



How did we get here?

The Search for the Klitz Family and Our Story



Welcome again to the Reunion. We'll spend the next 45 minutes or so discussing the search we have undertaken to find our family story. First a couple of notes about the presentations and in general the information presented during the reunion. When it makes sense, we've "Americanized" the names of our ancestors so it is easier to track who is who – for example, Johan Herman Bernard Klitz, the father of the family who immigrated to the US can be referred to as Barney Sr. (German naming convention from the 18th and 19th century had several names for each person, with the first 2 or 3 names being baptismal/saints names and their everyday name being the 3rd or 4th name listed in the historical records). Also, everything you see, hear and read this weekend is everything that we know and understand as of right now, all of this is subject to change with new information. And if you see something that is not correct, or if you have questions, please feel free to let me or Chuck know. We also have note/question sheets located on the counter to the left of the stage if you want to write it down and then leave it for us.

How did we get here is actually 2 questions in one. The first question is how did we arrive at this time and place, having this reunion, with all these people from around the country and globe. How did we gather all this information, find, connect and reconnect with all these families that would allow us to commemorate the 150 years since our ancestors arrived in America.

The second question is how did we, as a family, get to be who we are? Where did we come from? Who are our ancestors and what paths did they embark on, what actions did they take, what choices did they make, that again allows us all to be here today to celebrate together.

We'll start with the former question. - **CLICK**

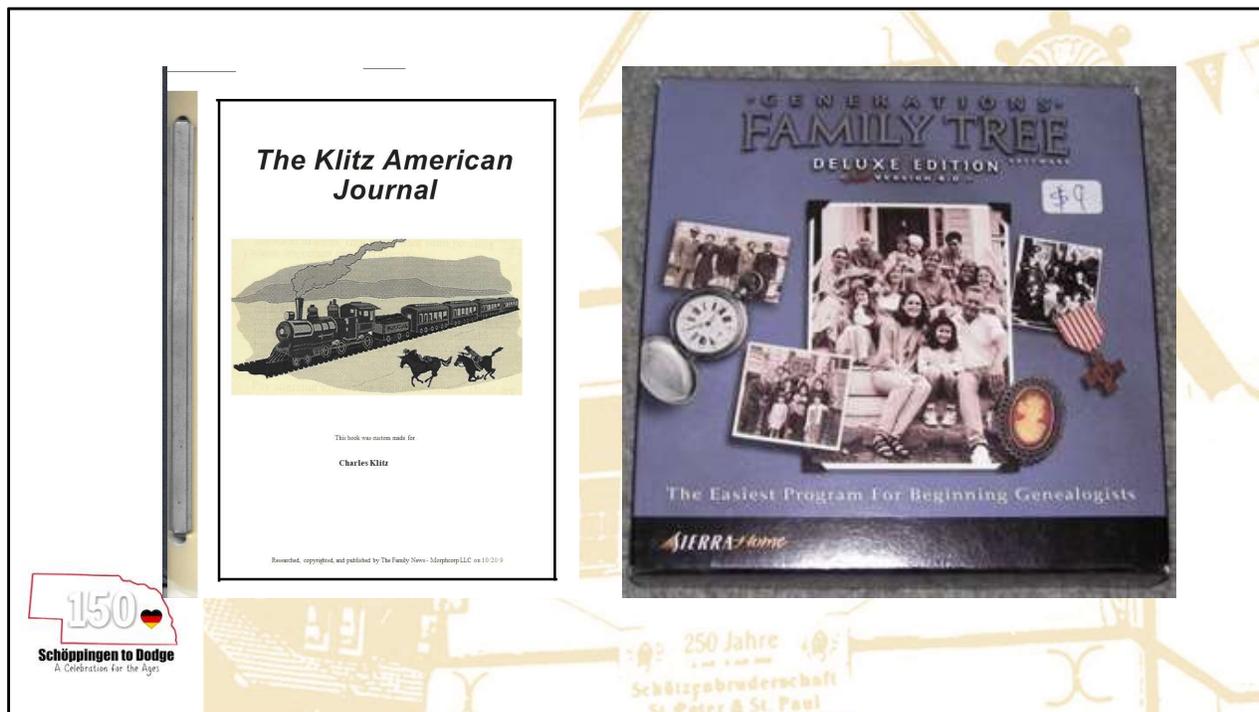


Research goes in fits. It's non-sequential and piecemeal. There will be long periods of time with very little new to add to the story. There will be brick walls popping up constantly – the demise of Barney Klitz Sr. There are the dreaded missteps caused by poor assumptions, incorrect recollections, or simply misreading a date or name – started researching the wrong Klitz son because one record had the incorrect date.

