

# The Rosental Vollmanns: “Ethnic Germans from Russia”



Johann Vollmann  
1878 – 1940

Rosalia (Kelsch) Vollmann  
1885 - 1960

St. Joseph’s Colony



Philipp Vollmann  
1868 – 1943

Amalia (Neigum) Vollmann  
1871 – 1906

Monika (Hoerner) Vollmann  
1868 - 1935

Prelate Colony

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## Preface



I am the eldest son of Alois Vollman, who was the fifth eldest of John and Rosa's children. John and Rosa had a large family, three girls and ten boys (one of whom died at the age of 18 months). As a youth I had frequent opportunities to meet my uncles and aunts, usually at family gatherings on the homestead. These could have been great opportunities to learn more about my heritage but, as with all young boys, I was more interested in playing outside than being stuck indoors with the old folks. I never knew Grandfather John because he passed away four years before I was born. Grandmother Rosa lived until I was sixteen.

Some of the early information about life in Russia and homesteading in a new land did stick with me and over the years I continued to collect additional bits of information. It wasn't until I retired from full time employment that I had the time and interest to dig deeper into my ancestry. I began my journey by reading every book and article I could find on our German-Russian heritage, joined societies and signed up for database access to sites like Family Search, MyHeritage, Black Sea German Research, GRHS, AHSGR, Ancestry and others.

This provided me with good context for my journey, but unfortunately there was not much data on Vollmanns in Crimea. The breakthrough came when I learned that copies of the Rosental Catholic Church records were intact and safe in the Saratov Archives in Russia. The bad news was that Russia had so far refused to have these records released on microfilm. The only practical way for me to access them was to hire a researcher to look through the archives on a record-by-record basis, copy what I asked for and send those records to me. The data then had to be extracted from the Cyrillic alphabet.<sup>1</sup> This was expensive and time consuming, but after the first couple of orders I was hooked; couldn't stop ordering until I had a complete inventory of Vollman baptisms, marriages and deaths for the 100 years our ancestors lived in Crimea!<sup>2</sup> North American research is a far simpler exercise; most archives are free or charge a modest administration fee. I also soon developed a small network of about 20 relatives who shared data with me and reviewed my work for accuracy.

This document is an attempt to bring together what I have learned about the Rosental Vollmans. The report at this point is quite detailed and thorough, nevertheless I am certain there are other relatives out there who have information that future generations would like to have recorded. If you have such information, please send it to me by email at [vollmanken@gmail.com](mailto:vollmanken@gmail.com) or text me at 403-463-5827. Alternatively you can mail me at 19 Evergreen Rise SW, Calgary Alberta T2Y 3H6. I promise to include contributions in subsequent versions of this document. If you're a relative and just want to say hello, I'd be happy to hear from you.

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<sup>1</sup> This work would not have been possible without the volunteer assistance of experienced genealogists Merv Weiss and Matt Klee.

<sup>2</sup> In the years since I began this research, the results have been posted on multiple websites, free of charge.



## Contents

1.	How We Became Germans in Russia .....	9
2.	Georg Mathias Vollman .....	11
3.	The First Migration Journey .....	14
4.	100 Years of Vollmann Heritage in Rosental .....	17
5.	Russia Changes the Rules .....	42
6.	Dominion Lands Act .....	43
7.	St. Joseph's Colony .....	44
8.	History Repeats Itself .....	47
9.	The Second Migration Journey .....	48
10.	Homesteading .....	53
11.	First Generation Canadians .....	64
12.	Today's Descendants of John and Rosa .....	67
13.	The Prelate Colony Vollmans .....	88
14.	What Happened to the Vollmanns Who Remained in Crimea .....	113
15.	Some Personal Reflections .....	118
	References .....	122
	Conversion Factors .....	127
	Appendix 1: Other Colonies in Crimea .....	128
	Appendix 2: Topographical View of Aromatne in 2013 .....	131
	Appendix 3: Original Birth Record for Rosalia Kelsch .....	132
	Appendix 4: Original Marriage Record for Johann and Rosalia .....	133
	Appendix 5: Kelsch Partial Family Tree .....	134
	Appendix 6: Reinbold Partial Family Tree .....	135
	Appendix 7: John Vollman's Homestead Documents .....	136
	Appendix 8: John Vollman's Pre-emption Documents .....	143
	Appendix 9: Homesteads; Dominion Land Grant Information .....	150
	Appendix 10: Original Marriage Record for Philipp and Amalia .....	153
	Appendix 11: Partial Ruckhaber Crimean Family Tree .....	154
	Appendix 12: Partial Neigum Crimean Family Tree .....	155
	Appendix 13: More on Vollmann Roots .....	156

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Founding Families of Rosental .....	17
Figure 2: Ruins from Atmagea Reveal Construction Technique with Clay Blocks and Thatched Roof .....	18
Figure 3: Early Economic Progress of the Vollmann and Kelsch Families .....	21
Figure 4: Rosental Farming Achievements 1825 .....	22
Figure 5: German Women Cooking Sausage in Crimean Village of Rosental.....	24
Figure 6: Vollmann Households in Rosental in 1852 .....	24
Figure 7: Marriage Record for Johann and Rosalia (translated from Appendix 4).....	26
Figure 8: Children of Mathias and Margaretha .....	27
Figure 9: Children of Georg and Elizabeth .....	28
Figure 10: Josef and Veronica Family Tree, Part 1.....	29
Figure 11: Josef and Veronica Family Tree, Part 2.....	30
Figure 12: Josef and Veronica Family Tree, Part 3.....	31
Figure 13: Dorothea Josef & Paul Family Tree.....	32
Figure 14: Karl and Elisabeth Family Tree.....	33
Figure 15: Franziska & Jakob; Katharina & Josef Family Trees .....	34
Figure 16: George and Elisabeth Family Tree .....	35
Figure 17: Children of Mathias and Magdalena .....	36
Figure 18: Jacob & Katharina; Margaretha & Wendelin Family Trees .....	37
Figure 19: Philip and Theresia Family Tree .....	38
Figure 20: Philip and Katharina Family Tree .....	39
Figure 21: Dorothea and Andreas Family Tree .....	40
Figure 22: Dorothea and Ludwig Family Tree .....	41
Figure 23: Extract from S.S. Lake Michigan Manifest .....	48
Figure 24: S.S. Lake Michigan .....	48
Figure 25: Typical Steerage Accommodation .....	49
Figure 26: Typical Sod House .....	55
Figure 27: Single Furrow Plow and Oxen.....	56
Figure 28: John's Assets in 1911 as Sworn on Homestead Patent Application .....	57
Figure 29: John's Assets in 1917 as Sworn on Patent Application for the Pre-Emption .....	57
Figure 30: Seifert School .....	58
Figure 31: Veronica and Joe Vollman in School Photo, 1917 .....	58
Figure 32: St. Peter's Church Picnic .....	59
Figure 33: Veronica, Rosa, Joe, Isador, John & Alois .....	60
Figure 34: Left; Alois on binder, brother Joe on tractor; Right; threshing crew - unknown source .....	61
Figure 35: Two of John's Sons Served in the Military in World War II; Pete and Gus.....	62
Figure 36: Rosa Vollman .....	62
Figure 37: John and Rosa Grave Site in St. Peter's Cemetery.....	62
Figure 38: Photo of First Generation Canadian Vollmans .....	64
Figure 39: Children of John and Rosa .....	67
Figure 40: Isador and Mary Family Tree .....	69
Figure 41: Veronica and George Family Tree .....	70
Figure 42: Alois and Pauline Family Tree .....	71
Figure 43: Wendelin and Barbara Family Tree .....	72
Figure 44: Pete and Helen Family Tree .....	73
Figure 45: Anne and Julius Family Tree .....	74

Figure 46: John and Ann Family Tree.....	75
Figure 47: August and Violet Family Tree.....	76
Figure 48: Frank and Mildred Family Tree.....	77
Figure 49: Clem and Rose Family Tree.....	78
Figure 50: Rose and Richard Family Tree.....	79
Figure 51: Marriage Record for Philipp and Amalia (English extraction) .....	88
Figure 52: Philipp Vollmann's Family from S.S. Ausonia Manifest .....	89
Figure 53: Ruckaber Family from S.S. Corsican Manifest .....	89
Figure 54: Vollman and Ruckaber Families from 1911 Canada Census .....	89
Figure 55: St. Mary's Rosenthal Church.....	92
Figure 56: Earl Haig School .....	93
Figure 57: Current Title Holders of Homestead Grants.....	95
Figure 58: Children of Philipp and Amalia .....	96
Figure 59: Katharina and John Family Tree .....	97
Figure 60: Winter, Ruckaber and Fleckenstein Family Tree .....	98
Figure 61: Martin and Elizabeth Family Tree.....	99
Figure 62: John and Franziska Family Tree .....	100
Figure 63: Paulina and Kasper Family Tree.....	101
Figure 64: Philip and Petronella Family Tree.....	102
Figure 65: Extract from S.S. Dominion Manifest .....	109
Figure 66: John and Elizabeth Family Tree .....	110
Figure 67: Ship Manifest for another John Vollmann.....	110
Map 1: Expansion of Russia during the Reign of Catherine II.....	9
Map 2: Sources of Rosental Immigration .....	11
Map 3: Matheus' Rhineland Roots .....	12
Map 4: Danube River and Overland Routes to Crimea .....	14
Map 5: Location of Rosental in the Crimea .....	15
Map 6: Rosental Town Map.....	19
Map 7: Location of German Colonies in Saskatchewan .....	44
Map 8: Final Stage of Vollmann 1908 Migration .....	50
Map 9: Destinations of the Vollman, Kelsch and Reinbold Immigrants.....	53
Map 10: Location of Vollmann Homestead and Pre-emption.....	54
Map 11: Location of Vollman Homesteads, Churches, Schools and Cemeteries in Prelate Colony .....	90
Map 12: Expanded View of Vollman Homesteads, Church, Schools and Neighbours .....	91
Map 13: The Urals and Caucasus Mountain Regions .....	115





## 1. How We Became Germans in Russia

The empress Catherine II, known as Catherine the Great, ruled the Russian Empire from 1762 to 1796. Catherine's many accomplishments included continuing the westernization of Russia and greatly expanding its borders. Of interest to us is the expansion southward. Catherine wanted a warm water port for Russian ships to move into the Black Sea and the Mediterranean – essential for the development of Russian trade and naval power. Following two successful wars against the Ottoman Empire, Russia annexed the lands north of the Black Sea. The Black Sea lands came under Russian control in 1774 and Crimea was annexed in 1783.<sup>3</sup> Many of the inhabitants of the conquered area, primarily, but not only Tatars, fled the area leaving large tracts of land available for settlement. Catherine was determined to secure the area with settlers loyal to her to discourage a return of the Turks. She also recognized that these fertile lands could help feed a starving Russian population if they were farmed properly.



Redrawn from Giesinger, page 25

Map 1: Expansion of Russia during the Reign of Catherine II

By birth Catherine was a German princess and in her youth had witnessed the productivity of German farmers and also the scarcity of good land. She assumed they would jump at the opportunity for new cropland and that they would have a certain sense of loyalty to her. They would be the perfect choice to settle her newly conquered lands. She issued a manifesto spelling out the conditions under which Western Europeans, mainly Germans, were welcome and accorded them special rights and privileges, including;<sup>4</sup>

- Free transportation to Russia,
- Freedom of religion,
- 30 to 60 hectares of land per family,
- Exemption from taxes for a period of 5 to 30 years,
- Interest free loans for the acquisition of necessary tools,
- Freedom from import duties,
- Exemption from military service for themselves and their descendants, and
- Local self government.

<sup>3</sup> Giesinger, p 24

<sup>4</sup> Berschauer, p 1; Aberle, p 19; and Pritzkau, para 15

Large numbers of German peasants accepted the invitation, but our Vollmann ancestors were not part of the migration under Catherine II.

After Catherine's death her son Czar Paul I ruled for five years before he was assassinated. He was succeeded in turn by his son Tsar Alexander I, who ruled from 1801 to 1825. Alexander I re-issued his grandmother's manifesto with some sweeteners<sup>5</sup>, but also attached conditions to bar "undesirables." Essentially, the Russian government was unhappy about the quality of the previous waves of German immigrants and this re-script was intended to address these complaints. Alexander I wanted people who were particularly skilled in agriculture and handicrafts — well-to-do farmers with skills in viniculture and management and breeding of livestock.<sup>6</sup> His conditions aimed at attracting capable agriculturists and artisans included;<sup>7</sup>

- Only experienced farmers or tradesmen were to be accepted,
- They must have assets of at least three hundred guilders,
- Only families could come,
- No more than 200 families a year would be accepted, and
- Only people of a higher class would be welcome.

The fourth condition could not be effectively enforced and the quota was greatly exceeded. The Russian recruiters were warmly received by Germans living along the southern Rhine. This was the era of Napoleon and residents were growing weary of French and Austrian armies criss-crossing their lands, looting, burning crops and even conscripting able bodied men into their armies. There was also a shortage of land and political and religious oppression.

While it is okay to say that our family is of German descent, it is not technically correct to say our ancestors came from Germany. Germany did not exist at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Baden and Württemberg were among the remnants of the Holy Roman Empire that at its peak covered all of central Europe comprising more than 500 independent states. Napoleon would declare an end to the Holy Roman Empire in 1806. Other amalgamations of the culturally distinct germanic states would follow until 1871 when the states were unified as a federal nation with a centralized government.

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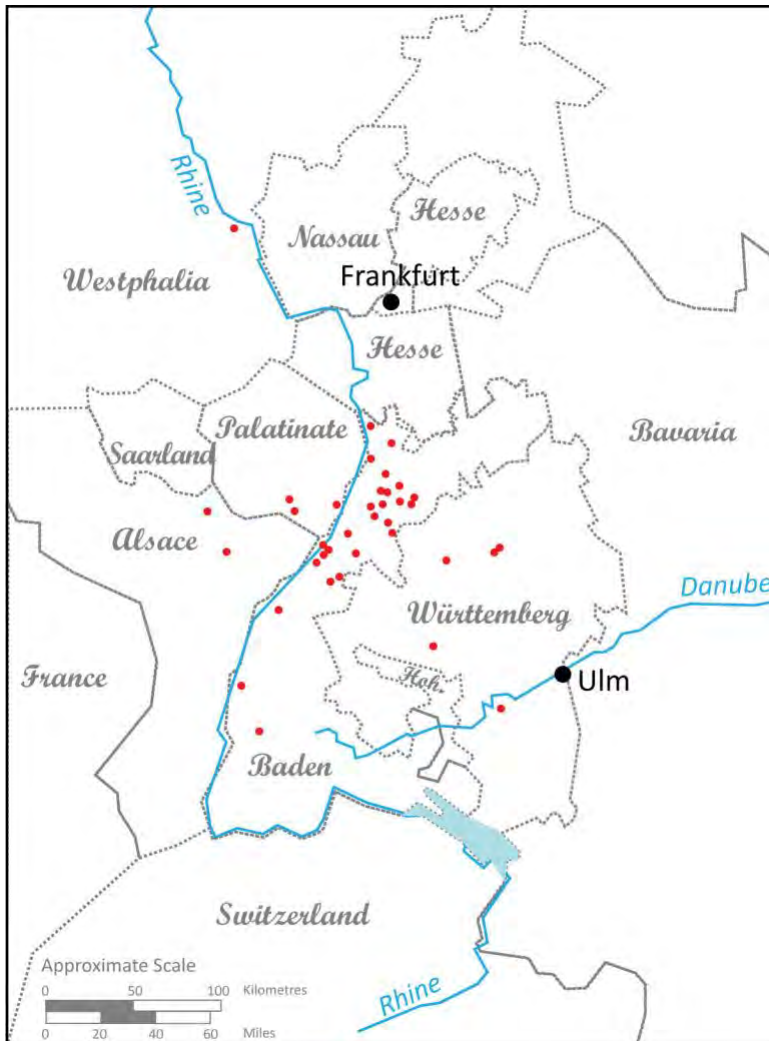
<sup>5</sup> Height 1975, p 2-3

<sup>6</sup> Frank, p 4

<sup>7</sup> Pritzkau, para 56 & Reiten para 12

## 2. Georg Mathias Vollman<sup>8</sup>

The Vollmann and Kelsch families were among those who chose to pursue a new life in Crimea. Both families would wind up in the village of Rosental; in fact, they were among the 56 founding families. They would, however, follow very different courses in time and route to get there. It is recorded that the immigrants came mostly from Baden, although others may have come from Alsace, Württemberg and Bavaria.



Map 2: Sources of Rosental Immigration

Most of the Rosental founding families came from north Baden. Each red dot on Map 2 shows the location of the ancestral village of one or more of the Rosental founding families. (see Appendix 13 for town names). We do not know the ancestral village for a third of the families.

The Kelsch family were among the first wave of migration in 1803. Stumpp's 1816 revision list<sup>9</sup> describes the family as: Kelsch Franz (52) his wife Margaretha (52) and children Katharina (15), Georg (13) and Joseph (6). Their itinerary down the Danube was given as Ulm – Wien – Galatz – Odessa (see Map 4).

Georg Mathias Vollman was part of a second wave in 1809. The 1816 revision list described the family as Vollmann Matheus (41), his wife Barbara (45) and children

Georg (16) Mathias (13) and Dorothea (10).

<sup>8</sup> It was German practice in this era to give a child two names at baptism. The first was a biblical or ancestral name that would be used only on church records. The second name would be used to identify the person to the family and to the world, including on all legal documents.

<sup>9</sup> Stumpp, pp 918-939

Although Mathias was in his early thirties when he decided to move to Crimea, it seems he did a remarkable amount of moving around as a young adult, thereby complicating archive searches to learn more about him. The first official record I found was the marriage of Georgi Mathias to his first wife Anna Susanna Reichart in 1795 in Spechbach.<sup>10</sup> Susanna died in 1797 in the neighbouring village of Epfenbach. There is no record of children being born to this marriage.

The Hilsbach archives record Mathias' second marriage to a Margaretha Reichart in 1798. It is possible that Anna and Margaretha were related, but we know they were not sisters because the birth records show different parents. Margaretha's home town is given as Neckargerach; no home town is provided for Mathias. Mathias would father five children with Margaretha. Their first baby, named Johannes Georgius after his father, was born in Epfenbach in 1799. Unfortunately their first child died as an infant. A second boy was born in 1800 in Spechbach and was again named Johannes Georgius. This was followed by the birth of a third son in 1802. They named him Georgius Mathias. There were to be no more sons.



Map 3: Matheus' Rhineland Roots

Mathias and Margaretha's first daughter Dorothea was born in 1805 in Neunkirchen. Sometime after 1805, Mathias left Baden and crossed the Rhine to the Palatinate. A second daughter Maria Barbara was baptized in Feb 1809 at the age of three in Großfischlingen. The mother is recorded as Margaretha. That baby would only have been three years old when the three-month journey to Crimea began.

What we know from the German archives is that Margaretha was the mother of all five children. However, as stated above, Stumpp's 1816 revision list (census) lists Mathias' wife as *Barbara*. Only three children are listed; Georg, Mathias, and Dorothea.

To solve this apparent inconsistency we need to jump ahead to the next section, which discusses the journey

from Baden to Crimea. After a long overland journey in 1809, the travellers reached

<sup>10</sup> LDS

Ekaterinoslav as winter was approaching. They were forced to spend the winter in Ekaterinoslav before continuing to Crimea in the Spring of 1810. A record in Jambury Parish (south of Ekaterinoslav) has a Georg Mathias Vollman, a widower, marrying Barbara Buchmiller on 24 May 1810. Thus we can conclude that Margaretha died either during the long journey or during the winter and that her baby perished with her. Barbara had been travelling to Crimea with her brother Andreas Buchmiller.

The parish records I do have from the German Empire provide us with a general idea of Mathias' place of origin and hopefully more research will pinpoint the town. Meanwhile, there is speculation that he may have been from Ubstadt. One clue is that the Buchmillers were from Ubstadt. The fact that Mathias returned to Freimersheim prior to emigrating makes that a target area as well.

The fact that the marriage and birth records involve at least four different parishes may explain why Stumpp does not provide a village of origin for Mathias. It is also worth noting that the priests described Mathias as a transient in their parish records.

