



Welcome again everyone. Today we will be looking at the Klitz family once they arrived in the United States and their lives here. Before we start, I must confess that this presentation is not complete, it's not done. The title states that I will cover the family history until 1950. I'll talk about the Klitzes who immigrated in 1869, their children and some of other early American generations, but the story of our family up to 1950 (and really beyond that) is not my story to tell. It's your story to tell. 1950 and the time around then is still a living memory for many of us here, and I can not do it justice to try to tell our story. So I will start the story with our ancestors who came from Germany, and I'll leave it to you share the rest of your story with each other. Sound good? Ok, let's get started.

CLICK



150 years ago right now, this is what our ancestor saw. Barney Sr. and Elisabeth and 4 of the children – Bernard Heinrich, Barney Jr, Anna and Elisabeth - were 28 days into their trans-atlantic trip – with 16 days to go (left July 7/8 1869). They would have been about 2500 miles from Bremerhaven. In the middle of the North Atlantic

Johan Engelbert left about 11 days after the rest of the family (July 18 1869) – he was 15 days into his journey, and had 27 days ahead of him. - 1400 miles out. Out of sight of mainland Europe.

Both ships would have averaged a speed of about 3.5 knots.

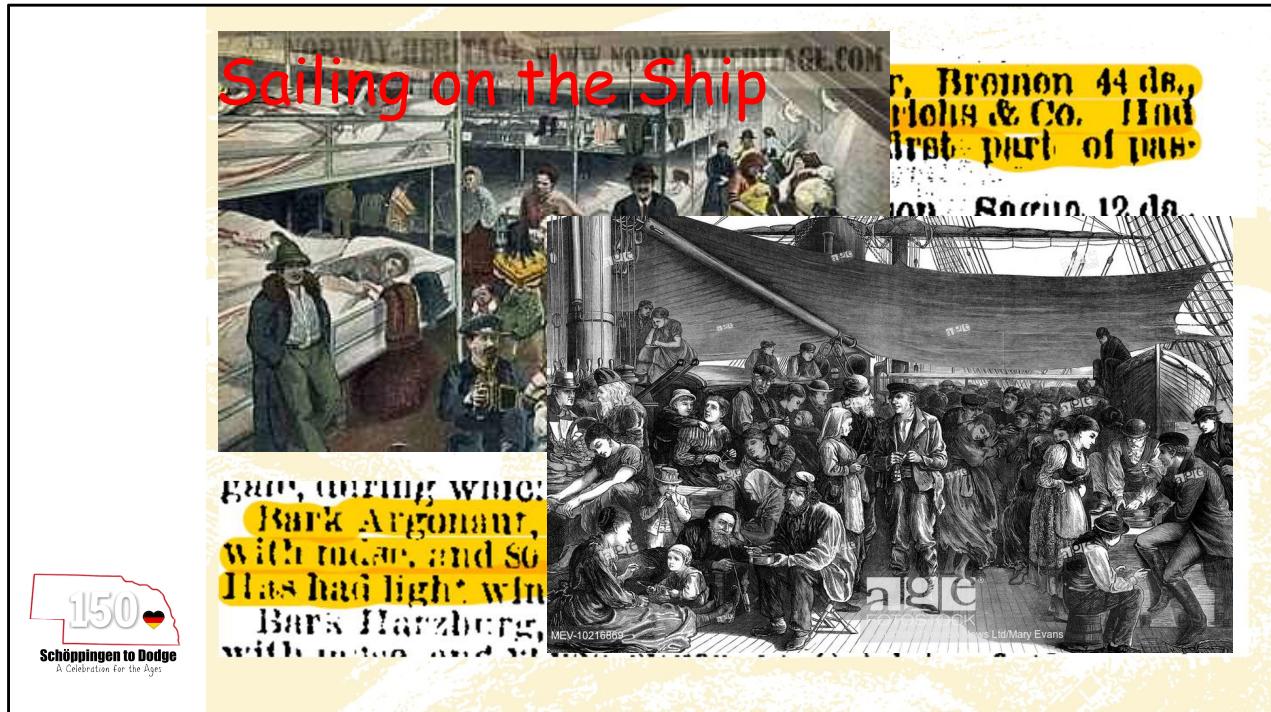
Interesting fact about the Klitzes travel – they sailed by sailboat and not steamboat, which were becoming more prevalent. From Bremerhaven there was both types (71 steam, 59 sail – the largest number of sailing vessels for ports of embarkation to NYC) - [CLICK](#)



We talked yesterday about possible reasons why the Klitzes left Prussia and headed to the US. Here are some typical ads in Europe for land in the US, specifically Iowa and Nebraska - [CLICK](#)

Klitz family left with 200 thalers to their name acc. to the Schöppingen history book. The price in 1873 for *steamship* passage in steerage class was 55 thalers. We're not sure what amount exactly our ancestors paid when they travelled nor how much they had when they arrived to the US - [CLICK](#)

Here are some images of Bremerhaven from around 1870 and models of sailing ships from around that time. - [CLICK](#) - [CLICK](#)



Please allow me to read an excerpt from Harpers Magazine 1865 on what conditions were possibly like for our ancestors traveling in steerage across the Atlantic - **CLICK**