Then there are the great leaps forward, where your understanding of our history and our story expands exponentially like the Schoppingen History Book and the Church Books from the LDS Family History Centers.

And all of this together can be overwhelming . . . So where do we begin? - [CLICK](#)

We started with what we knew - two. – [CLICK](#) Two names and a handful of family stories. John and Angela Klitz, my great-great grandparents, buried in Sacred Heart Cemetery in Olean. We knew where they were buried, and some basic information. So where does ne go with that? Chuck started asking relatives for their remembrances, and we started using state-of-the-art technology. - [CLICK](#)



Pre-internet genealogy for beginners was a mess. I remember a series of books my father bought which listed the Klitzes from around the world (only about 10 countries actually). Someone went through phone books from these countries and compiled the “Klitz Family Story” and the Klitz American Journal. None of these were very useful for finding out our history - **CLICK**

Then Chuck received as a present from us kids genealogy software – our first leap forward because it listed the Klitzes who emigrated from Prussia and when they emigrated John Klitz from the previous slide, his siblings and parents. This added another layer, and another generation to the story. - **CLICK**



With this leap forward, we also ran into a lot (or what seemed like a lot) of other Klitzes. I spent many hours researching these families to see how they fit into our family tree; after all, the Klitz name is rare, so any Klitz found is family, right? Nope.

There are the 4 main branches of Klitzes we found: - **CLICK**

– Nebraska – we know that one; -**CLICK**

- Wisconsin/Arkansas – Friedrich Johann Carl Klitz from Pomerania (now Poland) – emigrated maybe around 1860-1870, settled in Pella area; -**CLICK**

- Ohio/Illinois – from Stettin, Prussia, (now Szczecin, Poland – Pomerania) emigrated around 1800, part of family moved to western IL in the 1850s – a descendant (Oscar Dewitt Klitz moved to Quincy, IL area in 1880's; -**CLICK**

- MAYBE ADD ONE MORE FAMILY GLEISS/GLEITZ/KLITZ/CLITES family from Wurttemberg Germany, Johann Michael Gleiss emigrated to Pennsylvania in first half of 18th century. Family gradually spread west through the generations ending up in South Dakota – though there are still some Gleitzes in PA, one who helped us store furniture when we moved this summer. - **CLICK**

- England – Ludwig Heinrich Klitz from Nassau/Hesse (area around Frankfurt) emigrated to England around 1790.

- To date, we have not found a connection linking these families together. - **CLICK**

The 2003 Trip To see what we could see



Nordwalde Catholic
Cemetery

Schoppingen
Alte Rathaus

Eggerode Outdoor
Chapel

Having spent a few years meandering in search of our family history, we determined that a trip to Germany was in order. We knew our ancestors came from the town of Schoppingen in the Munsterland, but that was about it in terms of what we knew to look for in Germany. It turned into a delayed leap forward for us.

Town of Schoppingen – a lovely town. –**CLICK** We searched the cemeteries, - **CLICK** but found no Klitzes, and, other than the parish priests, no grave older than 80 years old. - **CLICK** But we bought some wonderful historical books from the Town Hall which added to the picture. The books listed our ancestors and 2 other Klitz families – they are on the Johann Bernard Klitz table. - **CLICK**

Town of Eggerode – found on the WWI memorial Herman Klitz KIA 1915. But Who was he? -**CLICK**

Received a copy of addresses for Klitzes in that part of Germany and saw a concentration of Klitzes in Nordwalde about 20 minutes from Schoppingen, so we had a look. We found many Klitz tombstones in the cemetery but had no idea how or if they fit into our tree.

Our trip to the motherland was digging up more questions than answers. We had a better understanding of the land and the towns of our ancestors but did not add too much to our

story.

When we returned to the States, we sent dozens of letters to those Klitzes in Nordwalde and received some responses. It looked like we were making some headway. But then there was a lull in our research for a while – some more tidbits, but not much in terms of leaps forward.