In 1809 Mathias received his passport to move to Russia. The family is listed on the passport as follows:

Mathias	36
Margaretha	26
Johann Georg	9.5
George Mathias	7
Dorothea	5
Maria Barbara	3.5

### 3. The First Migration Journey



In the spring of 1803, a group of 35 families, including Franz Kelsch, boarded river craft at Ulm and sailed down the Danube as far as Galatz.<sup>11</sup> They floated down the Danube in flat bottom barges known as Ulmerschachtel (Ulmer crates). The barges had no keel, no motor and were not designed for a return trip. Conditions aboard were crowded and primitive. At the destination they were disassembled and the lumber used for other purposes.

There are no forests on the expansive steppe north of the Black Sea, so the lumber from the disassembled boats was a welcome building material.

The Ulmerschachtels were built in various sizes, from about 70 to 90 feet long and 10 to 24 feet wide. The emigrants were crowded onto a single deck, largely exposed to the wind and weather, where they camped, ate and slept. They had to bring their own supplies for the trip including food and bedding.



Adapted from Stangl, page 2

Map 4: Danube River and Overland Routes to Crimea

At Galatz they remained in quarantine on the boat for fourteen days before they were permitted to leave the vessel to get a comfortable rest. Wagons were rented to take them onward to Odessa, where they arrived eight days later. Among the German immigrants that

<sup>11</sup> KRIM, para 2

arrived in Odessa in the fall of 1803 were a considerable number that had wine-growing experience. The Russian authorities decided that these should be settled in Crimea, where it was believed the climate was suitable for the production of wine.

They remained in Odessa for the winter and, in the spring of 1804; some 40 families boarded ships for Eupatoria. According to Eisenbraun<sup>12</sup>, they did not land in Eupatoria, nor in Feodosiya. They did not land again until the last Black Sea port, Kerch. Illness had broken out while they were aboard ship, and many found their last resting place in the tides of the Black Sea. Therefore, they had to remain in quarantine in Kerch for several months. Entire families died on the trip. After the state of health among the settlers had been somewhat restored, they continued on by means of Tatar oxcarts via Feodosiya through the northern part of the Crimean Mountains and beyond the Tatar city Karasubazar. About 10 km beyond this city, they left the main road and turned towards the south into the mountains.

There in the mountains lay three ownerless Tatar estates. These were given to the Germans for settlement. Around them were mountains and forests, from which springs and small brooks flowed into the valleys with clear, good, drinking water. Nature here reminded them so fervently of the old homeland left behind in Germany. Here the first three German colonies in Crimea were established. On the largest estate, Chukurcha, arose the German village Neusatz; on the second estate, Khan-Takus, Friedental was established; and on the third estate, Shoban-Oba, Rosental was founded. Settlers of the first two colonies belonged to the Evangelical Lutheran faith and those in Rosental to the Roman Catholic faith. Of the forty families mentioned above, eighteen were settled in Rosental.



Map 5: Location of Rosental in the Crimea

<sup>12</sup> Eisenbraun, 1986.

Rosental was founded on the banks of the Burultsliia River, in a low level plain bordered by hills, mountains and forests. Part of this land had been under lease to Tartars, who were growing flax and tobacco on it and were watering the fields with a primitive irrigation system. The plain and hills provided good nourishment for large herds of sheep; hence the site where Rosental now stands was then called Shepherd's Hill. Because there were many flowers growing here, especially wild roses, the first mayor of the new colony, Anton Fauth, gave it the name Rosental (valley of roses).

When the Vollmans decided to immigrate to Crimea in 1809, travel on the Danube was not possible. War was raging between Napoleon and Austrian armies on the upper Danube and there were safety threats on the lower Danube. So they had to use one of the overland routes shown on Map 4. The route highlighted in yellow seems most likely based on the journey chronicles I've read, but I cannot be certain. Previous travelers reported the northern route to be a better and smoother way than the more challenging conditions emigrants faced who chose the path through Saxony, Silesia and Galacia. The settlers travelled in wagon caravans of 12 to 40 wagons for safety reasons, which included forming the wagons into a protective square at night. Twenty kilometres was a good day's travel, so the 2500 kilometre trek took between three and four months if everything went well.

An advantage for those traveling overland by horse-drawn wagons was the ability to bring more personal items, including farming equipment. Those traveling on the Danube were very limited in the number of items they could take onto the crowded boats.

When they crossed the Russian border they were directed to Ekaterinoslav where the Guardian Committee for Foreign Colonists assigned them to colonies.



## 4. 100 Years of Vollmann Heritage in Rosental

Immediately after the arrival at the village the authorities measured out eighteen lots and the building of houses began.<sup>13</sup> Each family was given 210 rubles for the building of a house and about 100 rubles for buying livestock, farm implements and seed grain. The colonists had brought very little money with them from their homeland. The eighteen colonists were apportioned 2,000 dessiatines (1 dessiatine = 2.7 acres or 1.09 hectares) of land. According to some reports the colonists did not want such a large tract of land as it seemed impossible to farm it all!

Colonist	First Name	Colonist	First Name	Colonist	First Name	Colonist	First Name
Antoni	Melchior & Frau	Fritz	Fideli	Klose	August	Oster	Paul
Bader	Philipp	Gerweck	Johann	Koenig	Adam	Ruckhaber	Johann
Bast	Joseph	Hartmann	Michael	Koerner	Jakob	Sauter	Joseph
Bauer	Johann	Haselsteiner	Georg	Kranzner	Franz	Schsefer	Anton
Becker	Heinrich	Heck	Melchior	Krug	Georg	Schild	Georg
Benz	Peter	Hoermann (Herrmann)	Jos.	Kuhn	Balth. & Dan.	Schindwein	Karl
Blatter	Joseph	Hoermann (Herrmann)	Ludwig	Lang	Adam	Schmid	Magnus
Bloch	Jakob	Horle	Andreas	Leonhard	Johann	Schmid	Johann
Bosch	Ignatius	Hoener	Raphael	Lehmann	Matheus	Schumacher	Peter
Buchmiller	Andreas	Jehle	Nikolaus	Maier	Matheus	Speidel	Johann
Delhai	Alexander	Kelsch	Franz	Moch	Peter	Tischler	Joseph
Engesser	Johann	Kettinger	Franz	Moser	Joseph	Vollmann	Matheus
Erhard	Joseph	Klee	Franz	Moench	Kasmir	Winter	Andreas
Fauth	Marianna	Klink	Johann	Neufert	Jakob	Ziegler	Franz

Figure 1: Founding Families of Rosental

The village was fittingly named Rosental, which in German means valley of roses (also spelled Rosenthal). If you're trying to find Rosental on a modern map, its current name is Aromatne. Also, for those doing your own research, it is important not to confuse the Catholic village of Rosental in Crimea with a Mennonite village of the same name located in South Russia where the Chortitza River joins the Dnieper River.

The building of the houses began in May 1805<sup>14</sup>, using stones and clay bricks, and by the fall all were ready to move into. The method of making clay bricks varied somewhat, especially in terms of brick size, but generally followed a standard recipe:<sup>15</sup>

*To make bricks in quantity, they cleared the black dirt, made a hole to expose the underlying clay, added straw and maybe horse manure, then filled it with water. They mixed it with their own bare feet and sometimes with the feet of horses and oxen. They made a form with partitions, sort of like the inserts in an ice cube tray, and filled the spaces with this clay mixture. Then they lifted the form, set it down in another space, and made more. They allowed the bricks to dry naturally in the sun.*

<sup>13</sup> Keller, K. para 6-7

<sup>14</sup> Height 1979, p 244

<sup>15</sup> Boardman, p 31

*When our pioneering forefathers had accumulated a sufficient number of bricks to build a home, they used a mortar made of the same material as the bricks to bind them together. They formed the windows and doors with wood and glass if they had it. To camouflage the material of construction, more adobe mixture was spread inside and out to give a stucco texture.*

Every summer the homes would be whitewashed so that they always looked fresh and neat. The whitewash was an excellent finishing material. The lime from which it was made is highly alkaline, thus anti-bacterial and a good insecticide. The fluid would penetrate any small cracks or holes and once cured would provide structural protection and waterproofing. It also has fireproofing qualities.

It is reported that while these mud brick dwellings provided suitable protection against the elements, settlers tried to get out of them and into stone homes as soon as possible.



From Heritage Review, No. 23 April 1979, North Dakota Historical Society of Germans from Russia

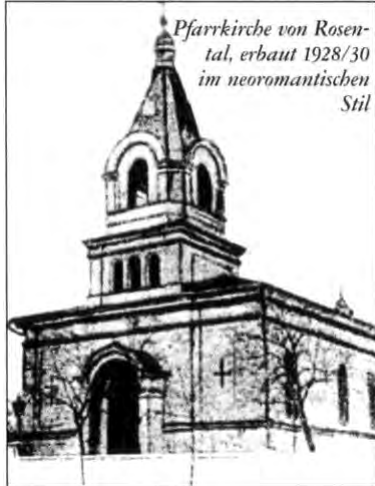
**Figure 2: Ruins from Atmagea Reveal Construction Technique with Clay Blocks and Thatched Roof**

Construction went so well that it was even possible to give winter quarters to an additional seven families from Lorraine and Hanau who arrived in the fall. By the fall of 1807 Rosental had twenty-five completed houses inhabited by that number of families. New colonists continued to come from 1810 to 1818, most of them from Baden but including a few from Württemberg.

It is likely that Mathias and his family spent the winter of 1809/10 in Ekaterinoslav and completed the final leg of the journey to Rosental in the spring of 1810. Rosental must have appeared quite well established when Mathias and his family arrived in 1810.

The settlements built by the German colonists followed a typical layout, as shown in Map 6. Height has provided us with a town map of Rosental and although it dates from after the turn of the century it is safe to assume the structure placements are essentially the same as in 1810. Along a street about 20 metres wide, the farms were placed side-by-side in the form of a rectangle. The dwelling, with the gable toward the street, had in addition to the vestibule three more rooms: a Vorderstube [front room], kitchen, and Hinterstube [back room]. Following and built onto the house were the sheds and stalls. The women had their flower beds between the house and street wall. In the middle of the village was the schoolyard with the church and the community water well.





When building a church, no amount of money or labour was spared. It was very important to the colonists to have the most beautiful church in the district. The parish was established in 1823. Up to that time, the Rosental community was affiliated with the Catholic Church parish in Simferopol. The first church in the village was built in 1828/30.<sup>16</sup> They named the church after Saint Martin, a fourth century monk known for his modesty and altruism. (In modern Germany they celebrate the Feast of Saint Martin on November 11 as a day of religious observance.) The present church, a structure of stone in the neo-Romanesque style, was consecrated in 1869. Today it is an Orthodox Church.

The fruit gardens with apples, pears, plums, cherries, and apricots of various sorts were laid out in the back yards. Grape vines were planted by the community outside the village. Grains and potatoes were planted in the fields; winter wheat especially was sown. The first settlers, who were now called "colonists," had to learn much. They learned the hitching up of the oxen by watching the Tatars. Two oxen were hitched to a wooden yoke, to which a moveable shaft was fastened in the middle. They likewise took over from the Tatars the custom of threshing on a threshing place with a stone roller with six or seven ribs. Straw, chaff, and hay were placed in the open in stacks in the back yards, probably also according to Tatar custom. Our forefathers got along well with the Tatars, and soon the Tatars were their servants. As early as the second generation, men as well as women spoke the Tatar language fluently. In the stores and markets, everywhere, Tatar was spoken so that our forefathers in reality did not come to Russia but rather to Tatar country.

I've been unable to find what year the school was built, but early records say the children of Rosental had to go to Protestant German schools.

I assume that the clay pits shown on the town map are those described by Boardman as the location where building bricks were made.

With the influx of several more families the number of families rose to 56 in the year 1818. The 1816 census lists the population of Rosental as 131 males and 103 females.

The early wheat growing operation has been described by several inhabitants<sup>17</sup> of Crimea and their descriptions are similar. The wheat seeds were broadcast by hand and harrowed to cover them up. The harvesting is described by the first reference as follows:

*"we found a big flat place near the fields which we flooded with water where we let horses tread it until it was as hard as cement. Then we put the wheat on the hard ground and hitched the horses to a wagon that went round and round until wagon wheels and*

<sup>16</sup> Riss, 2011

<sup>17</sup> Leslie 1978, Eisenbraun 1886.

*horses' feet threshed out the wheat. We took the straw off with a big fork and put the wheat through a screen."*

A measure of their early economic progress can be discerned from the statistical records kept by the Russian Government to track welfare of the colonists. Selected data is included in Figure 3.<sup>18</sup>

Right at the beginning there were a few good years, enabling the colonists to equip themselves better and to increase their numbers of livestock. But after that there was a devastating setback. In the year 1819 crops were looking great until they turned white with hailstones the size of pigeon eggs.<sup>19</sup>

<b>Vollmann</b>	<b>1810</b>	<b>1814</b>	<b>1816</b>	<b>1818</b>
Plow	1	1	1	1
Harrow	1	1	1	1
Wagon	1	1	2	1
Spinning Wheel	-	1	0	0
Horse	0	0	3	3
Cattle	?	4	9	6
Sheep	0	0	0	0
Pigs	0	0	0	0
Occupation	Farmer			

<b>Kelsch</b>	<b>1810</b>	<b>1814</b>	<b>1816</b>	<b>1818</b>
Plow	2	2	1	1
Harrow	1	1	1	1
Wagon	2	2	2	1
Spinning Wheel	-	1	1	1
Horse	2	2	2	1
Cattle	1	13	20	11
Sheep	0	0	0	0
Pigs	4	4	8	5
Occupation	Shepherd, farmer and in 1814 = Cobbler			

**Figure 3: Early Economic Progress of the Vollmann and Kelsch Families**

From 1820 to 1827 there was again a series of good crops, which enabled the colonists to recover somewhat. The Rosental economy and that of the nearby settlements was described in the 1820s as follows:<sup>20</sup>

*The colonies have a good economic base, have very fertile soil, but have fewer large tracts of land than the colonists of other villages on the steppe. They pursue arable agriculture and cattle husbandry very actively, gardening, fruit and honey production, and also vineyards. Wheat, butter, cheese and garden products (vegetables) they easily sell in neighbouring towns.*

<sup>18</sup> Klee, p 1

<sup>19</sup> Keller, K. para 9

<sup>20</sup> Stach, p 12

One perspective on life in Rosental after two decades can be drawn from the achievements for the community as a whole as illustrated in Figure 4.<sup>21</sup> It is a bit curious that the Welfare Committee, which conducted this survey, found no pigs in Rosental in 1825. We know from earlier records, Figure 3 as an example, that there had been pigs in Rosental. Also, there is much discussion in the historical literature about the colonists raising merino sheep; but it seems there were none in Rosental in 1825.

	Families	Males	Females	Total	
Population	57	164	128	292	
	Horses	Cattle	Sheep	Pigs	
Livestock	51	460	0	0	
	Plows	Harrows	Wagons	Spinning Wheels	Weaving Looms
Machines	50	21	53	38	3
	Apple	Pear	Plum	Cherry	Grape Vines
Fruit Trees	235	124	169	36	8001
	Grains	Potatoes	Other Vegetables	Hemp	Flax
Harvest	2812	2151	24	0	0

Then came the years 1827, 1828, and 1829, during which locusts ate up everything green in the fields, meadows, and forests and thus destroying the whole crop. There was a shortage of bread and of fodder for animals everywhere. Livestock had to be disposed of at any price. What could not be sold died during the winter and spring. Then in the year 1831 there was a destructive epidemic among livestock, which killed nearly all the cattle in the region. After this setback the situation improved. The families were now stronger, with more able-bodied workers; land could still be rented relatively cheaply; and trade and industry developed. It was now possible for the colonist to acquire the means to improve the farm establishment, to pay debts and to buy better livestock. Many built themselves, in the place of the old crown houses, new spacious stone houses and beautified their farmyards.<sup>22</sup>

Besides the horrendous acts of nature, the colonists had to deal with theft of livestock and produce by the Russians and the Tatars. Apparently the Russian men would even take jobs as hired men to case the village in the day time, only to come back at night to use the knowledge gained to commit theft. Another anecdote of theft I will quote in its entirety because I found it both illuminating and amusing:<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Rempel, tables 1,3,4,6 &7

<sup>22</sup> Keller, K., para 9

<sup>23</sup> Neilson, p 85

*The Russian peasants are, of late years, following the good example of the German colonists, by cultivating the potato more extensively; but the Tartars, though exceedingly fond of this useful and delightful vegetable, very seldom take the trouble of doing so, preferring to steal them at night. This they do in rather a sly manner: they abstract the potatoes with the hand, as they are planted in rows, and leave the shaw standing; so that if the owner is not lucky enough to discover the theft, the same process is repeated, night after night, until the whole crop nearly disappears.*

The same British lady travelling in Crimea in 1855 describes her encounter with caravans on the road, first with Germans and then with Tatars: <sup>24</sup>

*There is no mistaking these Germans, as they drive to town in their Stuhl-wagen, with their round faces, open countenances, and phlegmatic bearing. The men wear a jacket, something like that worn by our own peasantry; whereas the women still continue the short waist and gigot sleeves of our great-grandmothers.*

.....  
*The majar is a vehicle something between a cart and a waggon, mounted on four wheels. The wheels and axles are wholly made of wood; and as the Tartar esteems grease too precious to be bestowed on anything but himself, you may fancy what a tremendous screwing, creaking and screaming, accompanies a long line of heavily laden majars. When one has been accustomed to the silence of the steppe, it is almost unbearable to encounter one of these caravans.*

By 1848, there were 56 households in the village, comprising 65 families that numbered 244 males and 192 females. With the exception of one adobe house, all the houses were constructed of stone. The average number of children per family was five. The plow land that had been apportioned to the colonist amounted to 615 dessiantines (= 1,660 acres). This means each landholding family received about 11 dessiantines (= 30 acres). In addition, there were 375 dessiantines of communal pastureland, 185 dessiantines of hay land, and 1,254 woodland and forests. Thirty dessiantines were used for farmyards. The community also had an elementary school, a grain-storage depot, a water-powered grist mill, and a communal orchard.<sup>25</sup>

In summary, the available data show the population of Rosental increasing from 234 in 1816, to 292 in 1825, 436 in 1848, 559 in 1859 and declining at some point after that to 344 in 1905<sup>26</sup>, just before Johann and Rosalia emigrated. The number of houses peaked at 59, so Map 6 likely shows the maximum stage of development of the village.

It is said that Czar Alexander often had the wines of Württemberg with his meals. He liked these wines and because of them he wanted grape growers of Schwaben descent moved to Crimea to make wine. Wine-growing was carried on as a sideline, but some farmers got much more money through the wine production than from agriculture. Most farmers reserved a small portion of their land for wine production. The south facing slopes of the mountains produced

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<sup>24</sup> Neilson, p 85 & p 106

<sup>25</sup> KRIM, para 4

<sup>26</sup> Keller, P. p 36

wines rated among the best available. Producing wine north of the mountains proved to be more difficult. Colonists enhanced the soil by digging trenches to one and a half metre depth and filled them with gravel and loam (loam and gravel were considered to provide the best rooting medium for grapes). These artificially created soils produced grapes and wines of almost the same quality as some of those in the south of Crimea.



Figure 5: German Women Cooking Sausage in Crimean Village of Rosental

As the Rosental families grew in size, there grew a need for more land for the sons to farm. Initial land purchases were made by the colony, mostly from the Russian nobility. Then came Crimean War in 1854-1856. The war imposed great hardship on the colony as they loyally supported the Russian army with food and supplies. Land purchases were halted during that period. But the War had a silver lining for the colony. The Tatars realised

after the war that their long held hope of someday falling back under Turkish rule would never be realised. The Tatars left Crimea in great numbers, leaving plenty of land to be purchased at a bargain price.

The 1852 Rosental Colony List of Catholic Parishioners describes the Vollmann households as shown in Figure 6. Ludwig, Dorothea's second husband, is not shown in the original list presumably because he was not Catholic. The number of Vollmanns in Crimea would increase dramatically in the next generation as the children got married and raised families. Many would leave Rosental to find land and opportunity in the nearby daughter colonies.