"Follow me now into the compartment in which I have discovered" Berth No. 25." The only standing room in it is a space two yards long by one broad, and to right and left of this rise three tiers of bunks. Imagine the drawer frame of a chemist's shop destitute of its drawers, and you will be able to form a pretty good idea of these same bunks. There are twenty of them in the compartment, and into each one the future occupant is busy putting what bedding he has provided himself with, as the company provides nothing excepting space and victuals." – **CLICK**

These are reports printed in the New York Times of communications with the ships

of our ancestors at sea and as they arrived (READ THEM)

The middle report was from August 27, 1869 when the Argonaut was about 290 miles out from New York City- **CLICK**



Immigrant ships arriving in New York City prior to 1892 arrive at Castle Garden/Clinton – [CLICK](#)

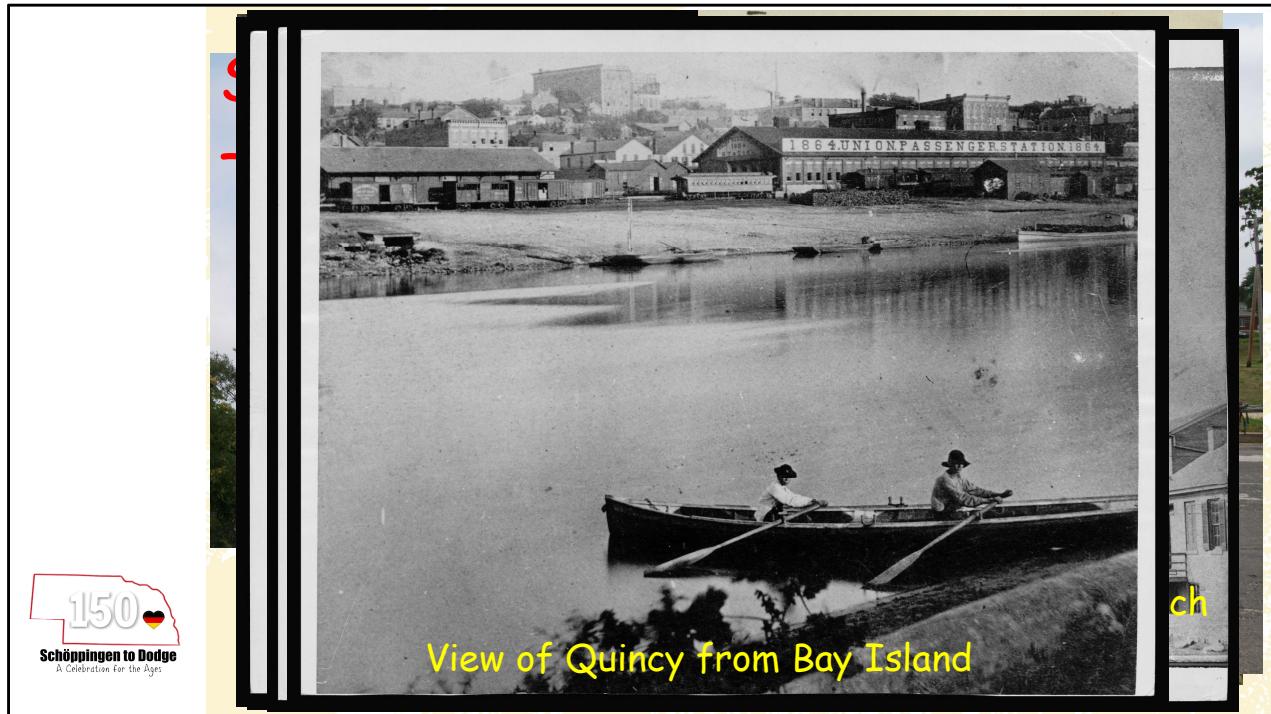
It was a State-run facility, not a federal one. There are reports on the computers from 1869 and 1870 from the Commissioners of Emigration of the State of New York. – [CLICK](#)

The Klitzes were 7 of 99,605 German Immigrants for 1869, (7 of 258, 989 total immigrants for that year) and 7 of 21,318 total immigrants for month of August alone. [CLICK](#)



Castle Garden

Arrival went like this: disembark onto barges and tugged to shore; have names recorded by two officers included names, birthplace, and destination; next is the “booker” a clerk of the Railway Association who determines where immigrants are going, and slip with destination and cost; then the Railway Counter to purchase tickets; exchange brokers – multiple firms to exchange currency; baggage weighed and checked to destination; letter receiving and sending – money held here if sent; then telegraph office; restaurant also available; there is also Ward’s Island and medical departments; outside Castle Garden is the Labor Exchange for those looking for jobs; also outside are boarding house representatives, and City Express office which transports luggage to anywhere in the city. - [CLICK](#)