-CLICK



-CLICK This is Franziska. She is about 14 or so in this picture. Franziska was born in 1886 and She is the last recorded Klitz baptism in Schöppingen/Eggerode. **- CLICK**

Until 2009, when Pauline Elizabeth Stevens Klitz was baptized in St. Brictius Church, Schöppingen.

Being a diplomat family, we experience hardships especially separation from our family and friends for extended periods. It also allows us to experience moments of wonder and amazement. My wife and I were posted to Berlin where she had a great idea – what if our first born was baptized in St. Brictius, Schöppingen’s Church, and the Church our Klitz ancestors? Ruth Anne and a friend from the Embassy did a fair bit of phone work before Fr. Bocker, the pastor of St. Brictius, agreed to the baptism. We met with Fr Bocker about 1 month before Lina was born, and while we were in town we also arranged a meeting with Matthias Frye, local genealogist and historian extraordinaire, in Eggerode. He introduced us to the town’s historical group - Frau Matilda Winter, Herr und Frau Schultze Sievert. The Schultze-Sieverts told us, “yeah, we remember the Klitzes. They farmed some of our land right next to the Klitzenbruecke.” **-CLICK**

That experience was reported in the local newspaper (A Baptism in the old tradition/way),

where Klitzes with whom we had made contact in 2003, read it, and reached out to us again to reconnect – Renate and Jurgen. - **CLICK** Renate, Jurgen, Matthias, Frau Winter, Herr und Frau Schultze-Sievert, The Koenig family, and some friends and family joined us on April 26, 2009, for the first baptism of a Klitz in St Briccius Church in over 120 years. (Our Father in 2 languages) - **CLICK**

By this point Chuck and I split the research: Chuck – Nebraska, Tim – Germany (and then Quincy, IL – found online, and Castle Garden)
- Chuck searched small town Nebraska gathering information and asked countless questions of our family, especially Aunt Sally, who was a fountain of knowledge.

I met with the Quincy, IL historians and found block where Klitzes lived for about 1 year

- searched Church Books of Schoppingen, Eggerode – found more Klitzes and pieced the connections together

-found Metelen connection – Christopher - **CLICK**

Fr., 14.06.2019

Westfälische Nachrichten

Zeitungs-Gruppe Münster  


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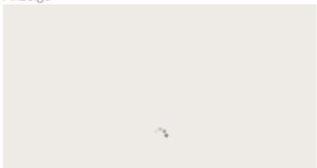
Deutsch-amerikanisches Familientreffen

„Heimische“ Erde in kleinen Dosen

Schöppingen-Eggerode - Drei Jahre zuvor hatten die Planungen begonnen: Nun war der Tag gekommen, an dem die Mitglieder der Familie Klitz aus Nebraska und Ohio die Stätten ihrer Vorfahren in Deutschland besuchten – einige zum ersten Mal. Von Matthias Frye

Donnerstag, 02.07.2015, 06:07 Uhr

Eine Woche lang dauerte der Aufenthalt der **Klitzes**. Und das Programm hatte es wirklich in sich: Unter anderem standen Ausflüge nach Köln, Münster und Nordwalde auf der Liste. In der letztgenannten Stadt leben heute noch entfernte Verwandte mit Namen **Klitz**. Auch ein Besuch im Auswandererhaus in Bremerhaven durfte bei