<b>Head</b>	<b>George</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>Mathias</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>Dorothea</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Spouse</b>	<b>Elisabetha</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>Magdalena</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>Ludwig</b>	<b>40</b>
Children	Karl	21	Philipp	17	Lambert	14
	Franziska	18	Elisabetha	14	Johann	11
	Katherina	15	Jakob	21	Dorothea	9
	Kaspar	12	Katharina	18	Joseph	6
	Georg	9	Magdalena	2	Adam	21
	Joseph	30			Elisabetha	21
	Veronica	27				
	Wendelin	1				

Figure 6: Vollmann Households in Rosental in 1852



The climate in Rosental is warm and temperate. The winter is mild, with an average January temperature of 1° to 2° C. The summer is very warm, the average July temperature is 24°C.



This brings us to the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the birth of Johann and Rosalia. I was unable to find Johann's baptism record in the archives, but we have his parents' names from the wedding record and can infer his birth year from his recorded age when he got married in 1905. His age in 1905, shown at the start of the paragraph implies a birth year of 1878. I was able to find Rosalia's baptism record in the Saratov archives. Rosalia's original birth record is included in Appendix 3. The key information extracted from these records is as follows:

Name:	Johann Vollmann	Rosalia Kelsch
Birth Date:	1878	25 Oct 1885
Father:	Joseph Vollman	Wendelin Kelsch
Mother:	Veronica Strubele	Anna Unkovskaya
Birthplace:	Rosental	Rosental

On the S.S. Lake Michigan manifest, Johann gave his age as 33, implying an 1875 birth year. On his homestead documents Johann gave his age as 33 in 1908, 43 in 1916 and 46 in 1921; implying birth years of 1875, 1875 and 1874 respectively. In the 1911, 1916 and 1921 Canada Census he gave his age as 37, 43 and 46; implying birth years of 1874, 1873 and 1875 respectively. On the face of it, Johann seems to have consistently portrayed himself as two to five years older than the age on the marriage record. Perhaps he didn't know his birth year; perhaps the census takers, land agents and purser misinterpreted his German; or perhaps an error was made on the marriage document. I have elected to go with the Church record but wouldn't argue with someone choosing one of the other years.

Rosalia's birth record provides all of the data shown above and all dates from our oral family history are within one year of her official birth record. Rosalia told her children that her birth father died when she was a young girl (nine years old). Wendelin's name remains on the wedding record however, and I am told it was and remains common practice to show the biological/natural father even if he is deceased and the widow remarries. (According to family oral history, a woman named Christina Glugofski was said to be Rosalia's mother, but there is no record of such a person and, in any event, it is in conflict with the Church's records.)

Johann was the youngest child in a large family of ten boys and two girls. He would grow up being fluent in Russian and German. Johann's courtship of Rosalia Kelsch is engagingly described by a member of the family:<sup>27</sup>

*In this idyllic setting, John Vollman, a dashing handsome, young man first laid eyes on the exquisitely beautiful, yet pleasant, young Rosa Kelsch. Their romance reads like a classic fairytale. John initially became attracted to Rosa when she was only a twelve-*

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<sup>27</sup> Erker & Lock, p 6

*year-old girl, rolling playfully with her friends in a pile of empty corn husks. Enamoured by her natural beauty, John gushed, “there are no other pretty girls in the village except the girl with the red cheeks and black, curly hair.” He vowed, “I will wait for her to grow up.”*

*In the meantime, John enlisted in the Navy as a sailor and spent the next seven years of his life absorbed in the world of the sea, where he refined his skills as a navigator and swimmer. Rosa spent these same years maturing into a beautiful, refined young woman. When John returned to Rosendale, after seven years at sea, his mind was still preoccupied with thoughts of Rosa. And as fate would have it, Rosa was quite impressed by John. Over the course of time, they discovered that they had many mutual likes and interests, and their new-found friendship gradually evolved into love. As a public testimony of their great love and devotion to one another, they were wed in a beautiful, church ceremony in 1905.*

Translated by Mila Koretnikov, Ph.D. December 2013, Rastatt, Germany					
Name of the married	#	Date of the marriage	When, where and who married the couple?	Names, age and parish of the married	Parents and witnesses
Johann Vollmann	14	25	On October 25, 1905 in Rosental Roman-Catholic Church priest of this church Georg Riessling married them after publishing the banns three times to the people who came to the mass.	Rosental settler: Johann Vollmann, 27 years old, and Rosalia Kelsch, 20 years old, both Roman-Catholic. No one forbade the banns. They were married by mutual agreement that they showed.	Bridegroom’s parents: Joseph Vollmann and Veronica nee Strubele. Bride’s parents: Wendelin Kelsch and Anna nee Unkovskaya. Witnesses: Joseph Riess, Franz Piko (?) and many others.

Figure 7: Marriage Record for Johann and Rosalia (translated from Appendix 4)

The following pages provide the family trees for the Rosental Vollmanns. I believe they are reasonably complete and accurate for those Vollmann families who belonged to Rosental parish as most of the entries were obtained from official Catholic Church wedding and baptism records for Rosental parish, copies of which were purchased from the Saratov archives. They may not be complete for families who belonged to the parish but lived in neighbouring villages including; Alatai, Alexanderheim, Argintschik, Bakschai, Busturcha, Deumas, Karassubasar, Munei, Neu-Darmstadt, Neusatz, Pitak, Scherch-Eli, Sidler, Sudak and Zürichthal. And as noted on Figure 8, Mathias and Magdalena may have left the Crimean peninsula in 1844 and moved to Georgia.

The location of villages provided on the family trees can be found in Appendix 1.

Of most interest to us is the ancestry of Johann, descendant of George and Elisabeth, but also take note of Philipp, descendant of Mathias and Magdalena, whom I will discuss in more detail in Section 13.

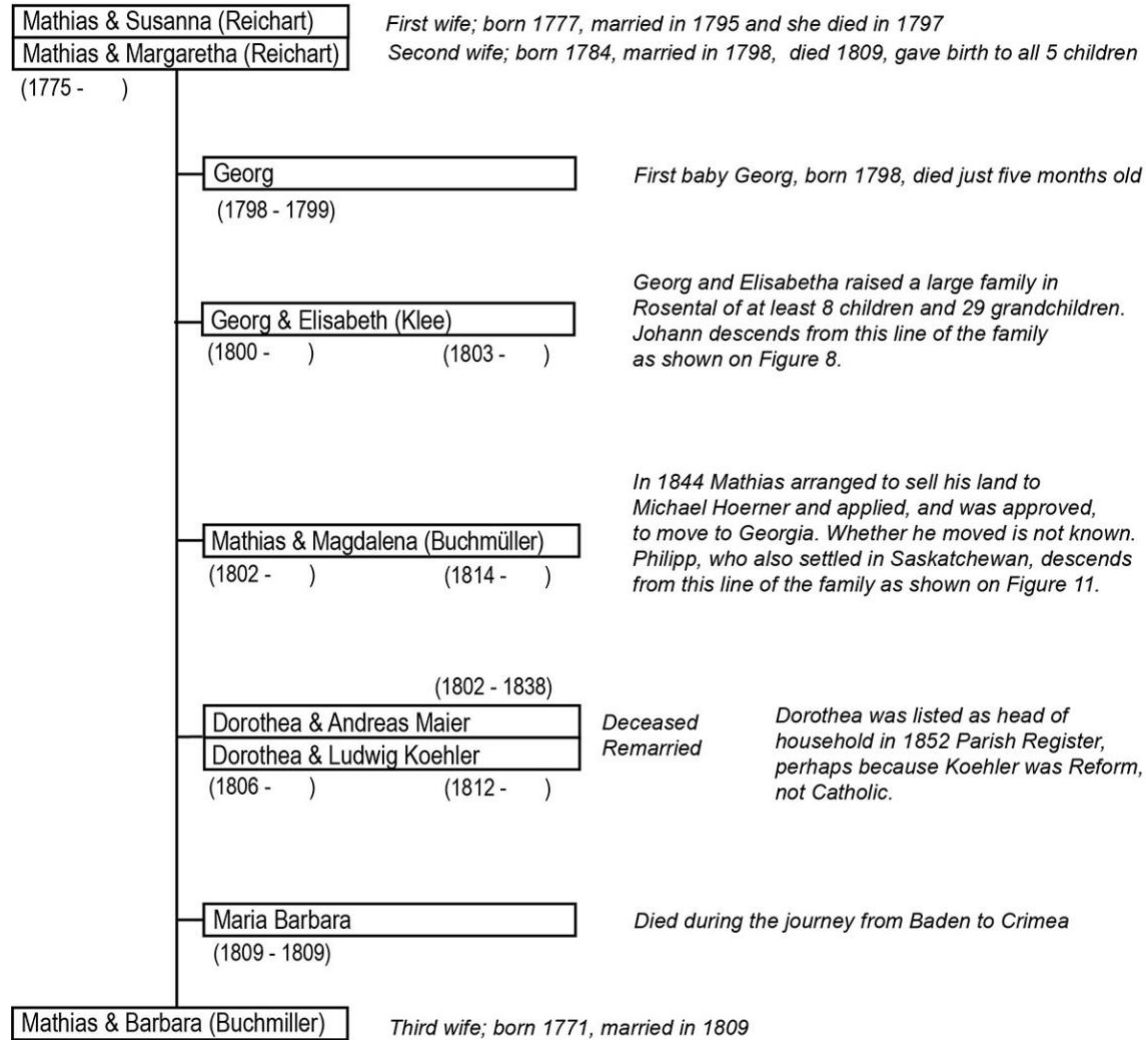


Figure 8: Children of Mathias and Margaretha

\* Under Russian civil law state land was granted to the Colony, rather than to some one person. However, colonists required permission of the responsible authority to sell their undivided share. This did not apply to private land purchased outside the colony.