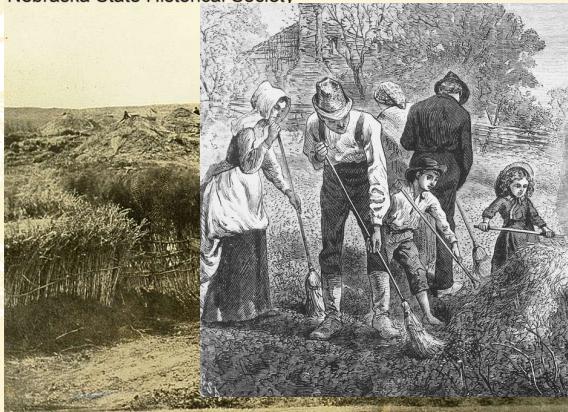
CLICK The Klitzes next appear in the historical record in 1870 in Quincy, IL. It seemed odd at first that they showed up in IL, but IL was the second most popular destination for immigrants coming through Castle Garden – after NY. And Quincy, IL had a large German Immigrant population. Yesterday I mentioned the Ohio/Illinois Klitzes who had one member, Oscar DeWit Klitz move to Quincy about 10 years after our ancestors left. I wonder how many people that confused. But why then and there? - **CLICK**

The Klitz family were not the only ones from the Schoppingen/Eggerode area on the ship. Herman Pieper and his wife, Elisabeth, were on that ship too. Herman's brother, Wilhelm, emigrated to the US and settled in Quincy around 1860, working as a cooper. Herman and his sister, Elisabeth, followed their brother in 1869. Elisabeth brought her family, Bernard Klitz Sr. and their five children. – **CLICK** The Klitzes lived near what is now North 10th and Lind Streets in Quincy – **CLICK** – most likely on this strip of land

19 months after arriving in the Quincy, the Klitz Family homesteaded in Colfax county Nebraska along with Elisabeth's brother, Wilhelm, and his family. - **CLICK**

Homesteading in America - Nebraska

Nebraska State Historical Society



The Homestead Act lasted from 1863-1986 and 270 MILLION acres (about 10% of the land in the US) was claimed under this act. In Nebraska there were 104,260 claims totaling 22,253,314 acres which comprised approximately 45% of the public domain land in the state. - [CLICK](#)

Here are things our ancestors saw and experienced in the first few years in Nebraska

These are Earthen Lodges of the Pawnee Tribe in 1871 Nebraska – [CLICK](#)

There was the Recession of 1873 which lasted 6 years

Locust 1874 – Rocky Mountain Grasshoppers – farmers had 1 hour's notice. Grasshoppers ate everything – all crops, vegetation, horse bridles, etc. The largest locust swarm in 1874, according to an 1880 U.S. Entomological Commission report, "covered a swath equal to the combined areas of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont."

infested an estimated 2 million square miles. Nebraska in 1877 passed a Grasshopper Act, requiring every able-bodied man between the ages of 16 and 60

to work at least two days eliminating locusts at hatching time or face a \$10 fine. - **CLICK**

Floods 1875

Drought 1876

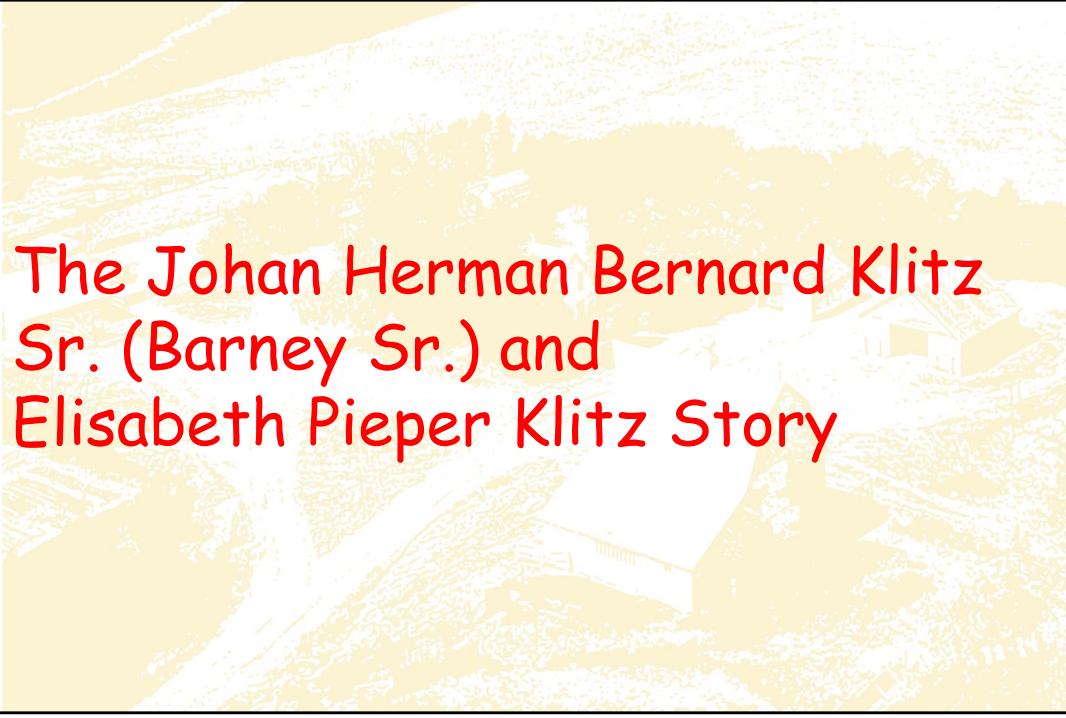
Locust of 1884

Winter of 1887/1888 Although conditions differed some what in various parts of the state, most accounts agree that the early hours of that eventful January 12th were unseasonably warm. Cattle were out in the fields. School children in some areas played outside during the noon recess. In some cases, men were reported to have worked out-of-doors in their shirt-sleeves.