Anzeige 

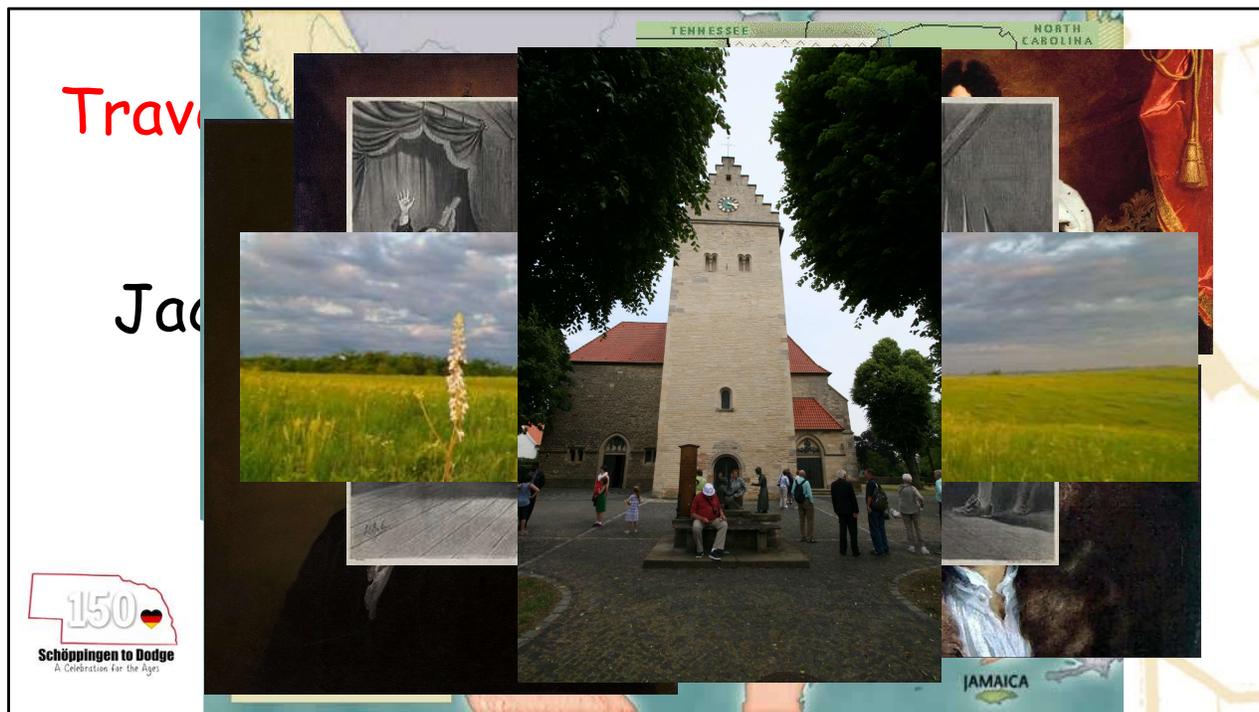


Since my dad likes to tell stories, he told anyone who would listen, or anyone within earshot, of his trip for Lina’s baptism. We had done a fair amount of research since the baptism, adding generations and filling out the branches of our family tree.

Finally, some of Chuck’s cousins, Joe and Sally Klitzes daughters, I think had enough of hearing Chuck talk about the motherland, so they said, why don’t you lead a group of us there to see what you have seen. So we did. There were two write-ups in the local paper about that trip. The first was - **CLICK** (Who knows about the Klitz Bridge?)

We saw the sites we knew about – **CLICK** Chuck and Lina unveiled a bi-lingual sign noting the history of the Klitz Bridge and the family it is named for – you can see a copy of the sign on the Christophorus Klitz table, and were treated to a party-train tour of all the places where our ancestors lived in the area. and the second was -**CLICK** (Local land in small containers)

- **CLICK** And had a trans-Atlantic family reunion with the Nordwalde Klitzes, our long lost cousins. **CLICK - CLICK**



When researching one's family history, it's easy to get caught up in the name of an individual from some small town or which church this great-great-uncle was married in and it's difficult to see exactly how far the total sum on the research reaches. And our research has led us back to that old reliable starting point of 2 - **CLICK**

to two new people Jacobus Klitz and Gertrud Saelman both born around 1709 - That's 310 years ago. What did that look like? - **CLICK**

Pop. Of Earth in 1709: est. 600 million Now: est. 7.5 billion

North America looked like this politically - There was no United States (we still had 67 years to go)

George Washington would not be born for another 23 years, and it would be 23 years until the final 13th British Colony in the Americas was founded, Georgia

Queen Anne of England was fighting the War for Spanish Succession.

Louis XIV (The Sun King) still ruled France

Isaac Newton was still alive

The Salem Witch Trials had concluded only 17 years prior.

Nebraska looked like this - it would be another 179 years until Dodge was incorporated as a town.

St. Brictius parish in Schoppingen was only 900-some years old. And the building – 700-some years old - **CLICK**

Where our story actually started . . .



