



# Our Story Continues . . .

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## "The Homestead Act was the hope of the poor man" - Mari Sandoz

"Signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln on May 20, 1862, the [Homestead Act](#) encouraged Western migration by providing settlers 160 acres of public land. In exchange, homesteaders paid a small filing fee and were required to complete five years of continuous residence before receiving ownership of the land. After six months of residency, homesteaders also had the option of purchasing the land from the government for \$1.25 per acre. The Homestead Act led to the distribution of 80 million acres of public land by 1900."

- Library of Congress, read more [here](#)



Daniel Freeman, the first homesteader in Beatrice, Nebraska in 1863. (Photo taken in 1904.)

## Facts and Figures

- 123 - Number of years the Homestead was in effect;
- 10 - Percentage of U.S. land claimed under the Act (270,00,000 acres)
- 45 - Percentage of Nebraska land claimed under the Act (22,253,314 acres)
- 80 - number of acres the Klitz family initially homesteaded

## The Homestead Act in Nebraska

The Homestead Act mandated applications needed to be made in Land Offices of the state in question, in our case, Nebraska.

Nebraska eventually had about 20 land offices located throughout the state with the

offices opening in an east to west direction as settlers advanced into the state.

The land office in West Point was relocated from Omaha in 1868 and on May 20, 1869, an office was

opened in Grand Island servicing the Platte Valley.

The Nebraska homesteaders in our family most likely made their applications in either the West Point office or the Grand Island office.

## Historical Impact of Homesteading

The general perception of homesteading, perpetuated by historians during the 20th century, was that the Homestead Act was a failure. The Act was viewed as a land grab by the wealthy as well as grifters filing false claims in search of a quick profit.

Richard Edwards, in his article for the Great Plains Quarter-

ly "[Changing Perceptions of Homesteading as a Policy of Public Domain Disposal](#)", argues that the Homestead Act was actually a success and produced "actual settlers".

While there was a portion of people staking a claim with nefarious intentions, most of the homesteaders were people,

both citizens of the United States and foreign immigrants, looking for a new life, a successful life. That was the case for our ancestors.

To learn more about homesteading, click [here](#).



Homesteaders (not the Klitz family) in the Loup Valley, Nebraska, on their way to their homestead, 1886

## What did a homestead look like?

Homesteaders had between five and seven years to prove up on their claims in order to receive the deed to the land. Applications included descriptions of the work homesteaders had completed as proof of their claim. The proofs give a glimpse of what a homestead looked like. Here is what the Klitz homestead looked like.

" . . . Bernard Klitz entered upon and made settlement on said land on the 23rd day of

March, 1871, and has built a [one story frame] 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, 1871 to ~~the present time~~ [April 25th, 1875] and that he ~~has~~ since said settlement, plowed, ~~fenced~~, 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 7 x 16 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."

- 20 June 1877

You can read more about life on a homestead [here](#).

## The Klitz Homestead, aged 150 years

This past summer we celebrated the arrival of the Klitz family to the United States 150 years ago.

In a little more than a year from now, (March 23, 2021) we will mark the sesquicentennial of the original Klitz homestead.

150 years. That is a long time by Nebraska standards. That's 150 growing seasons and 150 harvests. That's thousands and thousands of bushels of grain. Thousands of hours laboring in the fields at first for survival and later to make ends meet.

The homestead is more than just the land, more than just the buildings. It is also the people, our family, who poured their blood, sweat and tears into this land, our land so that we all might live and succeed.

Here's to another 150 years!



Image of the Klitz Family Homestead, Colfax County, Nebraska, 1933/1944

## Encounters with [Anthony Janssen van Salé](#)

It is not too early to prepare for National Talk Like a Pirate day on September 20. And what better way to prepare than to learn about a pirate in our family tree.