Then, the wind suddenly changed to the north, driving before it a great mass of thick, blinding snow. Men and animals alike were trapped in a freezing, white wasteland.

The thermometer plummeted to 34 degrees below zero.

The storm lasted from 12 to 18 hours over most of the area, and was followed by minor local storms. The state was two weeks digging itself out. When the newspapers finally were able to assemble the details from isolated farms and ranches, it was evident that the loss of life and property sustained in the great blizzard was the greatest ever known in the West. Estimates as to the number who died in Nebraska ran as high as 100. - **CLICK**



The Johan Herman Bernard Klitz Sr. (Barney Sr.) and Elisabeth Pieper Klitz Story



So now we arrive at our ancestors, settling into life in Nebraska, but there are continuing mysteries. For example, Elisabeth Pieper Klitz Meikman – She's a tricky person to research. She can't decide when her birthday was. Schöppingen Church birth records and German Emigration records confirm her birth date as Nov. 14, 1826. According to the ship's passenger list from August 20 1869, she was born in February 1825. According to Holtwick Church Marriage Records – where she and Bernard Sr. were married, she was born in 1827 – it's the same for LDS and Matthias' work. According to the 1880 US Census (where she was listed as wife to Bernhard Meickmann – even though they didn't marry until 1883) she was born in 1827, according to 1885 NE census, she was born in 1816. And when she married Barnard Meikmann, she is listed as being 52 years old (giving her a birth year of 1831). And her tombstone says she was born in 1823. We'll stick with the birth date from the baptism and emigration papers. – **CLICK CLICK**



March 23, 1871

April 25, 1875

June 22, 1877



I want to share with everyone 3 dates of significance for our family

March 23, 1871 – **CLICK**

April 25, 1875 – **CLICK**

June 22, 1877 - **CLICK**

March 23, 1871



Final Affidavit Required of Homestead Claimants.

Act of May 20, 1862.

My husband Bernard Kly (deceased), having made a Homestead entry of the South half of the South east quarter, section No. Twenty four, in township No. 20 North of range No. Four east, subject to entry at Grand Island Nebraska, under the first section of the Homestead Act of May 20th, 1862, do now apply to perfect my claim thereto by virtue of section No. 2294 Revised Statutes of the United States; and for that purpose do solemnly swear,

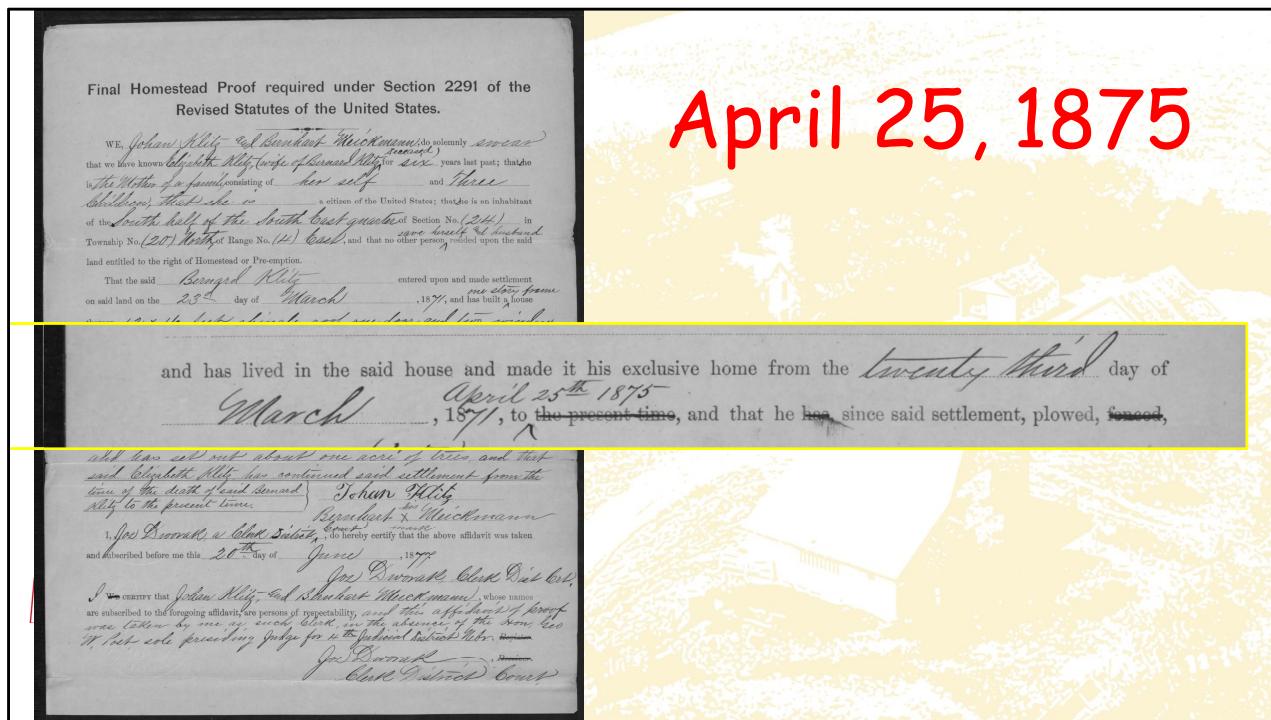
that I am, a citizen of the United States; that