Now for the second question of how did we get here. – **CLICK – PAUSE – CLICK** In order to answer that, we return to 310 years ago to the town of Metelen, to the earliest confirmed Klitz ancestors – Jacob Klitz and Gertrud Saelman. - **CLICK**

Die Familie Klitz aus dem Munsterland 1709-1869



250 Jahre
Schützbruderschaft
St. Peter & St. Paul

Clicks from previous slide directions

Where it all began . . . Metelen Jacobus Klitz and Gertud Saelmann



This generation is more about what we don't know than what we do know:

We don't know their parents, where exactly they lived, what they did for a livelihood, when exactly they were born – died –, how many children they had, where they came from; but we do know what Jacob and Gertrud started and where it led. - CLICK

Where ancestors originally came from? Maybe Scandinavia, there are Danish families with our name, some Swedish –who could have come over and settled during 30-years war in the early 17th century. The Klitz name exists in eastern Germany/western Poland as well. There are many Klitzes in the Metelen area (ex. Coesfeld (Klitzzi) who predate Jacob, but we have yet to find and confirm a connection. - CLICK

Jacobus – had at least 2 siblings – Elisabeth and Jodocus – we know this from baptism and marriage records

Our first confirmed Klitz family records are the marriage records of the church of Sts. Cornelius and Cyprianus, where in 1731 Jacob Klitz wed Gerturd Bruenick, and in 1734, Jodocus Klitz wed Catherine Fansbach. In 1736, Jacob married his second wife, Gertrud Saelmann.

The Jodocus Branch of the family stayed in Metelen till the mid-1800's, Elisabeth Klitz, (b. 1839) married into Berning family and moved to the Enschede/Hengelo area of the Netherlands, just across the modern-day border of Germany

Jacob and Gertrud had at least 3 children: Elisabeth (b. 1740), Christoph (b. 1743) and Mauritius (b.1748). Jacob had at least one child, a daughter, from his first marriage – Adelheid was born in 1733 - **CLICK**

Christopher Klitz and Maragetha Krude



Schöppingen to Dodge
A Celebration For the Ages

Christophorus Klitz

His story begins with his older sister, Elisabeth. In 1750, at the age of 10 she - **CLICK** was a servant/maid for the Goerke(sp?) family farm just outside of Schoppingen, about – **CLICK** 7km from Metelen. She appears to be the initial connection to Schoppingen. Elisabeth married into the Koenig Family who owned the farm next to the Goerke farm. - **CLICK**,
And no, it was not unusual for children of that age at that time to be sent away to work. - **CLICK** This by the way is a wooden beam found in the walls of a barn on the Koenig family farm and it mentions the son of Elisabeth Klitz and Bernard Herman Koening.

Christoph seems to have followed his sister, for he appears in the Schoppingen Church Books in 1773 when he married Margaret Krude. Margaret probably came from Metelen though she could have come from Emsdetten. They “settled” on the Schulze-Sievert farm, on a small plot of land across the Rockeler Bach (a small stream that runs through the area) from the main farm and the family remained there until the early 1900’s. This is the location of the KlitzenBruecke as it is the bridge over the Rockeler adjacent to the Klitz parcel of land.

Christoph was a tenant farmer (Tagelohner) as were his descendants until they left the farm. His youngest son, Engelbert (b.1789), was the first generation to emigrate from Westphalia, but more on that later. After the death of Christopher in 1789, Margaretha married Henerich Schilds and they had a daughter together. - **CLICK**

Johann Bernard Klitz and Maria Wernsing



Johann Bernard Klitz (1779-1833) and Maria Wernsing - **CLICK**

Next to Jacob, we know the least about this generation. They had 5 children. They are the common ancestor for the German Klitzes and the Nebraska Klitzes.

Ties to the Schulze-sievert family grew with them being the godparents at least 7 times over the generations to Klitz children. It was common practice to honor/utilize people of a higher socio-economic class as godparents to try to move one's family up, but with so many instances of Schulze-Sievert godparents, I think it was more than that.

Johan Bernard and Maria lived through extraordinary times. He was 10 when the French Revolution began. And as a young man, starting a family under the Kingdom of Westphalia, ruled by Napoleon's brother, Jerome. Grew up surrounded by war. **CLICK**

There are no buildings left on what was the Klitz parcel of land, nor the Schultze-Sievert farm. But the buildings and houses probably looked similar to these buildings. These are located at a historical park on the outskirts of Munster and are actually 17th, 18th and 19th century farm buildings from the Munsterland. - **CLICK**



Five Generations of Klitzes lived in Schoppingen/Eggerode area and Heinrich, was the 3rd generation. Heinrich is Renate's branch, and the family stayed on the klitz farm for about 100 years. – **CLICK** though the extended family spread through out the area

You can see on the Heinrich Klitz table copies of the land records from Schoppingen listing where the Klitzes lived.