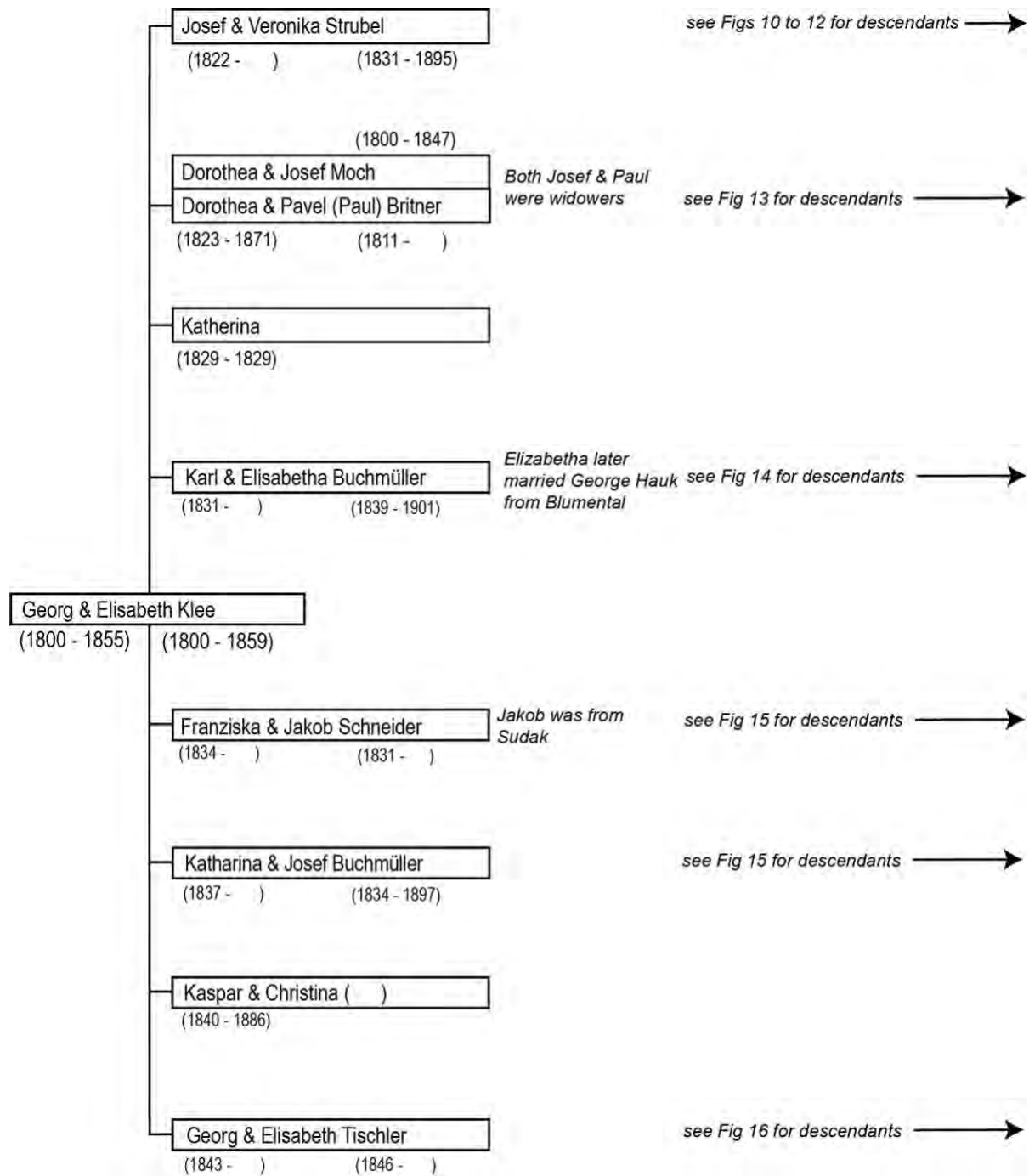


Figure 9: Children of Georg and Elizabeth

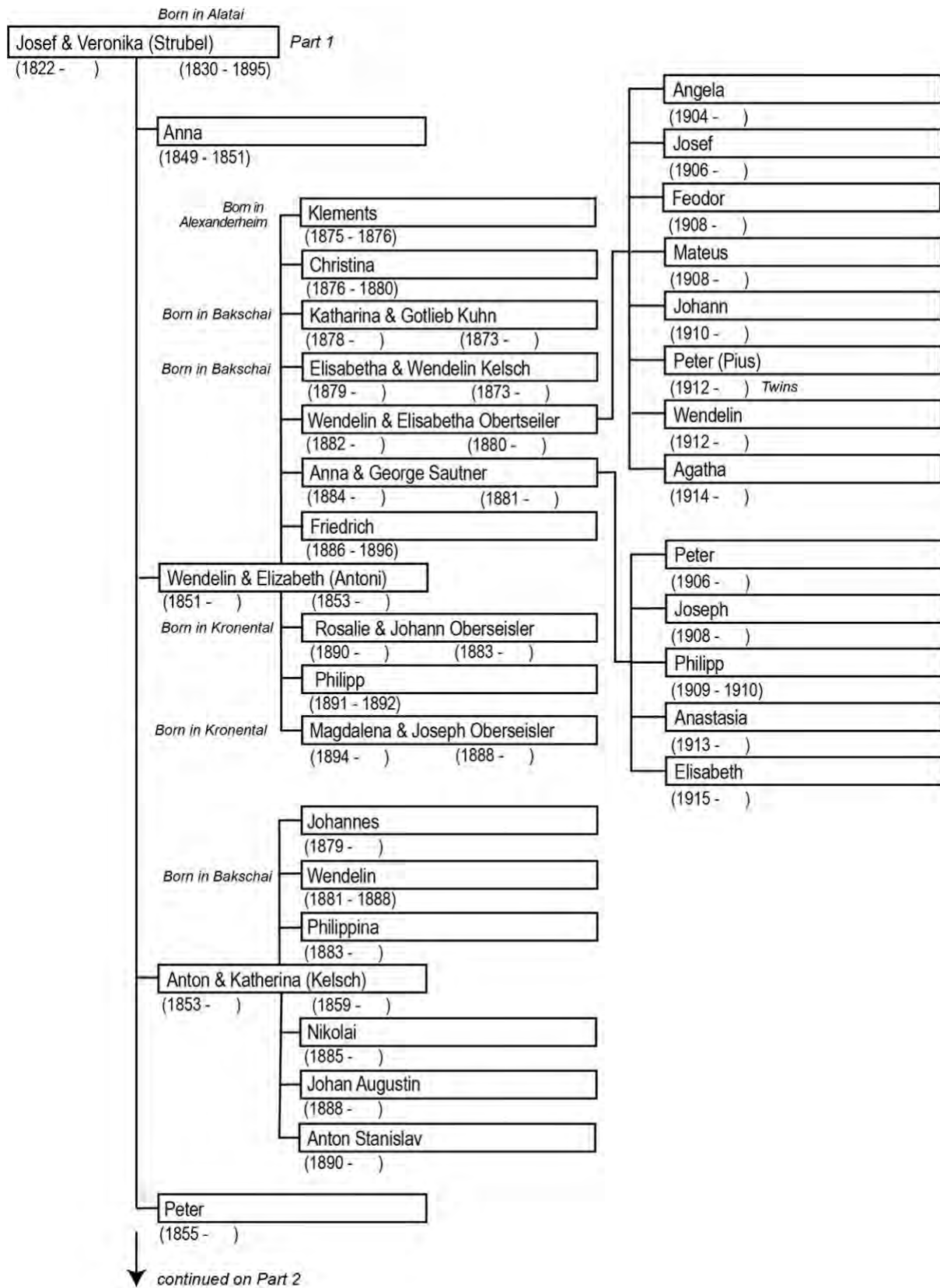


Figure 10: Josef and Veronica Family Tree, Part 1

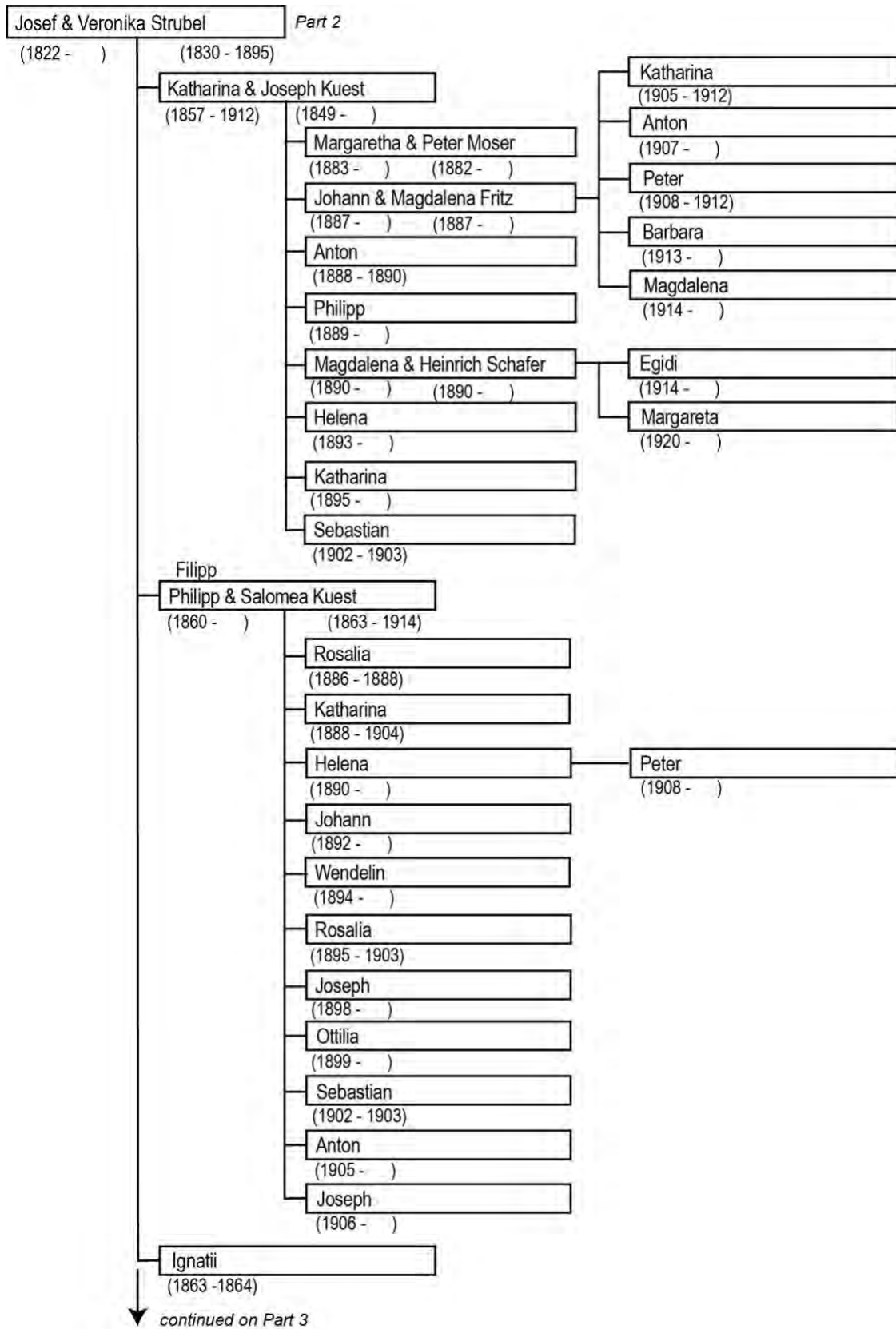


Figure 11: Josef and Veronica Family Tree, Part 2

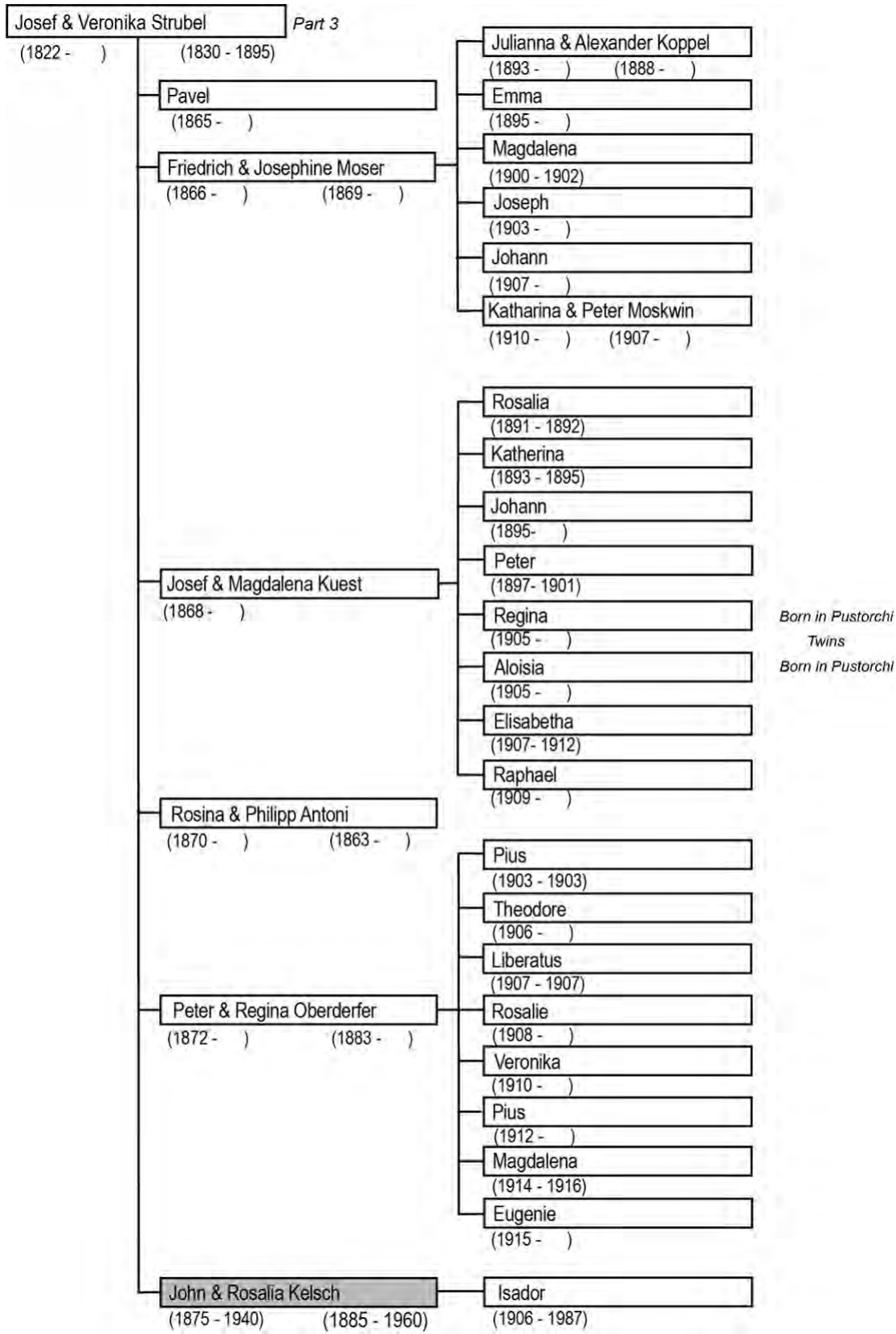


Figure 12: Josef and Veronica Family Tree, Part 3

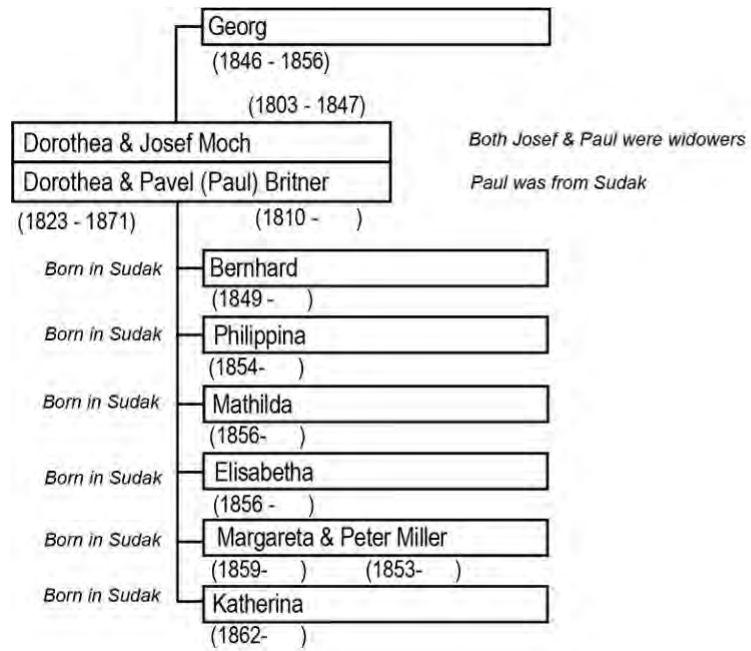


Figure 13: Dorothea Josef & Paul Family Tree



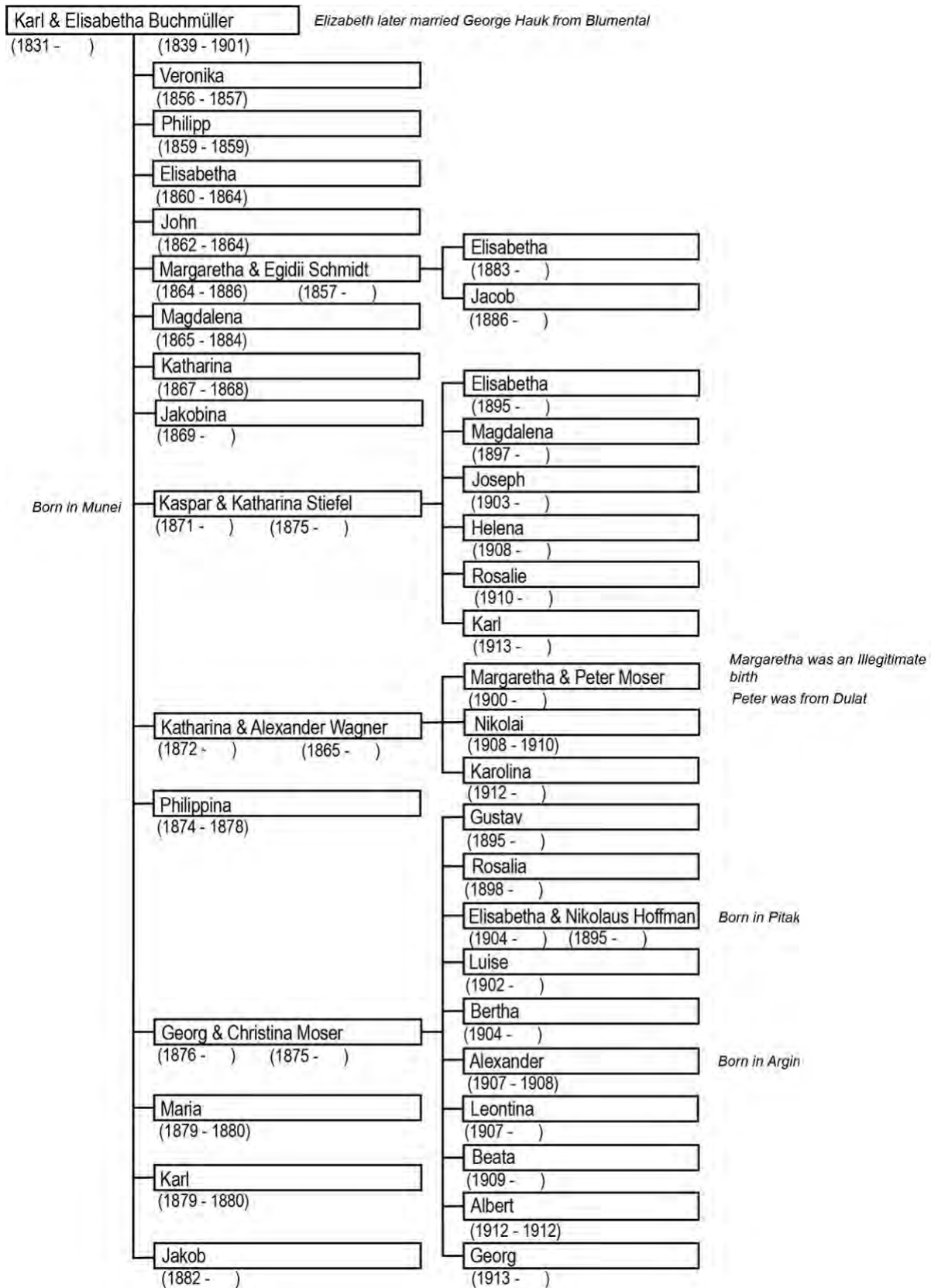


Figure 14: Karl and Elisabeth Family Tree

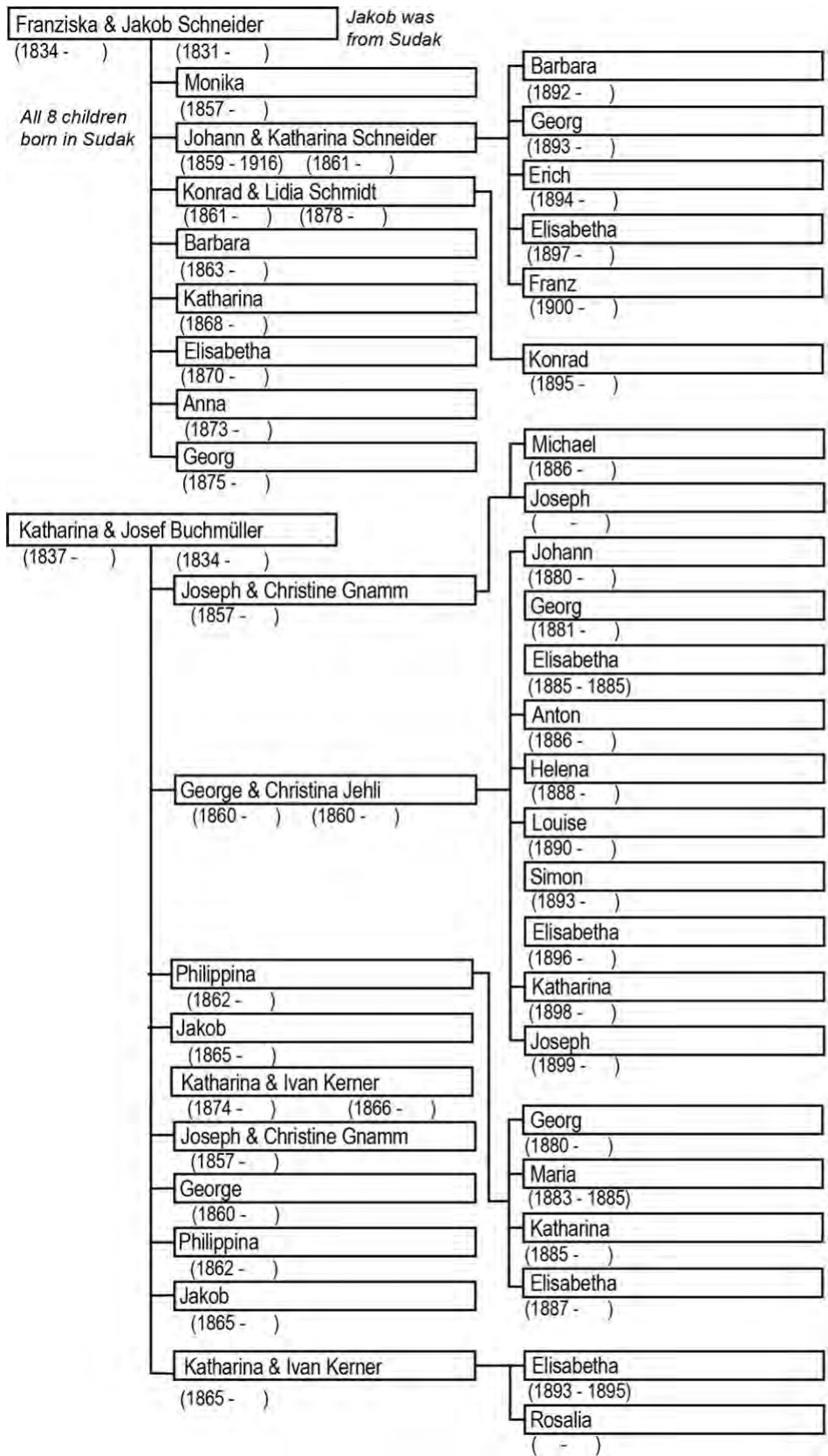


Figure 15: Franziska & Jakob; Katharina & Josef Family Trees

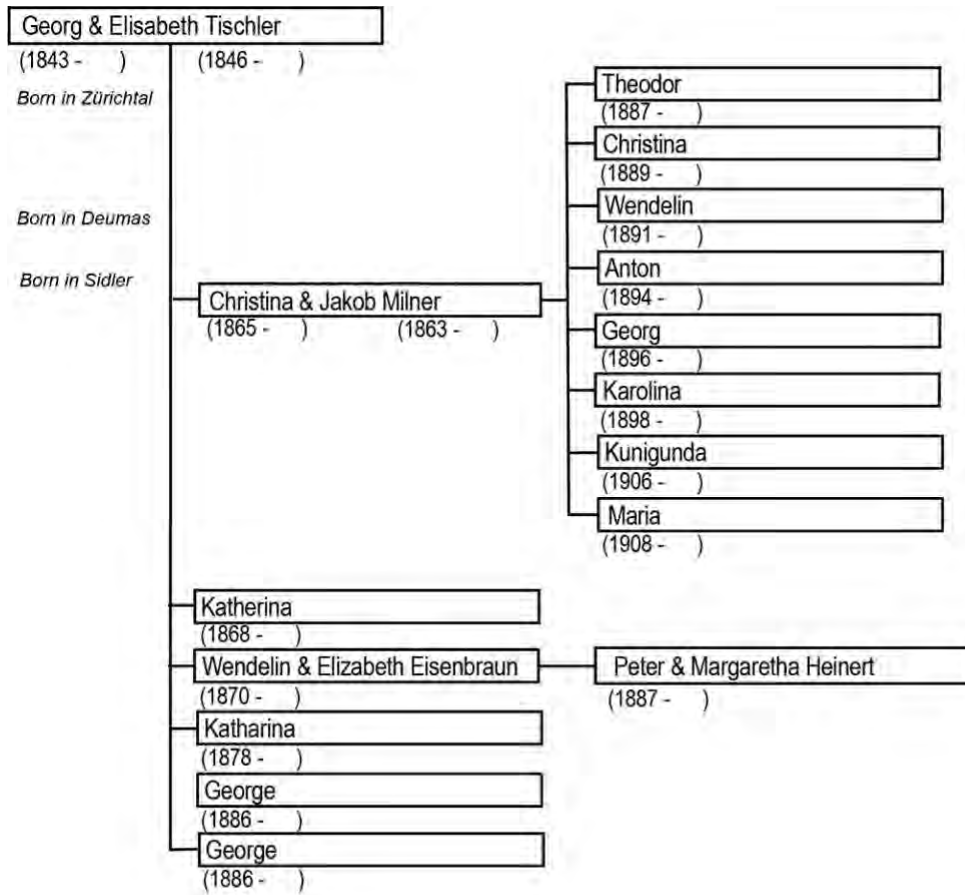


Figure 16: George and Elisabeth Family Tree

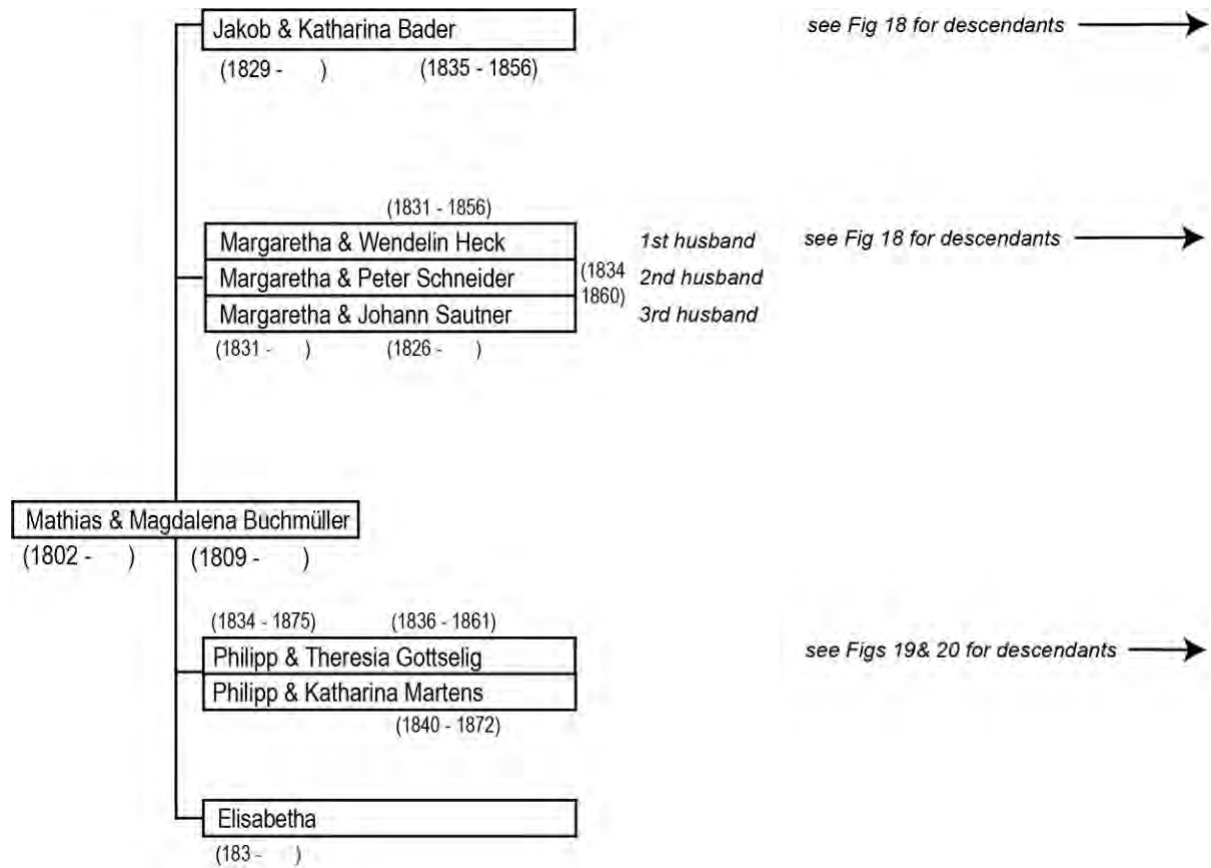


Figure 17: Children of Mathias and Magdalena

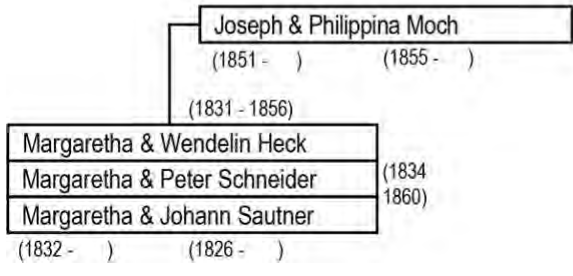
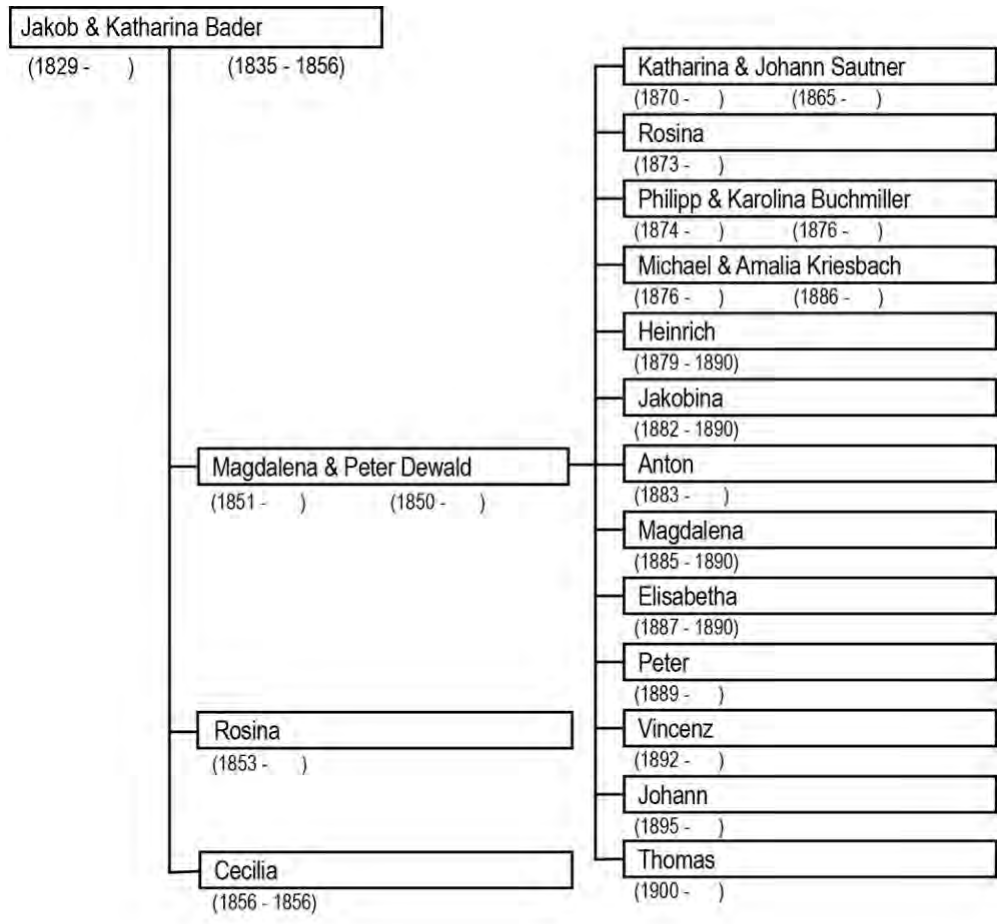


Figure 18: Jacob & Katharina; Margaretha & Wendelin Family Trees

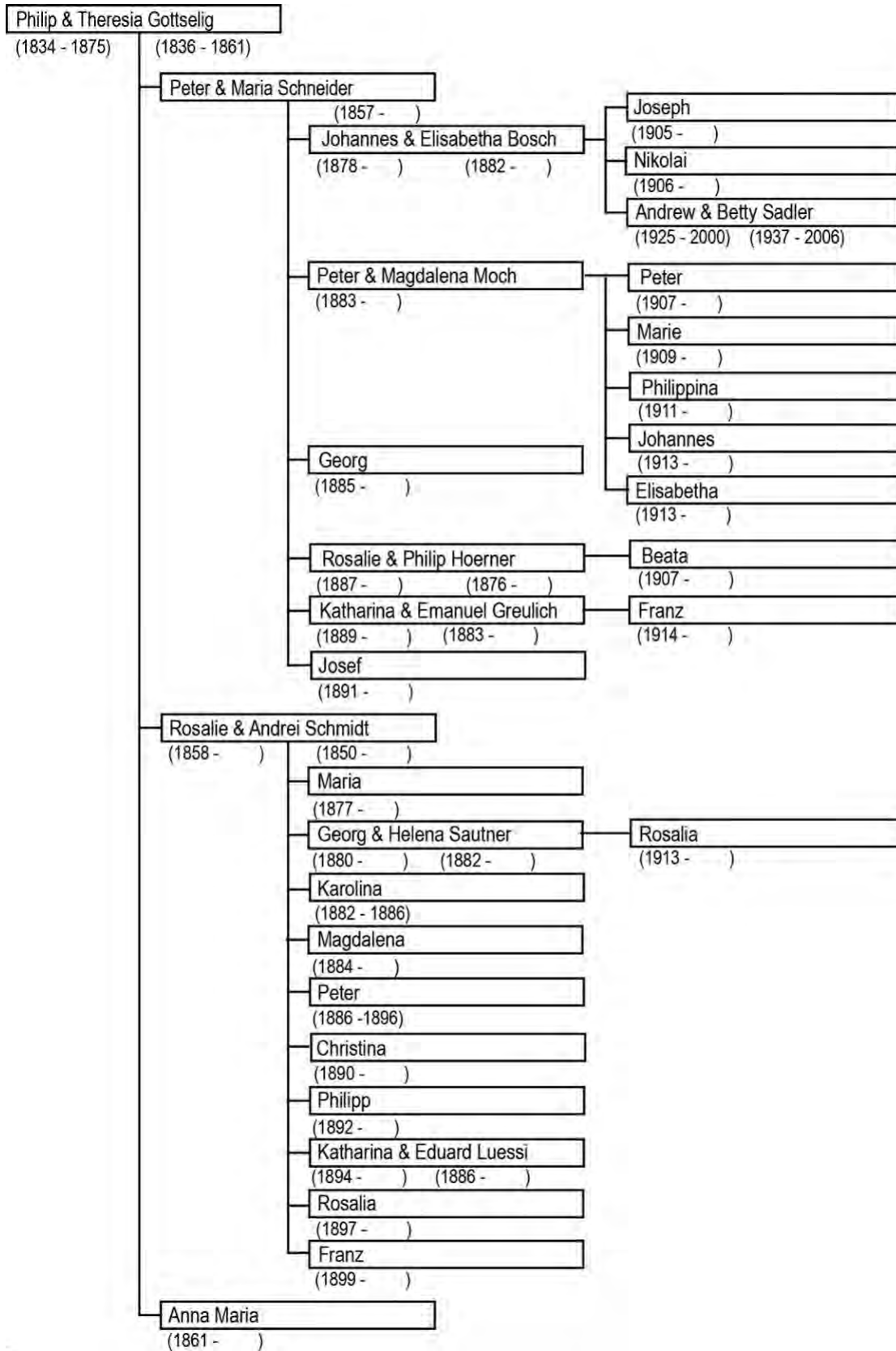


Figure 19: Philip and Theresia Family Tree

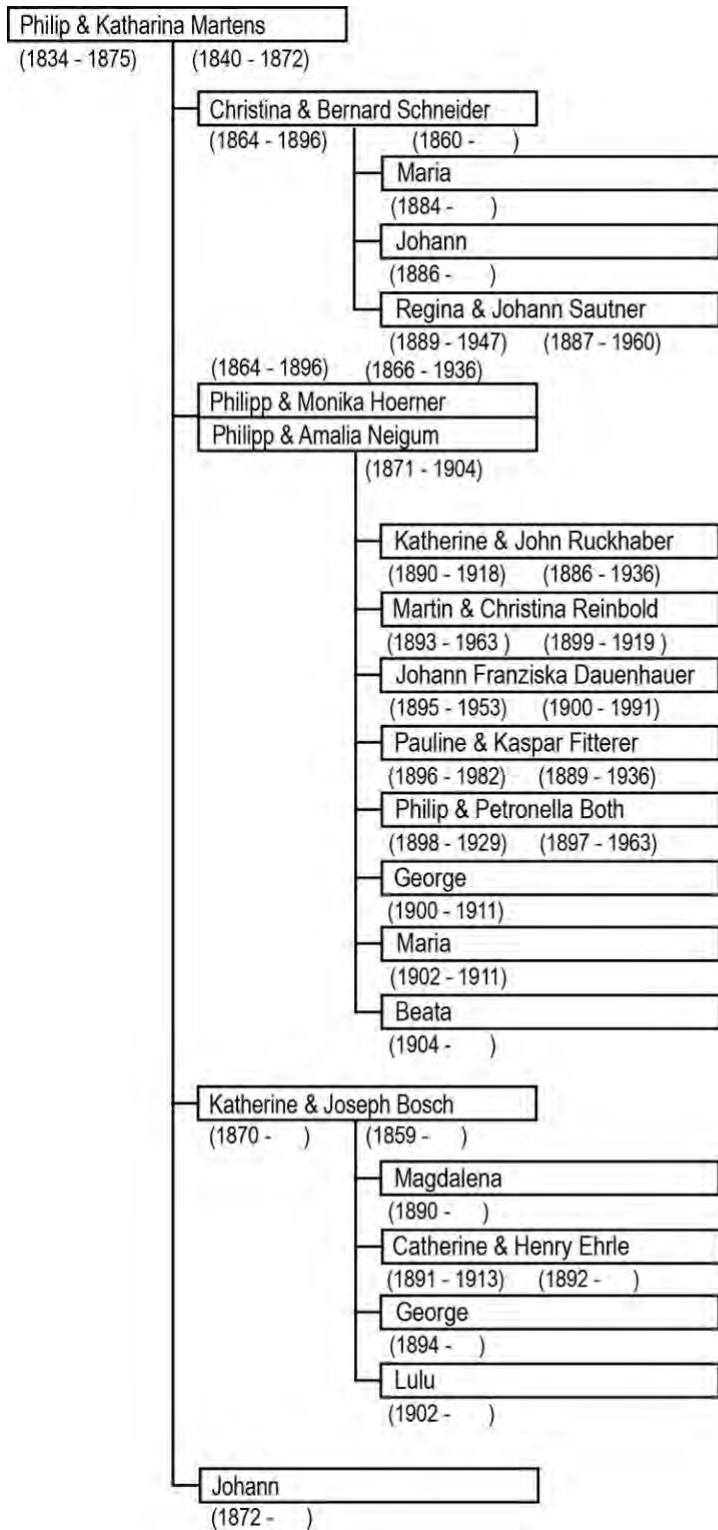


Figure 20: Philip and Katharina Family Tree

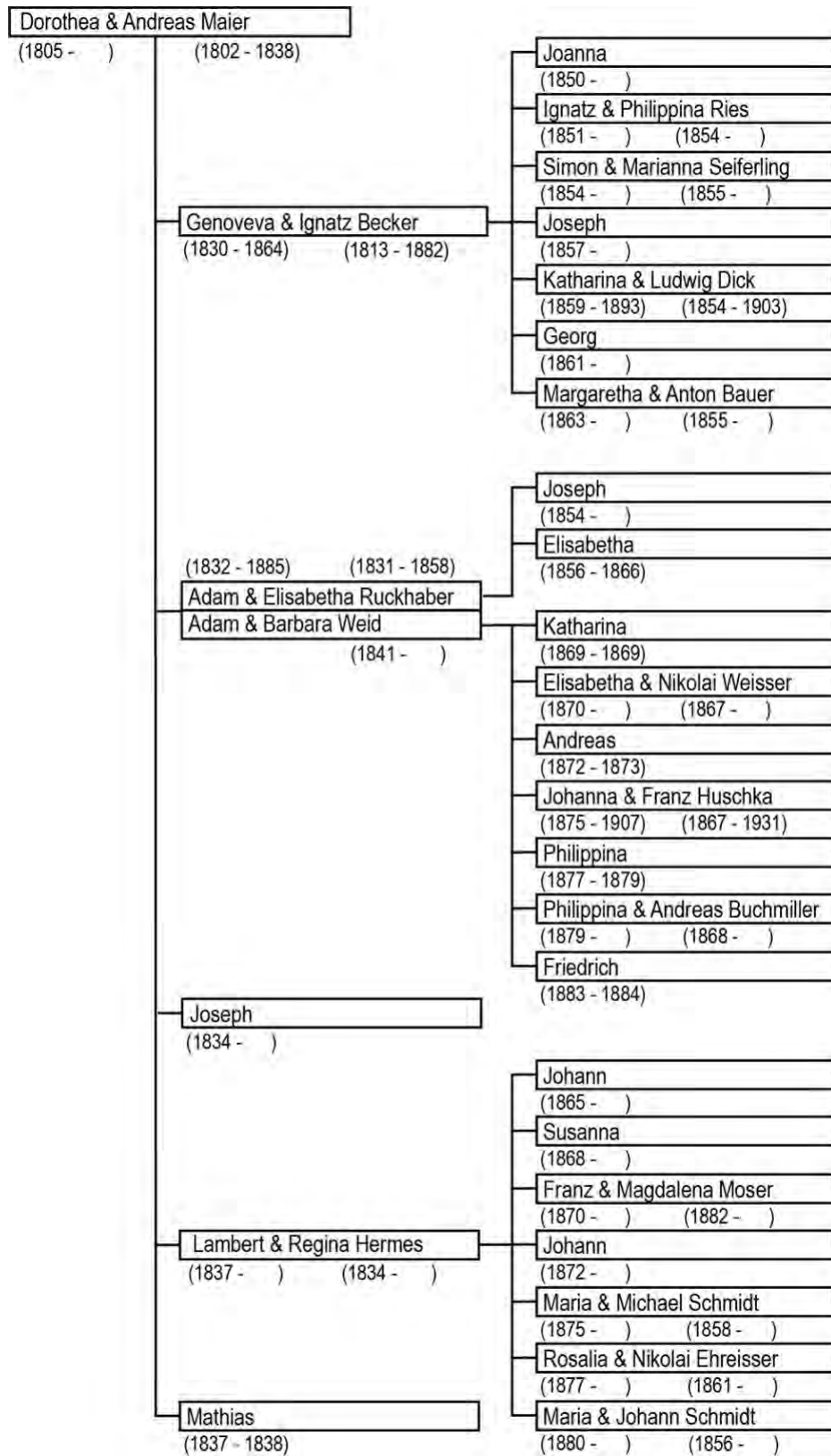


Figure 21: Dorothea and Andreas Family Tree



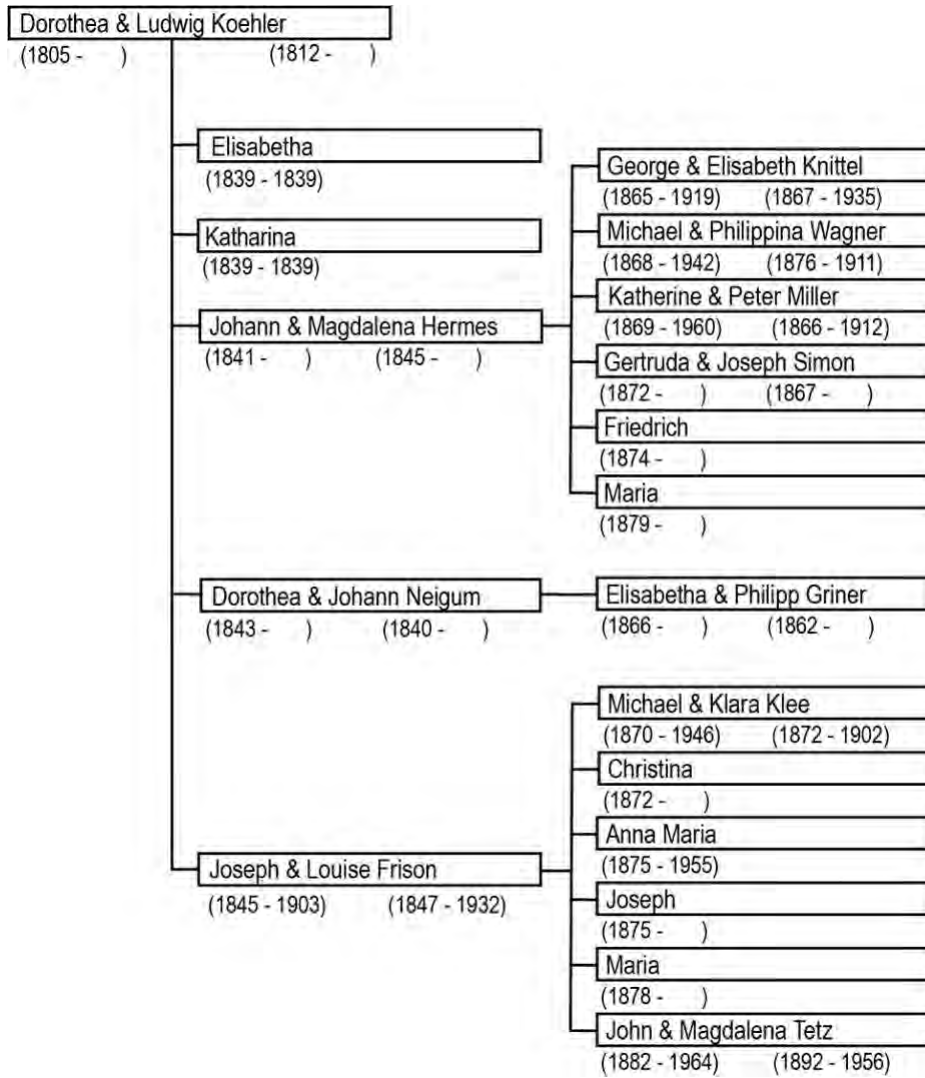


Figure 22: Dorothea and Ludwig Family Tree

## 5. Russia Changes the Rules

For half a century the German settlements in Crimea prospered. They had become the most advanced agricultural group in Russia, owned their own land, and retained their culture through their own educational system and local administration of affairs. They even had their own courts and dealt with all crimes except for the most serious, such as murder.

Things began to change in the mid-1800s. Crimea was the site of much of the fighting in the Crimean War (1853–1856), which devastated much of the economic and social infrastructure of the peninsula.

Despite the substantial help the Crimean farmers gave to the Russian Army during the Crimean War, many Russian people were growing suspicious and even jealous of these foreigners who were doing so well while refusing to be absorbed into Russian culture or military affairs. The stage was set for a series of reforms that would make life increasingly uncomfortable for our ancestors. The first change occurred in 1871 when Alexander II revoked many of the German colonists' inherited privileges including exemption from military service. There was to be a ten year grace period. However, in 1874 Russia amended the 1871 decree and instituted compulsory military conscription immediately.

More changes followed under Alexander III. Alexander's political ideal was a nation composed of a single nationality, language, and religion, as well as one form of administration. Historians refer to his series of reforms as "Russification." The German settlers lost their language in schools and in commerce, the bulk of the tax privileges previously enjoyed, and after 1874 they were subjected to military service. Military service was made compulsory to all males of age 20 and the term was reduced for land army to 6 years plus 9 years in reserve. This conscription created a large pool of military reserve ready to be mobilized in the case of war, while permitting a smaller active army during the peace time. Only sons were not regularly conscripted to the army.