I have made actual settlement upon and have cultivated said land, having resided thereon since the Twenty third day of March, 1871, to the present time; that no part of said land has been alienated, but that I am the sole bona fide owner as an actual settler, and

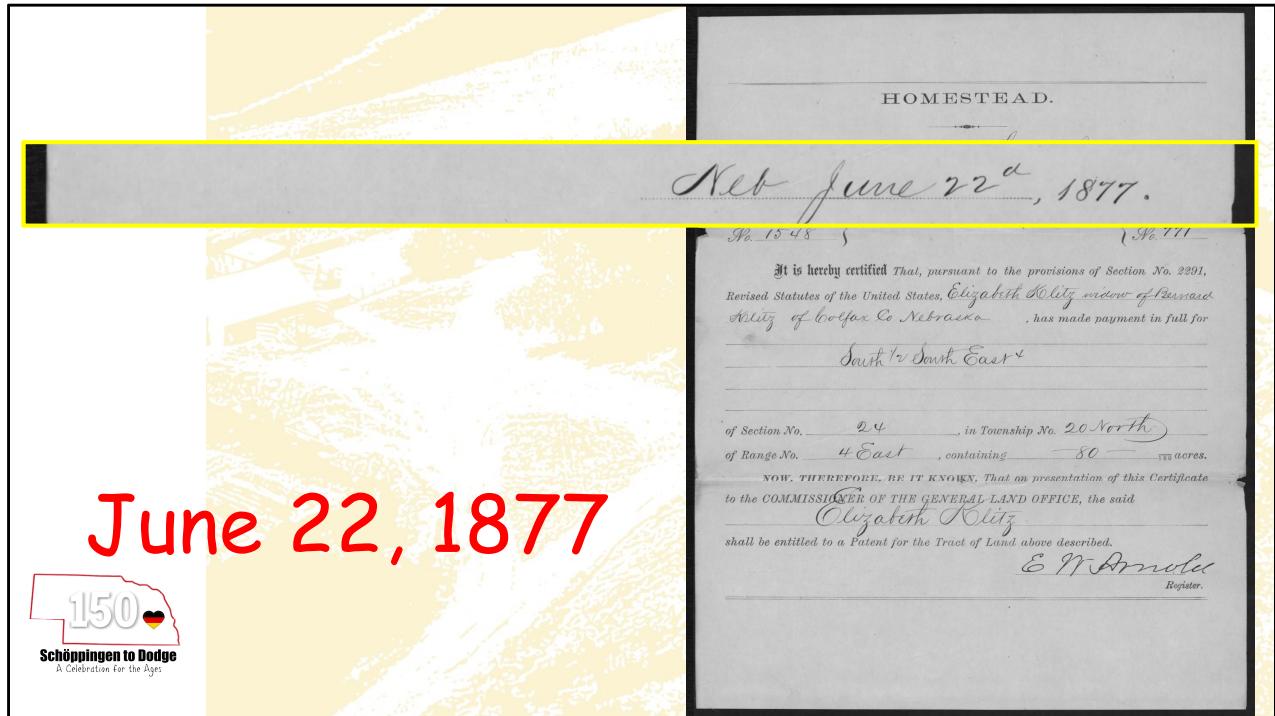
Joe Dvorak, a Clerk District Court, of the Land Office in Grand Island, Nebraska, do hereby certify that the above affidavit was taken and subscribed before me this 20th day of March, 1871.
And this affidavit of proof was taken by me as Clerk Clerk in the absence of the Hon. G. W. Pet, presiding Judge for the Judicial District of Neb.

Joe Dvorak,
Clerk District Court.

This is the day Bernard Sr. and his family first lived on the homestead - [CLICK](#)



This date is most likely when Bernard Sr. died. We don't have any church records or burial records listing when Bernard died. BUT . . . The Homestead Application lists this date above where "the present time" is crossed out. We are fairly confident this denotes the date of Bernard's death - **CLICK**



This is the date recorded for when the Klitzes proved up on the homestead, thus completing the requirements laid out in the Homestead Act – **CLICK - CLICK**

That the said Bernard Klitz entered upon and made settlement
 on said land on the 23^d day of March, 1877, and has built a house
 thereon 12 x 16 feet shingle roof one door and two windows
 and has lived in the said house and made it his exclusive home from the twenty third day of
March, April 25th 1875, to the present time, and that he ~~has~~ since said settlement, plowed, ~~seeded~~,
 and cultivated about (45) acres of said land, and ~~has~~ made the following improvements thereon, to wit:
Dug a well built a sod stable and granary 7x16 feet
and has set out about one acre of trees, and that
said Elizabeth Klitz has continued said settlement from the
time of the death of said Bernard Klitz to the present time. Johan Klitz
Bernard Klitz ^{his} Meickmann
mark