Jan Jansz of Haarlem, Netherlands, was one of many European sailors who offered their services to the Ottoman Empire and rulers in North Africa. Jan converted to Islam, took the name of Mou-

lay Rais, and harassed European ships and lands, including the sacking of Baltimore in southern Ireland. Jan wed a Moroccan woman and to them was born Anthony.

Anthony continued in his father's pirate footsteps. Anthony sought a new life, and after marrying Grietje Reyniers, rumored to be a woman of ill repute, sailed for New Amsterdam, now known as New

York. Anthony is thought by many to be the first Muslim in the New World. His eventful life led to a long list of famous Americans, including the Vanderbilt family and Jackie Bouvier Kennedy.

You can read more about Anthony [here](#). Read about his father's most famous raid [here](#).



Image of a Barbary Coast raider, a corsair captain. (from Adrian Tinniswood's book, *Pirates of Barbary*.)

## Encounters with [Peter Konen](#)

For the past twenty years, the United States has experienced an explosion of Micro and craft breweries. But did you know that long before the U.S. beer market was dominated by the likes of Coors and Budweiser, local breweries were common throughout the country?

One such brewery

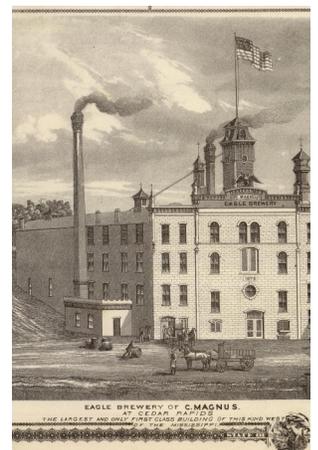
was C. Magnus' Eagle Brewery in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, which employed a young man by the name of Peter Konen, an immigrant from Luxembourg.

Peter's mother and father, Katharina Haack and Francois Konen, immigrated to the United States with their six children in September 1867, settling in Illi-

nois.

Peter made his way to Iowa, settling in Cedar Rapids and marrying Alvina Reihman, a German immigrant. He found work as an engineer for the Magnus Brewing Company.

Read about breweries in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, [here](#) and [here](#).



Print of the C. Magnus owned Eagle Brewery in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

## Encounters with [Simon van Ackeren](#)

No one likes being accused of having a "holier-than-thou" attitude, but one person in the family tree can rightfully claim to be holier than all of us, Servant of God Simon van Ackeren.

Born with the first name of Lawrence in the town of Humph-

rey, Nebraska, Simon was a brother in the Order of Friars Minor.

Simon joined the Order on March 2, 1937. He became ill in early 1938 and died on May 10, 1938, from tuberculosis at the age of twenty.

Brother Simon has been put forward for consideration of canonization.

You can read more about Brother Simon and his legacy [here](#) and [here](#).



Image of Servant of God Simon van Ackeren from St. Francis of Assisi Church in Humphrey, Nebraska

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Did you know?

There are over 9000 people in the overall family tree.

Some branches reach all the way back to Roman times, though a bit more research to confirm these connections is needed.

There are also over 25 countries (modern and ancient) represented in the tree. They range from current-day United States to Imperial Germany to the Barbary Coasts of Morocco to Medieval Wales to the Holy Roman Empire to ancient Rome itself.

Have questions about what's in this issue?

Want further information about an ancestor?

Notice something that's incorrect or doesn't seem quite right?

Then feel free to email us at

[info@klitzfamily.com](mailto:info@klitzfamily.com).

### Family Heirloom Corner

In 1904, W.S. George purchased the East Palestine (OH) Pottery Company. His new company, the W.S. George Pottery Company, produced dozens of different styles and patterns until the factory doors closed in 1960.

This "Lido" shaped semi-porcelain dinnerware set (left) was produced starting in the 1930s.

John Caspar Klitz and Mary Schrage owned twelve place settings of this dinnerware.



The twelve place settings were divided amongst the grandchildren of John Caspar and Mary, through their son, Frank.