As the reforms were implemented, the Germans were angry about promises broken and fearful of a bleak future. Fortunately, word spread that immigrants were welcome in America to settle and become owners of farmland under the 1862 Homestead Act. The Homestead Act offered settlers 160 acres of free land on the Great Plains. In search of a better life in a land of promise, a steady stream of emigration from the German colonies in Russia to the New World began. Most of the first German immigrants from Russia settled on the American Plains, for this was an environment much like that of their homeland. The very first settlement of the German-Russians in the Middle West, specifically Dakota Territory, occurred in the spring of 1873. In addition to the Dakotas, other large settlements followed in Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska.

## 6. Dominion Lands Act

Shortly after the U.S. Homestead Act, Canada passed The Dominion Lands Act to encourage the settlement of Canada's Prairie Provinces. It was closely based on the U.S. Homestead Act, setting conditions under which the western lands could be settled and their natural resources developed. In order to settle the area, Canada invited mass emigration by European and American pioneers, as well as settlers from eastern Canada.

The Dominion Lands Act of 1872 enabled anyone who was 21 (dropped to 18 in 1874) or was the head of a family to settle on a 160 acre homestead, and eventually obtain title to the land. The homestead was not entirely free, for the settler had to pay a \$10 fee to register and had to fulfill rather strict conditions of living on and cultivating the land to gain ownership. In 1871 it was further decided that homesteaders could also make an "interim entry" on a vacant, adjacent quarter-section. This meant that the land would be reserved until the settlers had gained title to their homesteads, when they could decide whether to buy the "pre-emption" at a market price of the time (\$1 to \$3/acre). Pre-emptions were discontinued in 1890 but reinstated in 1908.

Basic conditions for obtaining a Dominion homestead included:

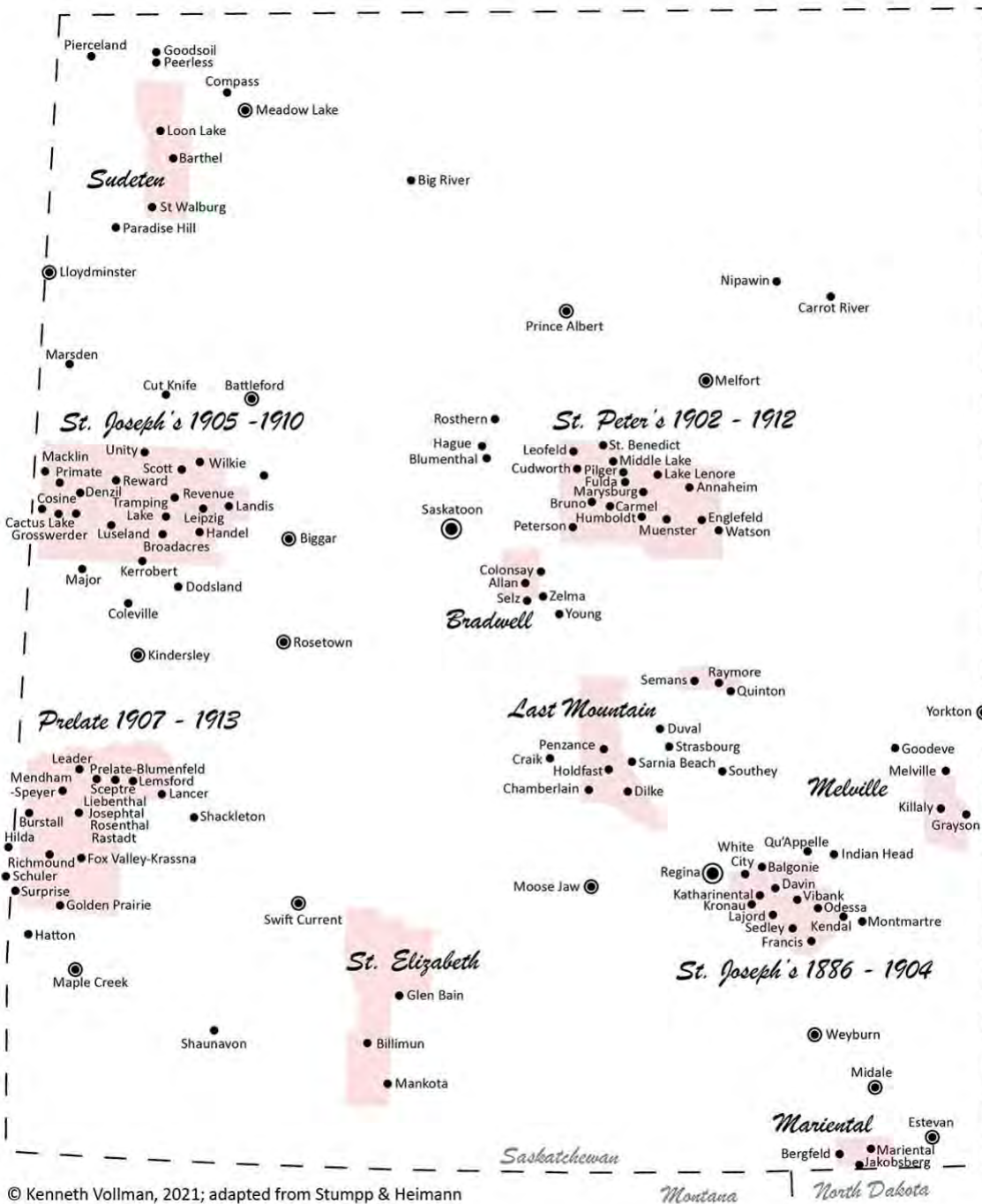
- Break at least 30 acres and crop 20 acres within 3 years (varied over time).
- Build a house on the land worth at least \$300.
- Live on the land for at least 6 months of every year.

After three years, if all conditions were met, the homesteader could apply for title. This condition of "proving up the homestead" was instituted to prevent speculators from gaining control of the land.

To help ensure the successful transfer of land to bona fide settlers, the Act required that homesteads be surveyed and marked on a map, and the map filed in a local lands registry, before settlement could proceed. This requirement sent dominion lands surveyors scurrying well ahead of the immigrant homesteaders, dividing the land into a checkerboard of some 1.25 million homesteads, the world's largest land survey grid.

## 7. St. Joseph's Colony

As land became increasingly scarce in the United States, emphasis shifted north to the Canadian Prairies. Four major settlements of German Catholics developed in Saskatchewan.



Map 7: Location of German Colonies in Saskatchewan

St. Joseph's Colony near Balgonie, immediately east of Regina, was the first. It originated in 1886 with the arrival of immigrants from the Josephstal Colony near Odessa in southern Russia (which in turn had been founded by Catholics from Alsace and southwestern German states) in 1804. Subsequent settlers were almost all from south Russia. By shortly after the turn of the century, there were 5000 German Catholics in the seven parishes of St. Joseph's Colony.<sup>28</sup>

The second large colony was St. Peter's Colony, founded in 1902, consisting mainly of settlers from Minnesota, but also the Dakotas, Wisconsin and Kansas. Many American-born Germans, whose parents had settled in the United States between 1860 and 1880, were looking for new homesteads in Western Canada. The initial American settlers were later joined by families from South Russia. By 1906 the population had swelled to 6000.

Our interest is in the formation of the third large Catholic settlement, St. Joseph's Colony, which followed St. Peter's by only a few years. F.J. Lange, a founder of the Catholic Colonization Society, conceived the idea of a vast German Catholic colony on the prairies that would not have the excessive bush and shrub that had vexed the settlers in St. Peter's. He travelled by horse and wagon until he found a suitable area near Tramping Lake. The Catholic Colonization Society collaborated with a religious order, in this case the Oblate Order from Hunfeld Germany, in the planning, development and settling of St. Joseph's Colony. This time there was no land company to buy up land for a closed colony as there had been for St. Peter's, nor was the federal government willing to assist. Lange induced the Canadian Pacific Railway to provide some money and for the balance he used much of his own income to defray the expenses of advertising.<sup>29</sup>

The newly formed Catholic Colonization Society with Mr. Lange as president, Mr. Bens as secretary, and under the spiritual guidance of the Oblate Priests, Fathers Laufer, Suffa and Schulte, advertised in various leading Catholic newspapers in the U.S.A. and in other foreign countries, especially in Russia.<sup>30</sup> Father Suffa and Schulte were not directly involved with the settlement of St. Joseph's Colony because of work demands in their own colonies, distant from St. Joseph's. Father Laufer was the spiritual leader, and he chose an excellent and highly qualified assistant by the name of Father Schweers. Along with Mr. Lange, the two priests must be considered as the true founders of St. Joseph's Colony.

Their advertising efforts were well rewarded and soon there was such an influx of German immigrants that the planned colony in reality almost became a closed community. The colony eventually expanded to cover an area of 77 townships.

The parishes comprising St. Joseph's Colony were St. Paschal (Leipzig), St. Michael (Tramping Lake), St. Franziskus (Ulrich), Our Lady of the Assumption (Handel), Our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel (Karmelheim), Broadacres, St. Francis Regis/The Assumption of Our Lady (Kerrobot),

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<sup>28</sup> Becker, p 10

<sup>29</sup> Becker, p 12

<sup>30</sup> Schneider, p 27

Sacred Heart (Denzil), St. Henry (Leibel), St. Anthony (Grosswerder), St. Peterskirche/St. Peter's and St. Donatus (near Cactus Lake), St. Elizabeth (Primate), St. Mary (Macklin), St. Johannes/St. John, Holy Rosary/Rosenkranz (Reward), St. Charles/Selz (Revenue), Our Lady of Fatima (Landis), Holy Martyrs (Luseland), St. Joseph (Scott), St. Peter (Unity), and St. James (Wilkie).

The agricultural potential of St. Joseph's Colony was believed to be better than the previous colonies because of its flatness, adequate topsoil and absence of excessive scrub brush that was time consuming to clear. In return for fertile agricultural land the settlers would have to endure hordes of biting insects, intense summer heat, bleak windy winters, stones a plenty and periodic raging prairie fires!

From a historical perspective, it is worth noting that before the arrival of German settlers, St. Joseph's Colony was the hunting grounds of the Cree. At the height of their development they are estimated to have numbered 60,000 people who roamed central Saskatchewan, Alberta and part of Manitoba.<sup>31</sup>

For 100 years before the arrival of the German settlers, there were hunters, trappers and officials of the huge Hudson's Bay Company that ruled all the trade in the territory. Travelling with company wares or with the skins of fur-bearing animals, they followed rutted trails from one trading post to another, which were usually situated on the shores of rivers or lakes. When a palisade surrounded the post, it was called a fort. The area of St. Joseph's Colony lay directly on the main thoroughfare of this trade and commerce. Some eighty miles north of the colony, on the Saskatchewan River, stood Fort Pitt. Further east on the same river and only sixty miles from the colony, at Battleford, the seat of the government for the Northwest Territories was organized. From both of these centres, trade spread in all directions. The rutted trails would soon be used by settlers.

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<sup>31</sup> Schneider

## 8. History Repeats Itself

After a century of life in Rosental, history was about to repeat itself. Just as Mathias and his family had left Europe for promise of a better life in Crimea, Johann with his wife Rosa and son Isador were to depart Crimea for a better life in the Americas. The reasons were similar; a shortage of land, oppressive social conditions and promise of a better future in a new land.

I have been unable to locate any of Johann's travel documents. However, a cousin of mine has a copy of Joe Kelsch's passport. The date stamp shows it was issued on 11 March 1908. Given the close relationship between the Vollmann and Kelsch families, it is probably safe to assume Johann followed the same process. This suggests to me that the families had a somewhat orderly and legal emigration from Russia. I am told that dramatic stories of dangerous escapes under cover of darkness would be rare during this period and have likely become exaggerated with the retelling over time!

## 9. The Second Migration Journey

It is likely that Johann's family travelled by wagon to Simferopol and then took a train to the Belgium, a trip of about three days. In any event, they were among the passengers aboard the S.S. Lake Michigan when it departed Antwerp on 3 April 1908. It arrived in Saint John New Brunswick on 17 April 1908. The manifest lists their names and ages as:

Tollmann; Johann (33), Rozalie (22) and Isador (1½).

Their itinerary would take them by railroad to Battleford, so Battleford was given as their destination on the manifest. Other passengers who listed Battleford as the destination of their journey were:

Kelsch; Joseph (31), Kathe (26), Philip (3), Johann (1);  
 Reinbold; Friedrick (28), Helena (21) Rozalie (1); and  
 Kelsch; Johann (38), Kunigrande (21), Veronica (1).

NAMES AND DESCRIPTION OF PASSENGERS.													
Date of Sailing: April 1908. N.B. Cabin Passengers must also be included in this Schedule after the other Passengers. "The Immigration Act," Chapter 65, R. S. C.													
Number of Passengers	Amount of Cash To be filed in by Immigration Agent at Port of Landing	NAME OF PASSENGER.	Age of Adult.	Children under 16 years of age.	Able to			Profession, Occupation or Calling of Passengers.	Nation or Country of Birth.	Countries in British Isles from which Passenger came.	Place of Birth.		Place of ultimate destination of Passengers accepting "Tourist" returned Cash who are to be held.
					Read.	Write.	Swear or Sign.				Birth at Sea.	Death at Sea.	
308		Tollmann	Johann	33					Russia				Battleford
			Rozalie	22				H/Wife					
			Isador	1 1/2				Child					
309		Kelsch	Joseph	31					Germany				Battleford
			Kathe	26				H/Wife					
			Philip	3				Child					
			Johann	1				Child					
310		Reinbold	Friedrick	28					Germany				Battleford
			Helena	21				H/Wife					
			Rozalie	1				Child					
311		Kelsch	Johann	38					Germany				Battleford
			Kunigrande	21				H/Wife					
			Veronica	1				Child					

Figure 23: Extract from S.S. Lake Michigan Manifest

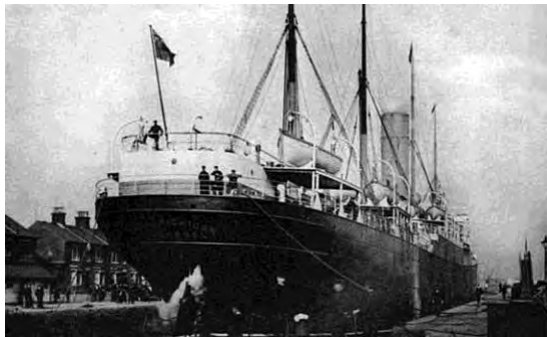


Figure 24: S.S. Lake Michigan



The full price of the ship and train tickets from Antwerp to Battleford was sixty rubles (about \$30) for an adult passenger; thirty rubles for children eight to twelve; children under eight were free.

The ship Master's name is given as H. Parry and the tonnage as 8340. She was built in 1901 with a length of 469.5 feet, a beam of 56.2 feet and a steaming capability of 13 knots. As built, there was accommodation for 500 third class passengers. She served initially in Capetown as a Boer War transport. On 6th April, 1903 ownership was passed to Canadian Pacific Railway Co. and her third class accommodation was increased to 2,150. On the Vollmann crossing there were 2186 passengers (2039 adults and 147 children) so the ship was clearly packed!

The first class and second class cabins on this class of steamship were quite nice and were located above the deck, with good ocean views, fresh air and modern bathrooms and dining facilities. Unfortunately, our ancestors did not enjoy such agreeable accommodations. They travelled steerage in large dormitory-type spaces below the deck. Steerage passengers describe being herded into these large spaces like cattle. Each steerage compartment might accommodate 100 to 400 or more passengers.

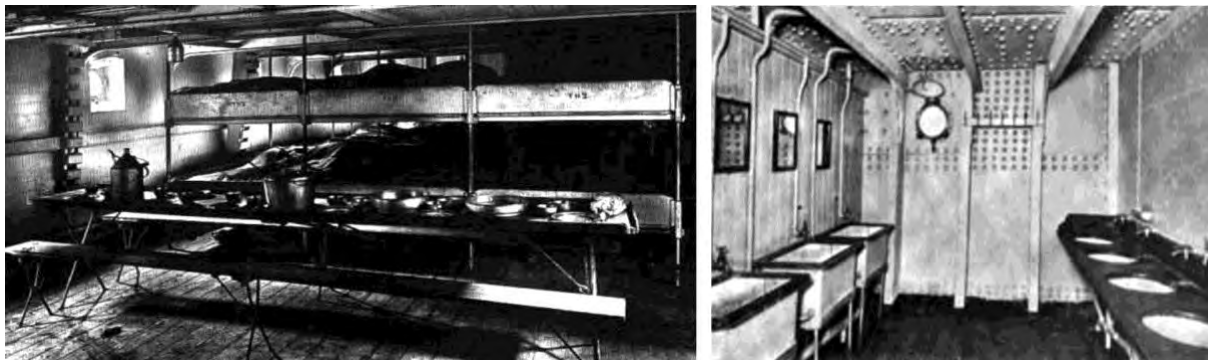


Figure 25: Typical Steerage Accommodation

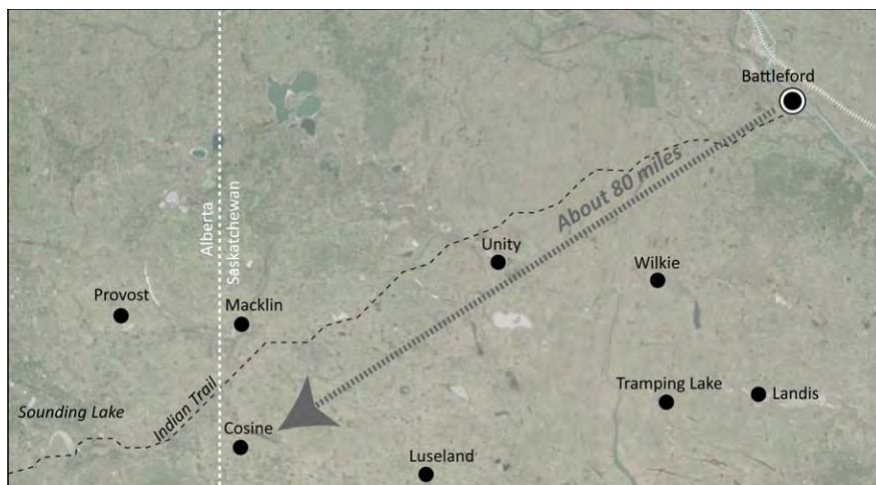
All the steerage berths were of iron, the framework forming two tiers and having only a low partition between the individual berths. Each bunk contained a mattress filled with straw and covered with a slip made of coarse white canvas. There were no pillows. Instead, a life-preserver was placed underneath at the head in each berth. A short and lightweight white blanket was the only covering provided.

It was practically impossible for women to undress properly for retiring because of insufficient screening and lack of privacy. When the steerage was full, each passenger's space was limited to his berth, which then served as bed, clothes and towel rack, cupboard, and baggage space. There were no accommodations to encourage the steerage passenger to be clean and orderly. There were no hooks to hang a garment, no receptacle for refuse and no cans for use in case of seasickness. Under these conditions the stench became unbearable and many fell sick during the two-week voyage.

When meal time came a large cauldron was brought into the dining area. Hunks of bread were thrown down beside the cauldron, and in the scramble for food there were frequent desperate fights between the passengers.

The steamship companies were under intense scrutiny by the media and regulators for the deplorable conditions in steerage. By the turn of the century the companies were installing walls in the large spaces below deck to create two, four and six person cabins, which became known as third-class cabins.

From Saint John they travelled by train to Battleford where they were met by Franz Joseph Lange, an American who was now the Canadian government agent responsible for helping immigrants in all their needs and getting them settled in their new homesteads. The trip continued by horse and buggy as Mr. Lange took them out to look at their land just north of Cosine. They must have liked what they saw as we know Johann applied for his homestead entry at the Dominion Lands office in Battleford on 9 May 1908. In addition to his government salary, Lange benefited from this duty because he was also part owner of a livery stable, as well as a farm machinery and wagon business, which benefitted from much business with the settlers.



