemetery in Iowa but his obituary states that he was buried in the Mountain View Cemetery in Altadena, California.

**Martha Mary Vornkahl** (1860-1916)<sup>[3075]</sup> married **Charles Schott** on 14 Mar 1887.<sup>[3076]</sup> Mr. Schott was born in Württemberg, Germany, on 8 May 1865, and emigrated from there at the age of 16. The Schott's were parents of three daughters, one of whom died in infancy. Living to adulthood were Lydia C. (1894-1969) and Mattie Martha Mary (1898-1961). Following the death of Martha Mary on 1 Dec 1916, Mr. Schott married Rebecca May Poole on 30 Mar 1922. He died 21 Jul 1935.<sup>[3077]</sup>

**Wilhelmina Elisabeth Vornkahl** (1862-1928, see Figure 64)<sup>[3078,3079]</sup> married **Harvey S. "Hub" Bonnell** on 23 Feb 1882.<sup>[3080]</sup> After living at a number of locations in Oklahoma, they eventually settled in Oklahoma City. They had two daughters, both of whom died in infancy.<sup>[3079]</sup> The following has been written about Mr. Bonnell: "He operated a cotton gin in Mulhall, Oklahoma, from 1899 to the early 1900's. He came to Oklahoma City to work for the J.I. Case Company and he was an adjustor for the Federal Land Bank. He later was interested in mining developments in Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana. His home was in Oklahoma City until his death 30 Mar 1940. His wife, Minnie, had failed badly, both physically and mentally, during the later years of her life and he gave the most patient care. Following her death 9 Dec 1928, he traveled about, visiting many nieces and nephews, in whom he took a great interest; all regarded him with real affection. He was an amateur photographer of unusual ability, and excelled in trapshooting; a fine collection of firearms, both modern and antique, now are in the possession of his nephew who purchased them from his estate."<sup>[3079]</sup>

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

Appendix. Tombstones of Conrad Grava (Greve), Heinrich Vornkahl, and Juliana Grebe (Greve).



Figure 66. Grave marker for Conrad Grava (Greve), father of Wilhelmina (Greve) Vornkahl.



Figure 67. Grave marker for Heinrich Vornkahl.



Figure 68. Grave marker for Juliana Grebe, mother of Wilhelmina (Greve) Vornkahl.