My brother read this out yesterday at the Homestead, but here 's a look at the description of the work the Klitzes did on the farm to prove up on the claim. Some items of note on this document is the mention again of Bernard Sr.'s death, Johan Klitz's signature and the fact that Bernard Meickmann was illiterate. – **CLICK - CLICK**



The Klitz Family Homestead
1933/1934



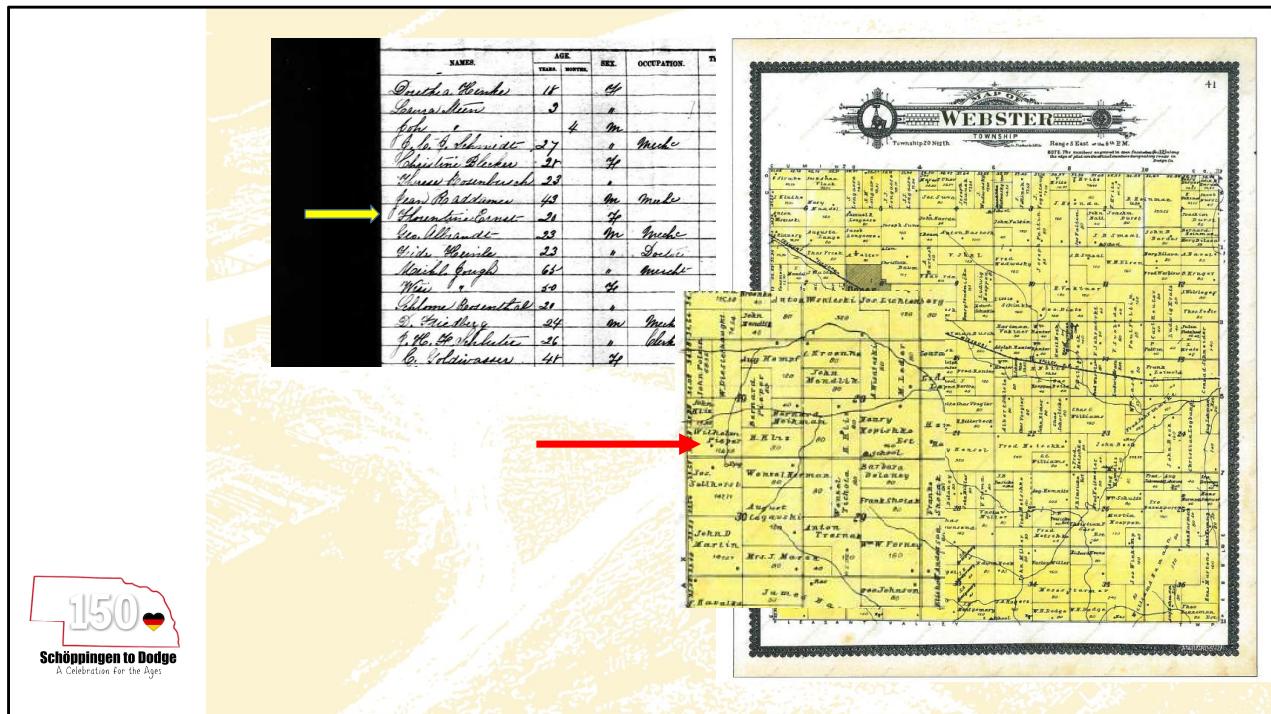
While we have a description of the first house erected on the homestead, we do not have any pictures. We do have examples of early homesteader/settler houses in Nebraska. -
[CLICK](#)



The Bernard Heinrich Klitz and Florenteen Ernst Story



CLICK - CLICK



CLICK - Bernard was the first-born son of Bernard Sr. and Theresa Uphues. He homesteaded his own farm shortly after the rest of the family homesteaded the original farm. You can see (hopefully) in this map how close the Klitz farms were to each other. You can also see the Meickmann, Pieper, and Sellhorst farms. - **CLICK**

Bernard married Florentine Ernst in 1878 here in Dodge. Florentine – we don't know much about her. She most likely emigrated in 1861, alone, at the age of 20? She and Bernard had no children. Then Florentine disappeared from the historical record. She does not appear in the 1910 US Census, suggesting she died before then.

Bernard stayed on the farm after Florentine's assumed death, with a servant, Ernestia Krause, and her son, Carl. Bernard died in 1917. - **CLICK**