Heinrich married at least 2 times, and possibly a third, and had 9 children, though only 2 appear to have lived past the age of 19. – **CLICK**

This is a photo of Renate's Great-grandmother, Anna Maria Bruening and her children - **CLICK**

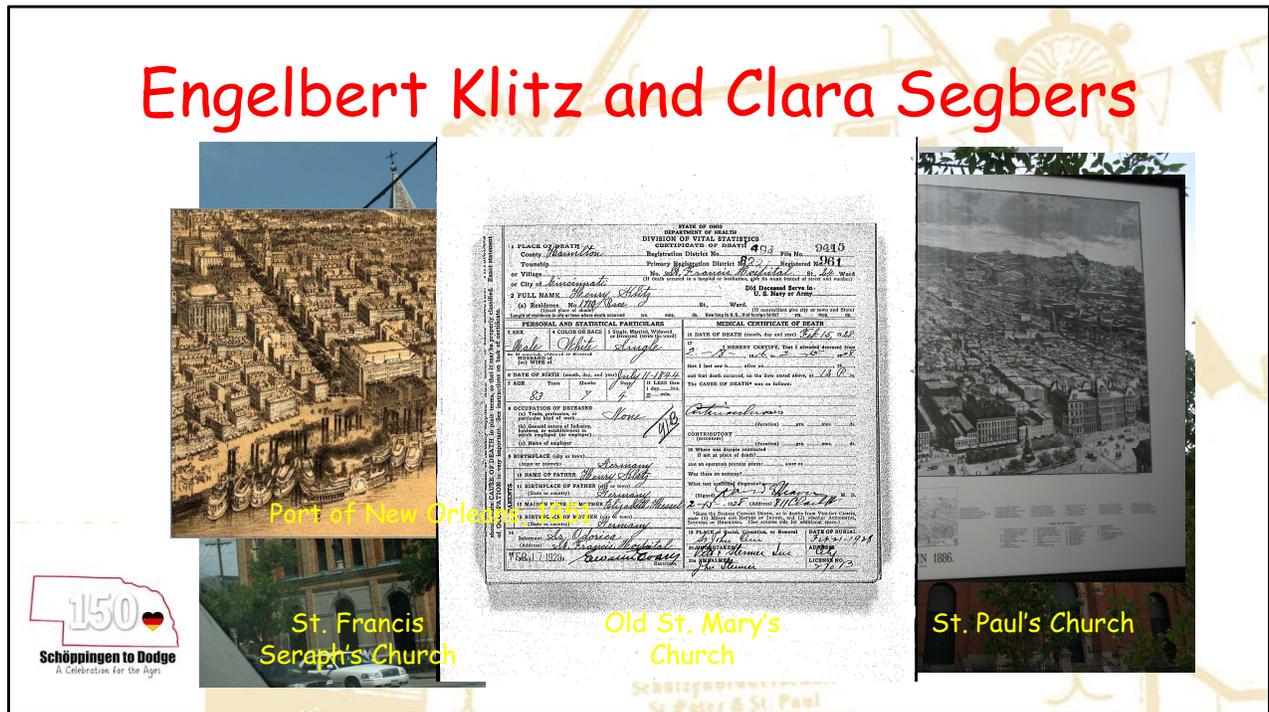
Renate's grand-uncle, Herman, was killed in WWI in northern France. He is the Herman we first saw on the memorial outside the Eggerode church in 2003. The Klitz family was in Schoppingen until 1912 when the remaining family (Renate's grandfather) moved to Nordwalde - **CLICK**



Matthias' information kept including other Klitzes who did not fit into our tree that we could tell, and there was still the other Klitzes listed in the Schoppingen history book who emigrated to the US in addition to our ancestors, but unlike finding Klitzes in the US, these Klitzes HAD to be related to us. Then there was this – **CLICK**

This funeral prayer card was found in a stack of prayer cards my father went through after his mother passed in 2003. Who was this person? The only Theresa Klitz we know is my aunt – and she definitely did NOT die in 1900. This Theresa is - **CLICK** this Theresa, whose family immigrated to Cincinnati, Ohio, 20 years before our ancestors did. - **CLICK**

Engelbert Klitz and Clara Segbers



Part of New Orleans

St. Francis Seraph's Church

Old St. Mary's Church

St. Paul's Church

Engelbert Klitz and Clara Segbers – **CLICK** Engelbert was an uncle to Bernard Klitz, the father of our ancestral family who came to the US in 1869. The Theresa Klitz from the prayer card is Bernard's cousin.