Map 8: Final Stage of Vollmann 1908 Migration

The trip from Battleford to the homestead is described by Kelsch as follows:<sup>32</sup>

*Each farmer bought a wagon, two oxen and a cow. One hand plow, one cook stove with two lids, the oven was on the stove pipe. One shot gun, one box of shot gun shells, ten pounds of gun powder and ten pounds of pellets. One box of felt and two thousand caps to make your own gun shells. Also a good supply of groceries, a scythe and hammer. We left Battleford by wagon train, each had a cow tied on behind. We drove for six days. When we arrived there was no house, no well, no neighbours. They unloaded the wagons covering everything up with hay. Took the wagon box off, turned it upside down, that way we lived for three days. Then they dug a trench two feet deep, seven feet wide*

<sup>32</sup> Grosswerder, p 791

*and twelve feet long. Built sod walls four feet high, put a roof on with poplar poles, willows and hay to cover and more sod on top. Then moved in for four weeks. After that they built a real house out of sod. It was 14 by 14 by 7 high.*

Next to the head of the family on Figure 24 is a dollar amount. The dollar amounts shown are the cash that the immigrants had with them to start a new life in Canada. It was the purser's job to safeguard this money. The money would be used at the destination to buy oxen, a wagon, a plow and the other supplies mentioned by Kelsch. Of course many people did not declare the full amount they were carrying. But hiding money on their person was dangerous because it was easy to get robbed in the tight quarters. Realistically, some \$200 to \$300 would be the minimum needed to make the necessary purchases.

It is my understanding that most immigrants purchased an "all-inclusive" transportation package (including accommodations when required) from the nearest railway station in Russia to final destination in North America. Agents for various transatlantic shipping companies were active in the Black Sea Area, holding public meetings, and trying to sell "all-inclusive passage to America". So the immigrant's journey began with a rail passage to a European sea-port. Here the immigrants were registered with the shipping company which was being used for the transatlantic crossing. They were subject to a medical screening. There was usually a several-day wait for the next passage, and so the immigrants were housed in dock-side "Immigration apartments" where they were also fed. At the destination port, they were registered as entering the country, and many were then placed on "special trains" pre-booked to match the docking dates of the ship, in order to take the immigrants further inland to their intended railway station destinations. If the immigrants had to wait a day or two for a train, they were again accommodated in Immigration Houses.

The immigration "business" became an important part of the early CPR business plan. They owned a Transatlantic shipping company, and the Canadian railway, and tons of land in the west as part of their sweetheart deal with Ottawa. The CPR had its own agents in Europe, and particularly Eastern Europe, recruiting potential immigrant settlers for the West.



Battleford would remain the only source of supplies in the initial years. A trip to Battleford was no small task. The usual route was to travel north to intersect the Sounding Lake to Battleford Indian Trail. The Trail connected the NWMP detachments in Battleford and Sounding Lake (it continued to posts westward including Fort Calgary.) Navigation was by compass, especially in winter when the trail was difficult to see. Travellers were comforted to see the Big Rock Buffalo

Rubbing Stone (today a historic site) near the mid-way point; an assurance they were on the right course! Twelve or fifteen miles for oxen and about twenty-five for horses was a good day's

travel.<sup>33</sup> The trip over a prairie trail took about a week, sometimes more. Thus, there was need for both food and shelter along the way. Travelers were made welcome at any sign of habitation, and soon there were recognized stopping places ten or fifteen miles apart.

Typical prices for household supplies purchased in Battleford were as follows;

- apples, 1 dollar for 25 pounds,
- butter, 15 cents a pound,
- eggs, 15 cents a dozen,
- flour, 1.75 dollars for a hundred pound sack,
- jam, 50 cents for seven pound pail,
- sugar, 8 cents a pound,
- yeast, 1.25 dollars a box,
- candles, 65 cents for a five pound box,
- suit of clothes, 5 dollars,
- overalls, 1.75 dollars,
- shoes, 1.75 dollars,
- tin heater, 1.25 dollars,
- cast iron cook stove 25 to 40 dollars, and
- letter stamp, 2 cents and postcard stamp 1 cent.

Battleford was also where settlers could buy the farming things they needed;

- oxen, 200 dollars a yoke (2 oxen),
- horses 400 to 500 dollars a pair
- wagon, 90 dollars, and
- walking plow, 24 dollars.

A restaurant meal was 25 to 35 cents; pie and coffee alone, 15 cents. The usual price of lodging was 1 dollar a night which included supper and breakfast.

Those with insufficient funds to properly outfit their new homestead stayed with friends until they could earn enough money to buy the needed supplies. A decent wage for working in the towns and cities and on the railroad was 1 to 2 dollars a day.

The first train arrived in Macklin in September 1909 on the new CPR Winnipeg-Edmonton line and in 1911 the Macklin-Moose Jaw was connected. The year 1910 saw the start of a major building boom in Macklin and soon local merchants were able to supply most of the settlers' needs. The round trip travel time was reduced to one day.

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<sup>33</sup> Bell, p 6

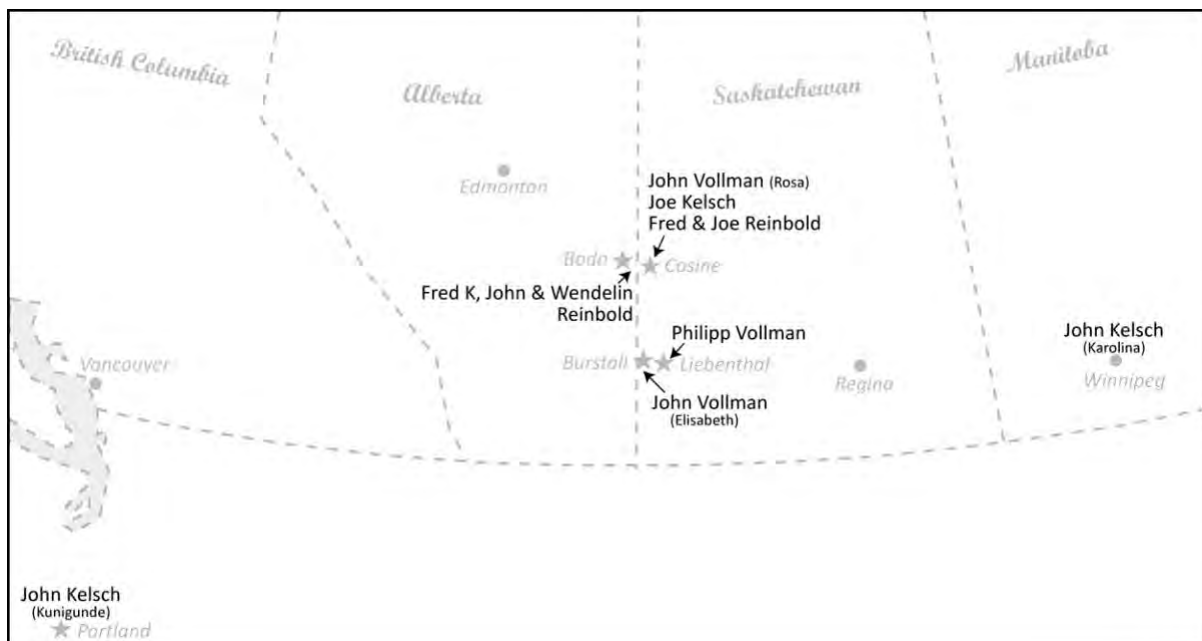
## 10. Homesteading

The Vollman, Kelsch and Reinbold families travelled together from Battleford by wagon and oxen with all their worldly belongings as just described. The three families shared more than an interest in finding opportunities for a new start in a land of opportunity. They were closely related by blood and marriage.

As shown in Appendix 5, Joseph Kelsch and Rosa were brother and sister. They had an older half-sister Sophia who married John Reinbold. John Reinbold and John Vollman were therefore brothers-in-law. My grandparents were known as Auntie Rosa and Uncle John to John Reinbold's children and families. Family stories show that the Reinbolds had great affection for their Auntie Rosa and the final demonstration of this was the large turnout for her funeral.

Fred Reinbold was John Reinbold's younger brother as shown in Appendix 6, so he was Rosa's brother-in-law. Fred Reinbold and John Vollman had something else in common. They both suffered from heart conditions that would see them die relatively young, leaving their wives with large families to support.

Rosa also had a half-brother from her father's first marriage, John Kelsch who, with his wife Karolina and six children would arrive in Canada eight months later. They arrived in Halifax onboard the Grampian which docked December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1908. The family would travel no further west than Winnipeg where they remained their entire life.

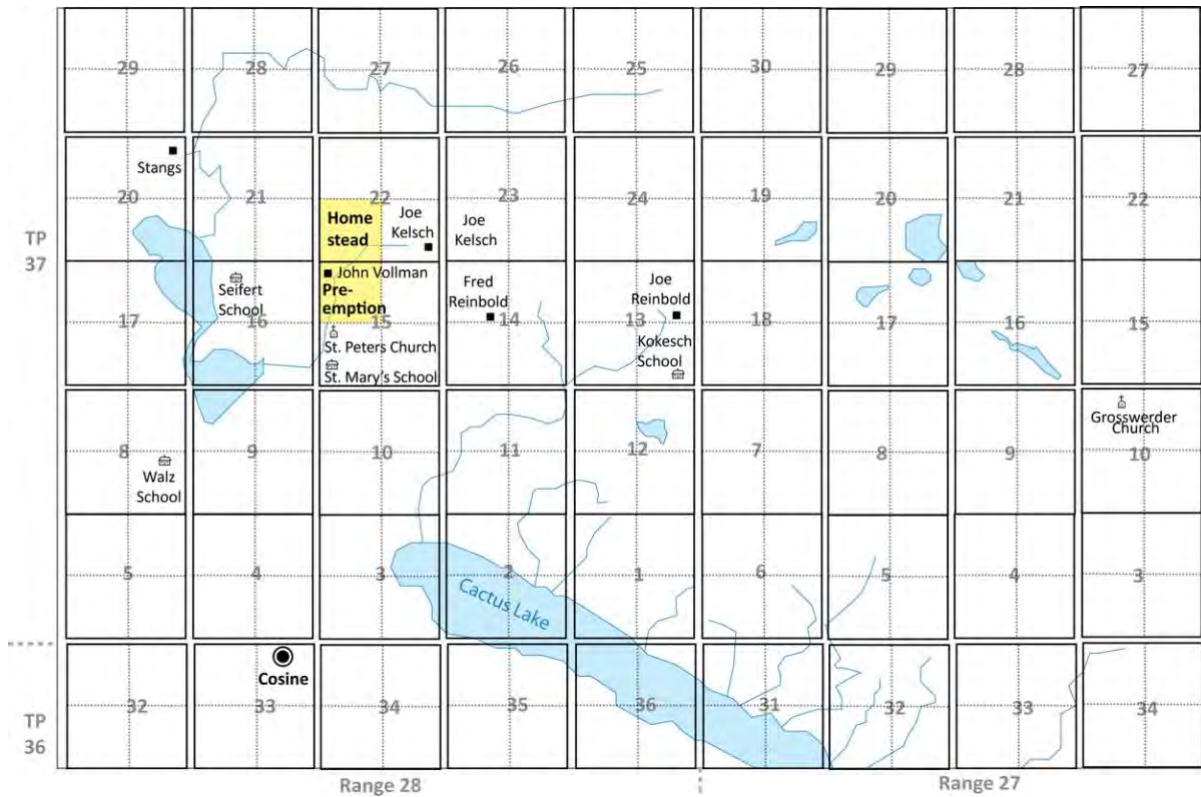


Map 9: Destinations of the Vollman, Kelsch and Reinbold Immigrants

With respect to the fourth couple on the manifest, this John Kelsch was Rosa's second cousin, i.e., their grandfathers were brothers. Apparently John and Kunigunde were not too impressed

with what they saw and continued west on their way to Oregon via Vancouver and Eastport, crossing the U.S. border on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1908. John would raise his family in Portland where he worked at one of the railway foundries. Kunigunde would go by her second name Maria (Mary) and the family dropped the “s” and all of their descendants used the Kelch spelling.

So back to the three Cosine homestead families who found themselves standing in an unending vista of prairie grass, coulees, rocks and gophers. They cooperated to build the initial dwelling on the Kelsch homestead and the Vollmans and Reinbolds lived there as well until they could build their own sod houses.



Map 10: Location of Vollmann Homestead and Pre-emption



I have read two versions concerning the cutting of sod for the house. The first version is that strips were cut from where the house would be located. Plowing then progressed outward from the house until enough sod was cut for the house, usually about an acre of sod. The cleared area around the house served also as a firebreak. The second version is that the sod was cut from slough bottoms. The reason was that the sod in slough bottoms was more permeated with roots which were thick and strong, adding integrity to the sod building strips. Either approach appears plausible in light of the topography around the homestead. Often a skeletal form of poplar was constructed to guide the sod laying.<sup>34</sup>



Figure 26: Typical Sod House

The sod for the house was cut using the same plow that would be used for breaking the land. The sod strips were rectangular, usually one foot by two feet. They were laid much like brick, grass side down, with alternating courses for strength, to produce a wall two feet thick. Each course was leveled by shaving off the high spots with a sharp spade. That dirt was tamped into the low spots and between all joints. A door and at least two windows were built in while the sod was being laid. The thermal mass

of the sod was very effective in protecting the settlers from the cold and heat. I read a humorous account of settlers who installed the door to open outwards. With the first heavy snowfall the exterior was packed with snow and the occupants were trapped inside the dwelling. It was quickly learned that doors on these sod shacks had to open inwards!

For the roof, poplar or aspen poles were laid close together and covered by woven layers of slough hay, sod and a tamped layer of clay. Typically, these sod houses were meant as temporary shelter for a few years until the homesteader had enough money to buy wood for a framed house. We know from John's land applications that the initial sod house used some lumber and that by 1917 he had a wood framed house.

On 4 September 1908 Johann applied for a pre-emption on an adjoining quarter section.

The next job was to make the land suitable for plowing. Tree roots were pulled. Large rocks could break or bend a plow so they had to be removed before sod turning could start. They were removed with spade and crowbar and hauled away by oxen. The rock removal could easily consume as much time as the plowing.

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<sup>34</sup> Broadfoot, pp 11 to 13

I remember visiting the homestead as a young boy and noticing what I was told was a scythe behind the house. Dad showed me how it was used to harvest the initial crops. He made a large sweeping motion with the scythe to level a large patch of hay in one swoop. Kelsch describes the entire crop cycle as follows:<sup>35</sup>

*The first year they each broke about 10 acres, which they put in crop by hand. It was cut by scythe and picked up by hand and made into bundles. Then put into stooks. When dry, the oxen were driven around on it to tramp out the grain.*



Figure 27: Single Furrow Plow and Oxen

The single-furrow walking plow, pulled by two oxen, broke the sod and turned it over so that the grass would die. There is no record of John initially having a disk or harrow to break up the exposed soil, so this was likely done by hand with shovel and rake or with a crude drag made from large logs. The seed was then broadcast by hand and then covered with hand tools or a drag.

This primitive method of harvesting would soon give way to a disk for seeding, horse drawn binders, stooking and then hauling to the sheaves to a threshing machine where they were pitched in for separation. Combines and swathers were introduced just before 1940 but it would be a decade before threshing machines disappeared from the scene.

In the next three years Johann made the necessary improvements to apply for a Homestead Patent, which gave him clear title to the Homestead. The improvements listed in his application included as Appendix 7 are set out in Figure 28.

Many settlers mortgaged their homestead so that they could purchase supplies, horses and machinery. These loans were typically for about \$1000 at a time when wheat was selling for half a buck a bushel. This proved risky for many because entire crops could be lost in some years due to hail, frost or insects. Johann was among those who could not pay off the mortgage. As a result he lost the Homestead in August 1915. Johann's sworn statement in Appendix 8 confirms he lost the Homestead under mortgage.

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<sup>35</sup> Grosswerder, p 729



	<b>Broke (acres)</b>	<b>Cropped (acres)</b>
1908	0	0
1909	35	7
1910	70	35
1911	0	100

	<b>Cattle</b>	<b>Horses</b>
1908	4	0
1909	5	0
1910	6	2
1911	6	6

House	28x12 sod & lumber, \$150 00
Other dwellings	2 stables, sod, 14x12 & 16x18 value \$100 00
Other	Well value \$50 00

Figure 28: John's Assets in 1911 as Sworn on Homestead Patent Application

With the Homestead lost, Johann' only option was to build a house on the Pre-emption and move the family there, which he did in August 1915. On 27 March 1917 John applied for a Patent for that quarter. On 26 December 1918 a Certificate of Ownership for the Pre-emption was issued. The Patent Application shows what John had accomplished in nearly a decade of hard work.

	<b>Fallow (acres)</b>	<b>Cropped (acres)</b>
1911	nil	145
1912	nil	145
1913	nil	145
1914	60	85
1915	85	60
1916	40	85

	<b>Cattle</b>	<b>Horses</b>
1913	6	nil
1914	7	nil
1915	8	nil
1916	6	4
1917	3	4

House	28x14 frame, \$300 00
Other dwellings	Frame stable 28x14 \$100; four frame granaries \$200
Other	Well value \$60 00; 15 acres fenced \$20.

Figure 29: John's Assets in 1917 as Sworn on Patent Application for the Pre-Emption

John and Rosa now had six children. The Vollman family would continue to live in this wooden frame house with two bedrooms from 1915 until 1960. They raised 13 children in this small house; of course many of them left home as soon as they were able to work.

Many of the settlers never learned English. The merchants spoke German, the churches were served by German priests and the first hospital in the area (Macklin) was operated by nuns

from Germany. I don't recall my Grandmother Rosa speaking English and I don't believe she understood what her grandchildren were saying when they spoke English. English was the language of the schools, however. In fact the students were forbidden to speak German on the school grounds. Culprits were made to write lines, "I will not speak German in School." So for the Vollman children it was German at home and in social gatherings and English in school. John had received his education in Russian and as a young man served seven years in the Russian navy, so he was also fluent in Russian. It was rarely spoken however. My father knew a few words, like counting, but mainly those spontaneous exclamations used when you accidentally hit your thumb with a hammer. Maybe that made Russian Grandpa John's first language!



Figure 30: Seifert School

Education was the responsibility of the provinces and teachers and a standard curriculum was developed for the settlers provided certain conditions were met such as a minimum number of homesteads and children. The Vollman children attended Seifert school where they learned English as well as the curriculum subjects. In the summer they would study their catechism for two weeks. Some made it to grade 8, but in many cases they would have to abandon their studies, perhaps as early as grade 4, as they became mature enough to work and help the family. Seifert school was built in 1910, opened in 1911 and

would remain in operation until 1953 when single room country schools were being phased out all across the prairies. In the summer time and sometimes in the winter the children would walk to school. On cold days they drove a one-horse sleigh. The schools had barns in those days for the horses. The school also had an outdoor privy.



Figure 31: Veronica and Joe Vollman in School Photo, 1917

Subjects taught at Seifert were:<sup>36</sup>

Grade One: phonics, reading, writing, health, arithmetic, oral language and art.

Grades two and three; the above plus spelling and written language.

Grades four and five; the above plus Canadian history and geography.

Grades six to eight; English history and grammar were added.

For some subjects two or more grades could be combined and the remaining grades did seatwork. In the evenings,

the teacher had to mark the written work plus prepare lessons and seatwork for eight grades the next day.

<sup>36</sup> Grosswerder, p 729

We can see in the pre-emption documents (see Appendix 8) that sometime before 1917, Johann simplified his name to John Vollman.

The Vollmann family and their neighbours were devout Catholics. In the early years, traveling priests would say mass in one of the settler's sod homes, typically one of the larger dwellings. Following is an extract from a letter that Anton Dewald wrote to *Der Staats-Anzeiger* in Bismarck, North Dakota on 16 March 1913 (the German language paper was an important vehicle for keeping in touch with relatives and friends, including those in the old country).

*On March 10, Father Palm held Holy Mass at my home. He will be back to my home again on May 1 or 2. Mr. Johannes Reinbolt and family were at my home for the service and when they returned home, they found their two brothers-in-law Joseph Kelsch and Johann Vollmann, their wives and children there for a visit. The children played outside in the yard and the adults were in the house. The children were going on walks and ended up at the yard of Johannes Riss.*

The first church in the area was St. Anthony's built in Grosswerder in 1908. Like the first homes in the area, the first church was built from sod. There was no parish priest until 1909 when Father Palm, from Germany, arrived. The original sod church was very small (16 x 32 feet). With more and more settlers moving into the area, a wooden annex was added to accommodate the growing congregation. Also, the sod roof, which often leaked, was replaced with wooden shingles. This modest church was replaced soon after by a larger church in 1915. Although it was more than six miles away, the Cosine settlers walked to Grosswerder practically every Sunday, plus the important feast days, especially if the oxen were too tired from breaking. Oxen hitched to stone boats or wagons were the usual means of transportation. Later on horses were bought and travel became a little easier and faster.

