

Herman Bernard Klitz (1858–1920)



Tombstone of Bernard Klitz

"The Bird, that never tried his wing,
Can blithely hop and sweetly sing;
Though prisoned in a narrow cage,
Till his bright feathers droop with age.
So I, while never blest with sight,
Shut out from Heaven's surrounding light,
Life's hours and days and years enjoy,
Though blind, a merry-hearted boy."

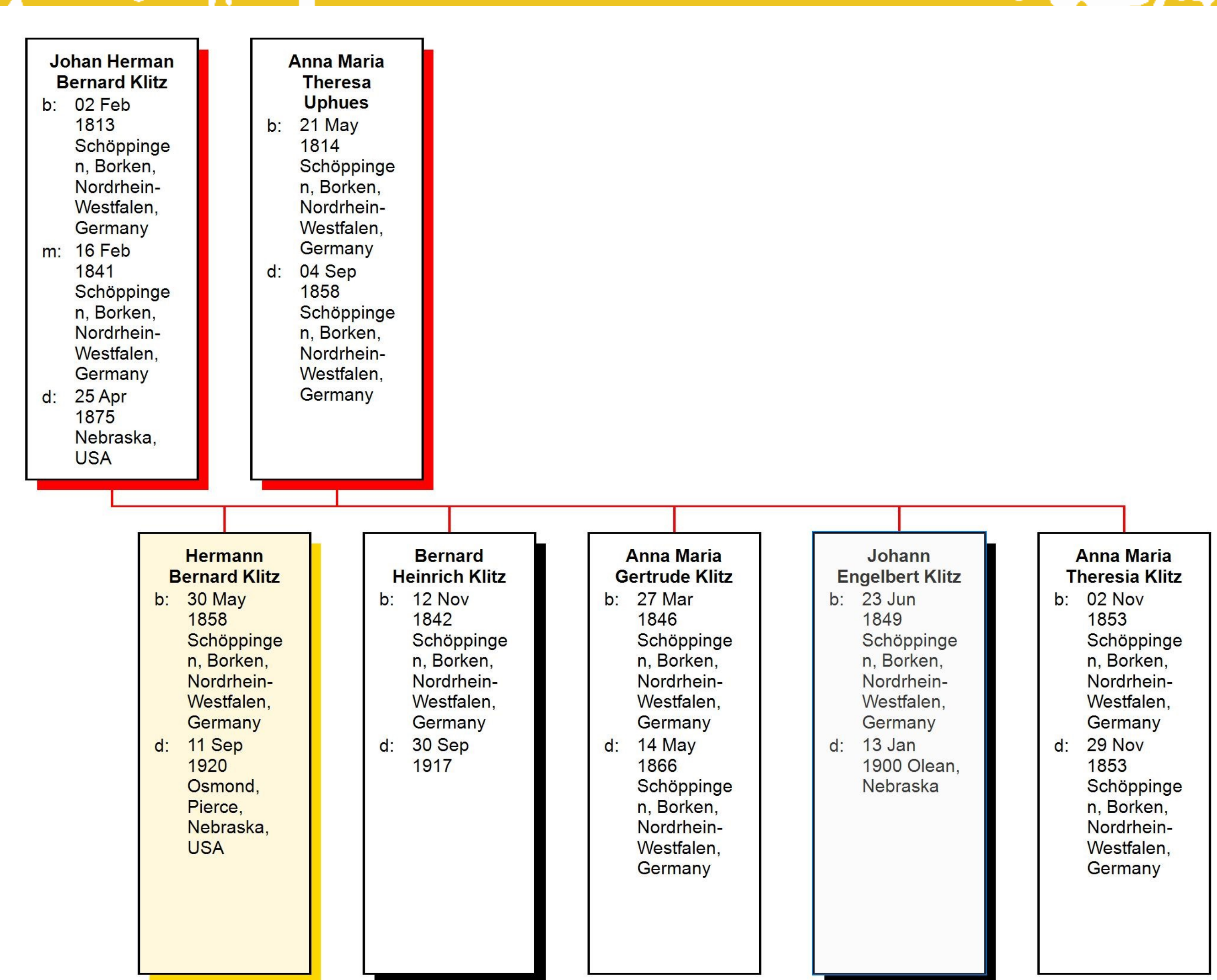
"The Blind Boy's Soliloquy" by Park Benjamin Freund

Barney Klitz Jr. was the last child born to Bernard Sr. and Theresia Uphues. His mother, Theresia, died about 3 months after Barney was born, due to complications from his birth. Barney was blind. It is unknown if he was blind from birth and if that may have contributed to or been a result of the complications his mother had.

He remained unmarried, and after the death of his stepmother, Elisabeth Pieper Klitz Meickmann, he lived with his half-sister, Elisabeth Klitz Sellhorst, until after 1900.

Afterwards, Barney lived with the Anna Klitz Becker family (his other half-sister) after they moved to Osmond, NE. Barney lived with his nephew, William Becker, and his wife, Mary, until his death.

Barney is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery in Osmond.



Family Tree of Bernard Klitz, Jr.



Map of Central Europe, 1858

Nineteenth Century America saw recognition and improvement in the diagnosis and treatment of disabilities, including blindness. Schools for the blind were founded in the larger cities on the East Coast with the purposes of teaching the blind skills with which to pursue employment.

The mostly well-meaning instructors and benefactors of the schools also sought to minimize the social stigma associated with disabilities like blindness.

Homesteaders in rural Nebraska did not have such opportunities. They were destined to rely on their family members for support.

Barney did just that, first living with his half-sister, Elisabeth Sellhorst, and her family, and then living with his other half-sister, Anna Becker, and her family, until he passed in 1920.