They were first emigrants, tailors, weavers and vest-makers by trade. The Eldest son Heinrich emigrated in 1847 entering the US probably through Baltimore, settling in Cincinnati. The family followed in 1849 through New Orleans

They settled in the Over-the-Rhine area of Cincy, now near downtown, but then on the edge of the city where most residents were German immigrants.

Heinrich (b.1821) married twice – to Elisabeth Himmelgarn in 1852 and to Mariam Livingman in 1864. Only two of his children survived to adulthood, but one, Joseph, died at the age of 20.

Heinrich's sole surviving child, Elizabeth, married John Wissmann in 1884 and they had 8 children. There are still Wissmans in the Cincy area.

Heinrich's sister, Elisabeth, never married and had no children.

The youngest child of Engelbert and Clara, Johann Josef, died at the age of 16.

Theresa was the longest lived child of the Cincy Klitz family.

There was one additional Klitz in Cincinnati – Gerhard Heinrich Klitz – a cousin to Theresa and a member of the Heinrich Klitz family (Renate's family) who immigrated in 1881. Heinrich, as he was called, died in 1928, the last Klitz in Cincinnati.

Now it's interesting, at least to me, that there was this other branch of Klitzes in the States that we are definitely related to, but what I find more interesting and very mysterious is – if us Nebraska Klitzes had a prayer card of a Cincinnati Klitz, there must have been some communication between Nebraska and Cincinnati. And if the last Cincy Klitz, Heinrich, immigrated 32 years after the Engelbert and Clara's family did, there must have been some communication between the Cincy Klitzes and the German Klitzes, But was there communication between the Nebraska Klitzes and the German Klitzes? We don't know. - **CLICK**

Bernard Klitz Sr., Theresia Uphues and Elisabeth Pieper



This generation is a little different because we emphasize both wives of Bernard Sr. Theresia was his first wife, and 3 of the children who immigrated in 1869 were their children – Bernard Heinrich, Johan Engelbert and Bernard Jr. Theresia died in 1858 due to complications from the birth of Bernard Jr. Elisabeth Pieper was Bernard Sr's second wife and mother to Anna Becker and Elisabeth Sellhorst, plus an additional daughter.

One of the main open questions, and one which will probably never be answered definitively, is why did our Klitzes leave? **-CLICK**

1 – second-born sons would not “inherit” the farm, as is evidenced but multiple records showing the Klitzes living on several farms. – **CLICK**

2 – economics - Most Klitzes supplemented their farming with another trade – weaving mostly. Through the 19th century, as England in particular modernized during the Industrial Revolution, Prussia and its people lagged behind. By the mid-1800's linens and textiles from England were less expensive than the hand-made Prussian textiles. Prussian weavers, including our ancestors, could not make enough money.

Ex: Skilled laborers could earn 2-4 times as much in the US then they could in European cities. - **CLICK**

3 – family loss? Bernard's 20 year old daughter from his first marriage to Theresia Uphues died in 1866 due to complications from birth. His youngest child with Elisabeth Pieper, Antonia, died in 1865 at the age of 2. - **CLICK**

4- ads? Did the elaborate advertising campaigns that US railroad companies and communities ran influence our ancestors? Ex: Northern Pacific Railroad sent 800 agents to Europe and Russia to recruit immigrants, Union Pacific advertised in over 2000 newspapers. - **CLICK**

By the way – these last pictures are of the last confirmed farm where Bernard and Elisabeth lived. Some of the buildings, especially the barn, may be old enough to have stood when our ancestors lived there.

5 – Family ties? Were there family ties which helped convince Bernard and Elisabeth to take their five children and leave for America? Maybe – we'll talk more about that tomorrow. - **CLICK**

Die Familie Klitz aus dem Munsterland 1709-1869