The Johann Engelbert Klitz and Angela Kluthe Grovijohn Story



CLICK CLICK

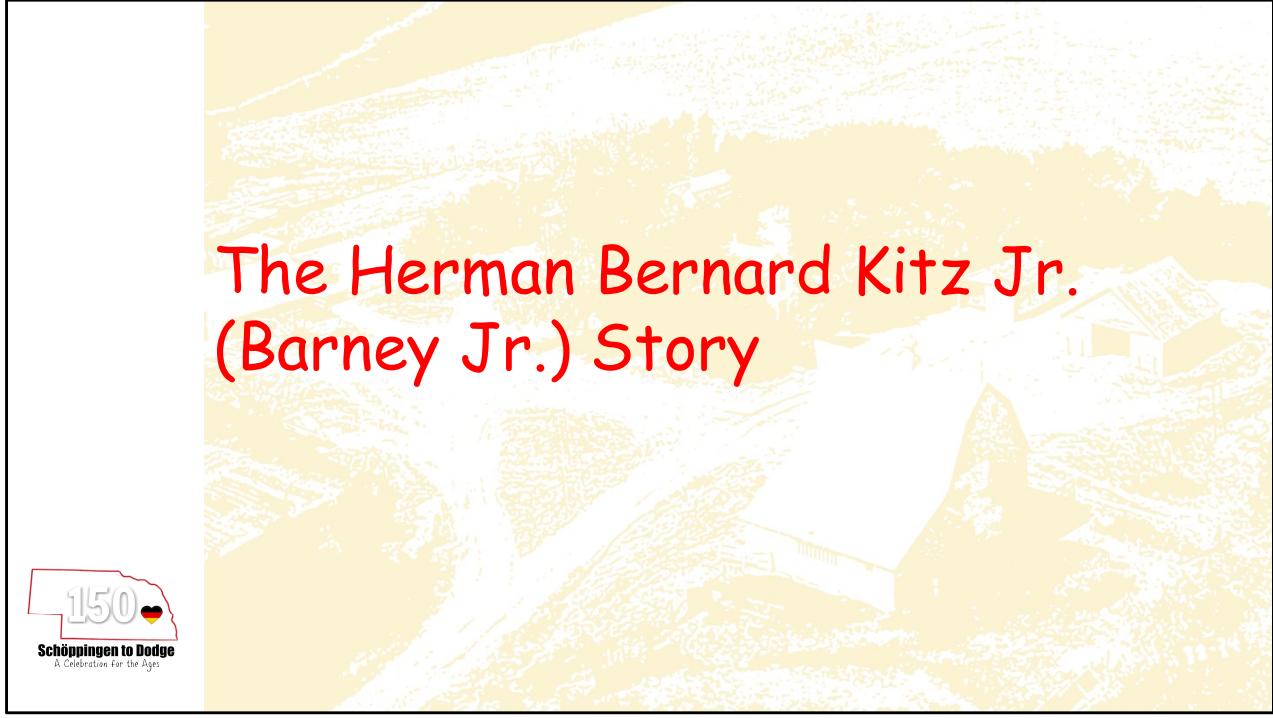


- [CLICK](#) - Johan Engelbert or John Henry was born in 1849 and emigrated in 1869 like the rest of his immediate family. But as mentioned earlier, he left Bremerhaven 11 days after the rest of the family. We've long speculated as to why he did not travel with the rest of the family, but we have no information to truly indicate any reason.

John Henry took over the Klitz homestead and in 1878 he married Angela Kluthe Grovijohn. Angela was a widow, previously married to Frederick Grovijohn who died in 1876. Angela and Frederick had one child, Justina. Justina moved to the Klitz homestead when her mother married John Henry.

John Henry and Angela had only two children – John Caspar and Henry Bernard. John Caspar inherited the Klitz farmstead from his mother after the passing of John Henry in 1900. Angela also purchased a farm for Henry Bernard which was (and is) basically adjacent to the Klitz homestead. Both farms are still in the family.

Justina, John Caspar's and Henry Bernard's half-sister, married James Leonard Wingert in 1898. Together they had 7 children. - [CLICK](#)



The Herman Bernard Kitz Jr. (Barney Jr.) Story



CLICK – CLICK –



- **CLICK** Barney was the last born child of Bernard Klitz Sr. and Theresia Uphues, born in 1858. Complications from his birth contributed to the death of his mother. Barney Jr. was also blind, but we do not know if the difficulty of his birth contributed to his blindness or not.

We don't know much about Barney Jr. He did live with his step-mother, Elisabeth Pieper, after his father's death. And when Elisabeth married Bernard Meickmann, Barney and his younger half-sister, Elisabeth, lived with them on the Meickmann farm.

After the death of Elisabeth Pieper in 1891, Barney Jr. lived with his half-sister Elisabeth Klitz Sellhorst and her family.

Barney Jr. lived with the Becker family from at least 1910 until his death in 1920 from a stroke as evidenced in census and church records.

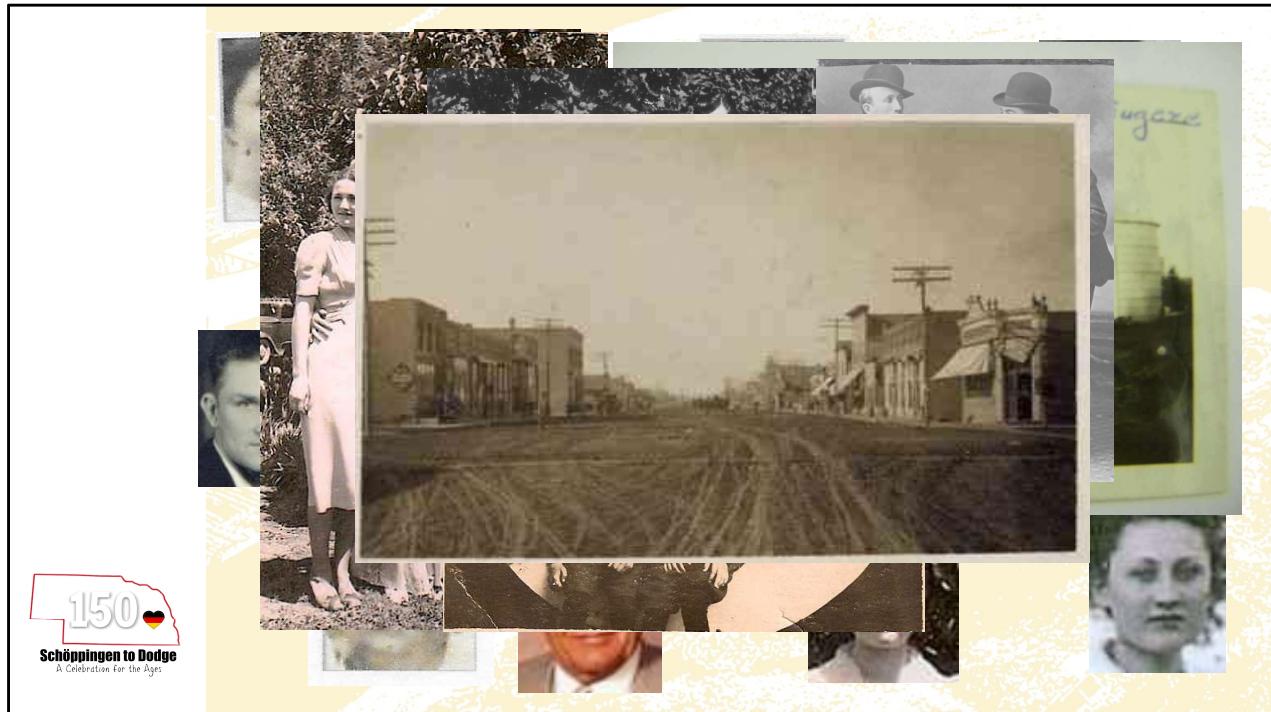
And here's a little tidbit for everyone about Barney Jr. - Acc. To 1900 US Census did not speak English - **CLICK**



The Anna Klitz and Hubert Becker Story



CLICK – CLICK



- **CLICK** - Anna Klitz was the eldest child of Barney Sr and Elizabeth Pieper, sister to Elisabeth Sellhorst, and half-sister of the 3 boys.

The Becker family goes back to 1751 with Johann Heinrich Becker and Anna Catharine Schneider from Gimmingen/Gummingen-on-the-Rhein in the state of Rheinland-Pfalz. (though one branch – the Giffels - does extend to the mid-1600's)

The Beckers came to the US on June 6 1870 into the port of Boston, MA, led by Peter Becker (the father) and Mary Kipper (the mother). Their 2 children travelled with them – Hubert and Catherine as well as Peter's sister, Anna. They emigrated to Wisconsin and then homesteaded in Colfax County, about 4-5 sections from the Klitz farmstead.

Anna Klitz and Hubert Becker married in 1877 at Sacred Heart Church in Olean. They lived on the Becker farmstead and raised a family of 11 Children. Hubert is listed as one of the first citizens of Howells. Children were: Peter, Bernard, Anna, William (Willy), Elisabeth, Paul, Mary, Carolina (Carrie), Hubert, Henry and Eleanora.

On September 7, 1895, a fire destroyed downtown Dodge where Hubert ran/owned a merchandize store. With the store destroyed, Hubert moved to Osmond, NE, a little more than 75 miles from Dodge.

Anna and the children joined Hubert a few years later. The Becker family farmed just outside the town of Osmond, and Hubert ran a store in Osmond.

Anna died on July 8, 1920 and Hubert died in 1941 spending the last few years of his life with his daughter Mary Marek and her family. The Becker family includes the Borgman family, the Marek family, - **CLICK**



The Elizabeth Klitz and Joseph Sellhorst Story



CLICK - CLICK



CLICK - Elizabeth was the youngest surviving child of Barney Sr. and Elisabeth Pieper. She was only 7 years old when the family left Prussia and settled in the US. After Barney Sr's death, Elizabeth lived with her mother, step-father Bernard Meickmann and her half-brother, Barney Jr., on the Meickmann farm.

The Sellhorst brothers, Joseph in 1880 and Arnold in 1874, came to the US. Arnold farmed in the Dodge area and Joseph spent his first year in Nebraska as a boarder/worker on the Frederick Bohn farm near St. Charles, NE.

Elizabeth and Joseph married in 1883 and settled on a farmstead adjacent to the original Klitz homestead. Together, they raised 11 children – Elizabeth, Bernard, Arnold, John, Joseph, Hubert, Mary, William, Frank, Lena and Conrad. Elizabeth died in 1927, though I do not have a specific date. Joseph lived until 1938.

The Sellhorst family includes the Wisnieski family.

Tidbit for Joseph - Acc. To 1900 US census Joseph did not speak English - **CLICK**



The Klitz Family in America 1869-1950