In 1916 the Cosine settlers built their own church, St. Peter's. Father Palm attended to the needs of St. Peter's as well as Grosswerder. A rectory was added in 1923 at which time Father Meyer was assigned to St. Peter's. Going to Church was a religious obligation, but it was a welcomed activity and a chance to get out and visit.



Figure 32: St. Peter's Church Picnic

On the social front, we know that weddings, church picnics and socials were times for the settlers to take a step away from their challenging environment and celebrate for a day or two. Weddings usually involved a two or three day celebration. At most weddings everybody got a chance to dance with the bride and, while doing so, would pin money on the bride's dress to help the young couple get started on their own. Picnics were held once or twice a summer. Everyone dressed in their finest and it is said that

the new relationships established at these picnics often turned into marriages. The practice of match-making was common, as it had been in the old country.

A favourite game at social gatherings was bunnock. It was at a family reunion that I was introduced to the game of bunnock. The game is believed to have been invented by Russian soldiers and brought to the U.S. and Canada by our German ancestors. It was played at social events and took advantage of materials the settlers had plenty of – bleached horse ankle bones. Fifty-two ankle bones were required for the game; 40 soldiers, 4 guards and 8 throwers. The game consists of two parallel rows of bones, ten metres apart, each row consisting of two guards flanking twenty soldier bones. The object of the game is to knock down the opposition's bones beginning with the guards. The team that knocks down the opposition's bones first, with the least number of shots, is declared the winner. To this day Macklin remains a hot spot for the game, annually hosting the World Bunnock Championships which draws as many as 250 teams!



Figure 33: Veronica, Rosa, Joe, Isador, John & Alois

Most of the children in the pioneer days were born at home without the assistance of a doctor; some with the assistance of a mid-wife. When someone became ill, home remedies such as herbs, mustards and other plasters, or wrapping in blankets to cause heavy perspiration, were used. The flu, diphtheria and typhoid took many lives. John and Rosa lost 18-month old John to diphtheria. In that case, John and Rosa did take the sick infant to Battleford but little John died en route.

In 1922 two Franciscan Sisters from Humboldt, Sisters Weiss and Schmidt, came to Macklin to establish a hospital. Sister Schmidt was a registered nurse. A canvas of settlers

raised enough money to buy a house and turn it into a temporary hospital. They were joined in 1924 by Dr. Eid and planning started on a larger more permanent hospital. St. Joseph's hospital opened in 1927 and the safeguarding of public health became a reality.



Figure 34: Left; Alois on binder, brother Joe on tractor; Right; threshing crew - unknown source

By the end of the 1920s farmers were quite well to do. The average farm was 320 acres, so John was less well off than most others with his 160 acres. Fortunes changed in the summer of 1929; one of the driest ever. Stubble crops could not be cut at all, while summer fallow wheat yielded less than two bushels per acre. The drought and depression began in 1929 and grew progressively worse until it reached its peak in 1937.<sup>37</sup> The October Wall Street crash in 1929 started the depression in western Canada, and caused the complete collapse in prices of grain and cattle. It would have been impossible to support John's large family on farm income. Most of the people were on relief. We know that the children had to help out and to get jobs as soon as they were able. Isador worked as a construction labourer in Macklin and Veronica did cooking and housekeeping for a neighbour. The boys were experienced at hopping trains to find work during the depression; Alois and Wendelin went east and spent considerable time in Winnipeg, John and August went west and worked for a time in the Kitimat and Kimberley B.C. coal mines. Later, Peter and August served in the army.

Things improved in the 1940s when good crops were harvested in the majority of years. From then on, farming was on a sounder footing. Unfortunately John would not see the return to better times. He passed away in 1940, leaving the youngest sons to farm the land. His passing was very difficult for Rosa as she had the farm, a ten year old girl and two teenage boys depending on her. She remained on the farm for several years before she moved into a house in Macklin. Rosa passed away in 1960.

---

<sup>37</sup> Stang, W., p 33



Pete & Rosa



August (Gus)



Frank, Wendelin & Pete

Figure 35: Two of John's Sons Served in the Military in World War II; Pete and Gus



Figure 36: Rosa Vollman



Figure 37: John and Rosa Grave Site in St. Peter's Cemetery

I thought it would be interesting to John and Rosa's descendants to have some insight into the kind of people John and Rosa were. I could not do this because I did not know John at all and had only brief encounters with Rosa. So I turned to my cousin Jane Wheat. Jane is the daughter of Rose Vollman; John and Rosa's youngest child. Jane enjoyed the opportunity of hearing many stories about Grandmother and Grandfather. Here is what she wrote for me:

*Our Grandparents were remarkably strong and courageous individuals who were not afraid to take on the challenges of settling in a new country, far removed from their families and the secure life they left behind. They had a deep, abiding faith in God and trusted in Him to take care of them and their growing family. For many years, Grandfather volunteered his time lighting the fire of St. Peter's Church so the Church was a warm, inviting place for all those who attended Mass. There is an interesting anecdote about Grandfather making the comment that the priest should put his housekeeper in the middle of the choir section, playing the piano, because she had the voice of a man, yet looked like a woman. She made him nervous because he was confused by her sexuality. He learned Latin as a sailor and often said that he could understand everything the priest said during Mass, which was always conducted in Latin not German, even though the priest was German, too. The Mass, itself, would go on for several hours, and*

*tempers would sometimes flare. A Sieben man, who was a fellow parishioner, could confirm my story that Grandfather had a short temper. Outside the Church, on one occasion, our Grandfather threw a punch at this man and he wound up falling face down into a huge mud puddle. That must have been the free entertainment that particular Sunday.*

*My grandparents faithfully attended Mass every Sunday and became close friends with many of the Parish priests of St. Peter's Church, particularly Father Hubbits. He was German like our Grandparents and led the choir group besides being the parish priest. He even had a perfume list that he recited that included all the ladies of the parish who wore sweet smelling fragrances. He selected Uncle Gus to bring him his mail and made a wise choice as it turned out. Uncle Gus ensured that Father's mail was delivered on time and enjoyed a tall glass of wine with the priest afterwards. Father Hubbits had the greatest respect and admiration for our Grandmother because she often had him to the house for meals and made him feel like part of the family.*

*Both Grandmother and Grandfather were short in stature which was quite typical of the time and era in which they lived. By short in stature, I would say that Grandmother was about 4' 10" tall and Grandfather was probably 5' 3" tall or slightly taller. They made a handsome couple with Grandfather's distinguishing bar moustache and Grandmother's flawlessly smooth complexion. According to her children, Grandmother had naturally curly, black hair that she kept long and fashioned into a bun, which she wore until her sudden death in 1960. While Grandfather had captivating blue eyes, Grandmother had warm, comforting brown eyes. They were both friendly and social and always ready to lend a helping hand to a relative or neighbor who needed assistance.*

*Their personalities were dramatically different which probably made them even more compatible. Known for his outspokenness, Grandfather was not afraid to tell someone the truth or share his own opinion on a topic of interest to him. Swimming was a natural talent that Grandfather had. When the day's work was completed, he loved to swim in the nude in Kelsch's dam, just up the road from his homestead. Some family members, particularly the Kelsch women, were not amused by his habit. They expressed their disapproval to Grandfather who just made some casual remark that he was not going to change his ways for anyone. He was fearless and strong in character and certainly not afraid to stand up for what was right. Grandmother had a totally different personality. She was the quiet type who was nevertheless thoughtful and wise. Her expressions are her legacy to her children and grandchildren. Here are some of my favorites. Keep in mind that Grandmother only spoke German and these are the English translations. We know that they probably sounded better spoken in German. "God's mills mill slow, but they mill sure." "Hills and valleys never meet, but people do." "Still waters run deep, the loud you hear it roar. "If you pick up all the pieces of wood, you soon have an armful", "Never see the sliver in someone else's eye, only the pole in your own."*

## 11. First Generation Canadians

With the exception of Isador, John and Rosa's children were all born in Canada. The following photo shows them in their mature years at a family reunion.



Back Row: Isador, Veronica, Joe, Alois, Wendelin, John. Front Row: Anne, Gus, Rose, Frank, Clem. Missing: Pete

**Figure 38: Photo of First Generation Canadian Vollmans**

John and Rosa's children continued the family legacy as farmers. The eldest children did not receive much education because of the difficult times, John's health and the need to help out on the farm.

Isador did not complete grade one because of his father's heart condition. At a young age he was needed to step-up and help with the farming and provide for the family. He helped until 1931 when he married Mary Kisslinger and rented a farm in the Macklin area. In 1945 he managed to buy his own farm near Provost where they continued to farm until 1959, when they retired and moved into town. He taught himself to read newspapers and was sharp at math.

As a young woman, Veronica worked at various jobs, putting in long hours and sending home her wages to help raise the family. After marrying George Herle they lived on his father's farm until they got their own quarter section in 1935. From 1943 to 1949 they farmed near Winter, Saskatchewan and then moved to a farm east of Provost where they farmed until their retirement in the town of Provost in 1972.



Joe did not marry. He could frequently be seen helping out at his brothers' farms with seeding and harvest activities. His help included constructing buildings on their farms. He retired in Provost and later moved to Macklin.

The boys after Isador received somewhat more education, but also had to leave school to help out on the farm. My father Alois said he had grade four, but my mom would roll her eyes whenever he made that assertion.

Alois married Pauline in 1944 and they lived on a farm north of Denzil for one year. Then they bought a farm northwest of Luseland where they lived until 1966. In 1966 they built a house in town where Alois semi-retired but would continue to run the farming operation into the 1970s when his son Don moved onto the farm. Alois continued to help out on the farm as long as his health permitted.

Wendelin married Barbara Ackerman in 1941 and lived on a rented farm east of Macklin. In 1945 they moved to Lacombe, then in 1947 to Clive and in 1952 bought a farm in the Chigwell district where they remained until retiring from farming in 1960. The next move was to Red Deer where he worked for the Alpha Dairy Plant before moving to the Deer Home where he became a chef. After 41 years in Red Deer, they moved to Malakwa, B.C. in 2001 to live in the care of a daughter and son-in-law and in August, 2004 they moved to Pioneer Lodge in Salmon Arm, B.C.

I never knew Pete as he moved to New Westminster, B.C. before I can remember meeting uncles. His occupation is listed as paper converter. I did hear many stories however about Pete's incredible strength. An unyielding canning jar lid could result in the jar being crushed in Pete's powerful hands. I also heard that the War was very hard on Pete; the phrase used was that he came home "shell shocked."

Anne married Julius Kluck in 1934. Julius passed away after 22 years of marriage. In 1959 she married Thomas McDowell. They farmed near Provost.

John and Ann farmed for several years shortly after they were married about 12 miles south of Provost, near the farm of Isador and Mary. They had to sell the farm after several years of being hauled out. He then worked for the CNR mostly in Mirror and in Calgary. Later he worked for the Calgary Herald newspaper until his retirement.

August had a varied work experience before settling down to farm. As a young man he worked on farms, in a mine, on oil rigs and ran a dairy. After that he farmed and ranched near Macklin.

Frank and Clem as the two youngest boys remained on the homestead for some time. I tend to remember Frank as more the farming type and Clem had Joe's skills as a carpenter. Frank remained on the farm until retiring in Macklin in 1984. After marrying, Clem lived in Calgary

from 1963 until 1986, using his skills as a cabinet maker and carpenter for a number of companies. He later moved to New Westminster.

Rose worked in private homes and public hospitals until marrying Richard. They lived on a farm north of Macklin until Richard's unexpected death in 1977. Rose then moved into Macklin.

**John and Rosa (Kelsch) Vollman**

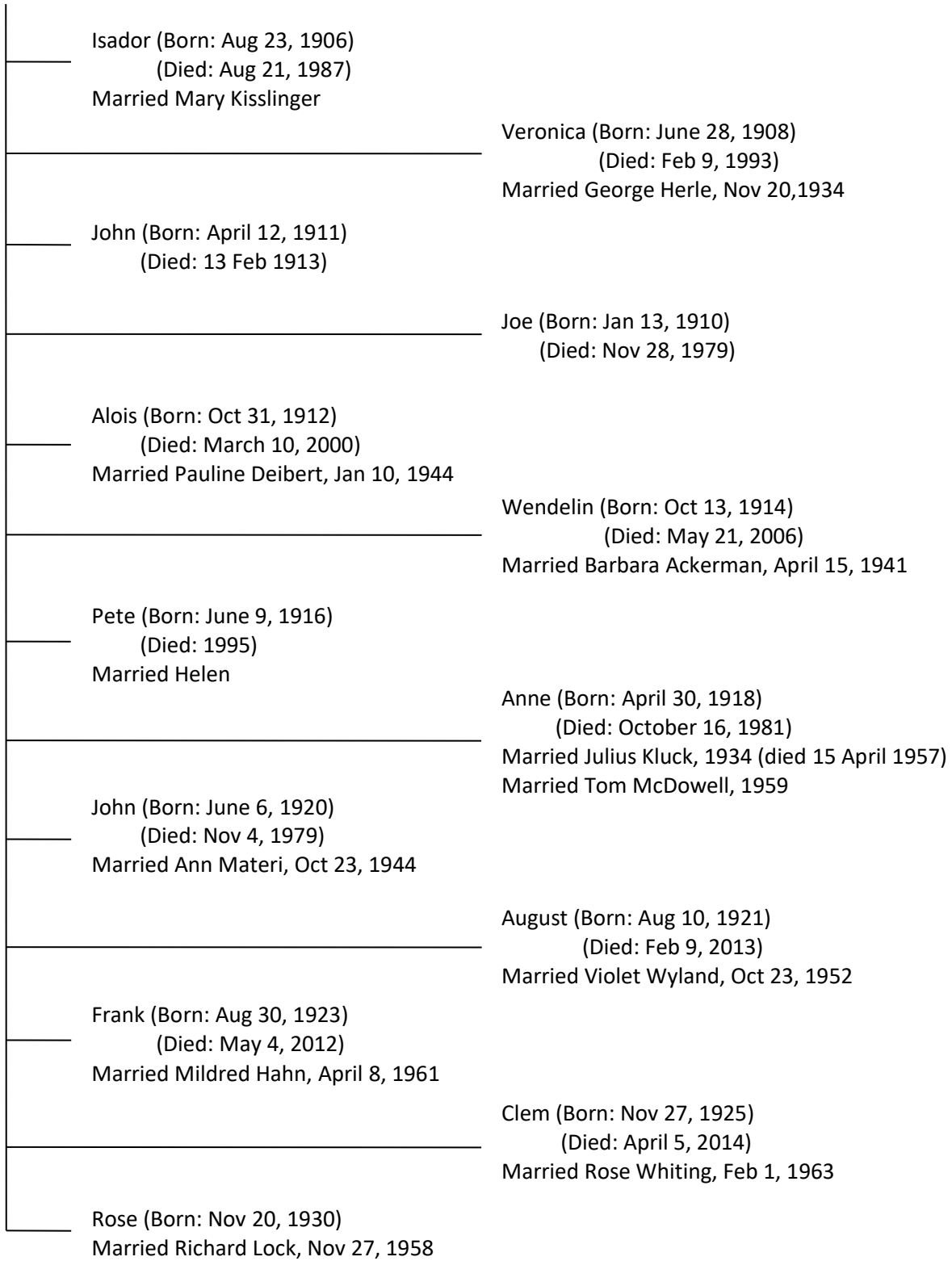


Figure 39: Children of John and Rosa

We are now seeing the birth of the fifth generation of the John and Rosa Vollman descendants in Canada. The number of living descendants has easily swollen to well over 100 and I doubt it's possible to keep track of everyone's existence and whereabouts. I've put together what I can; mostly complete for the first three generations, thanks to a handful of relatives who filled in as much missing information as they could.

Whether remaining gaps can be filled remains to be seen as this report gets wider distribution. In any event, the family trees in this document will allow the younger generation to have a line of sight back, not only to John and Rosa, but back some two hundred years to Mathias Vollman.

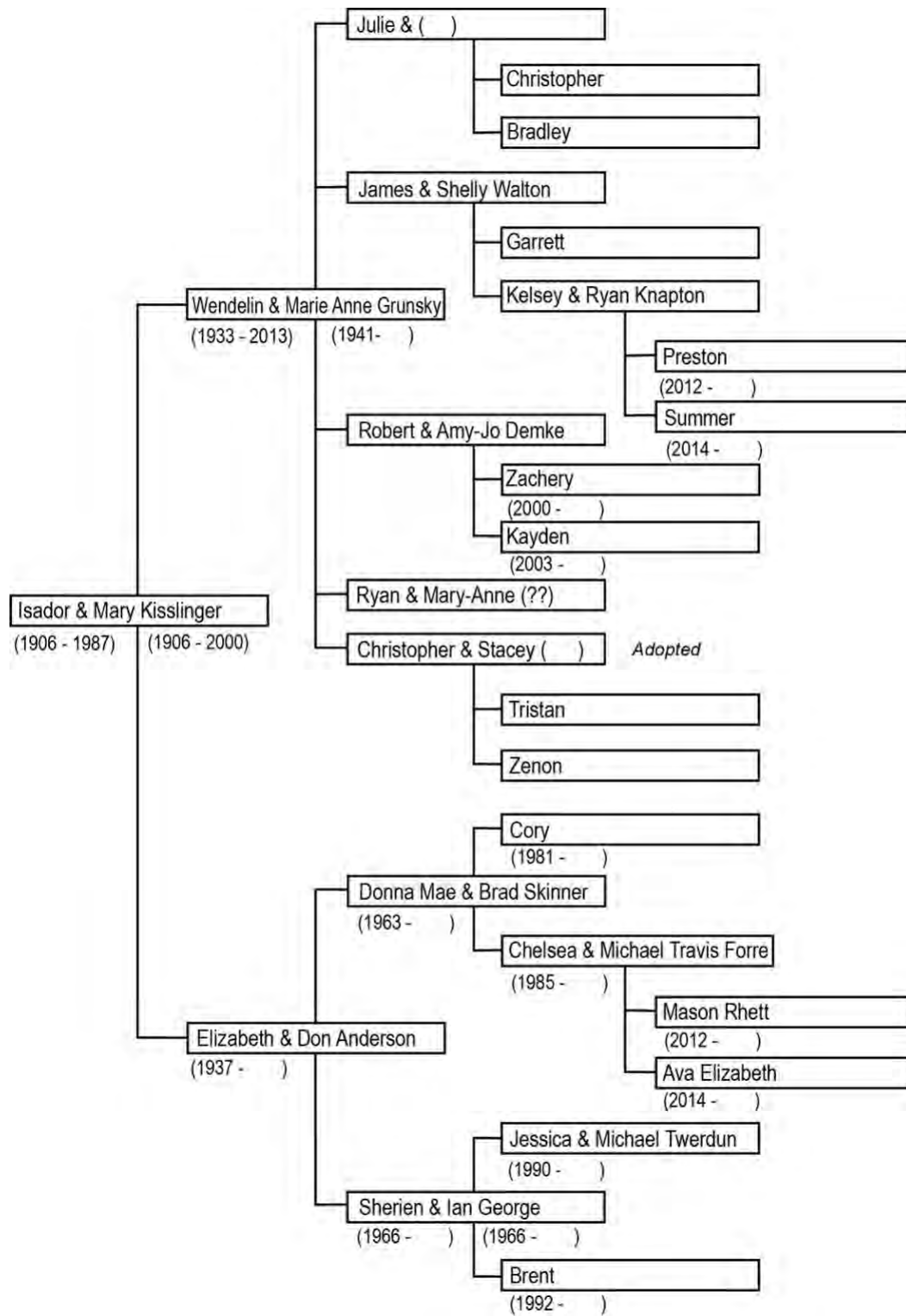


Figure 40: Isador and Mary Family Tree

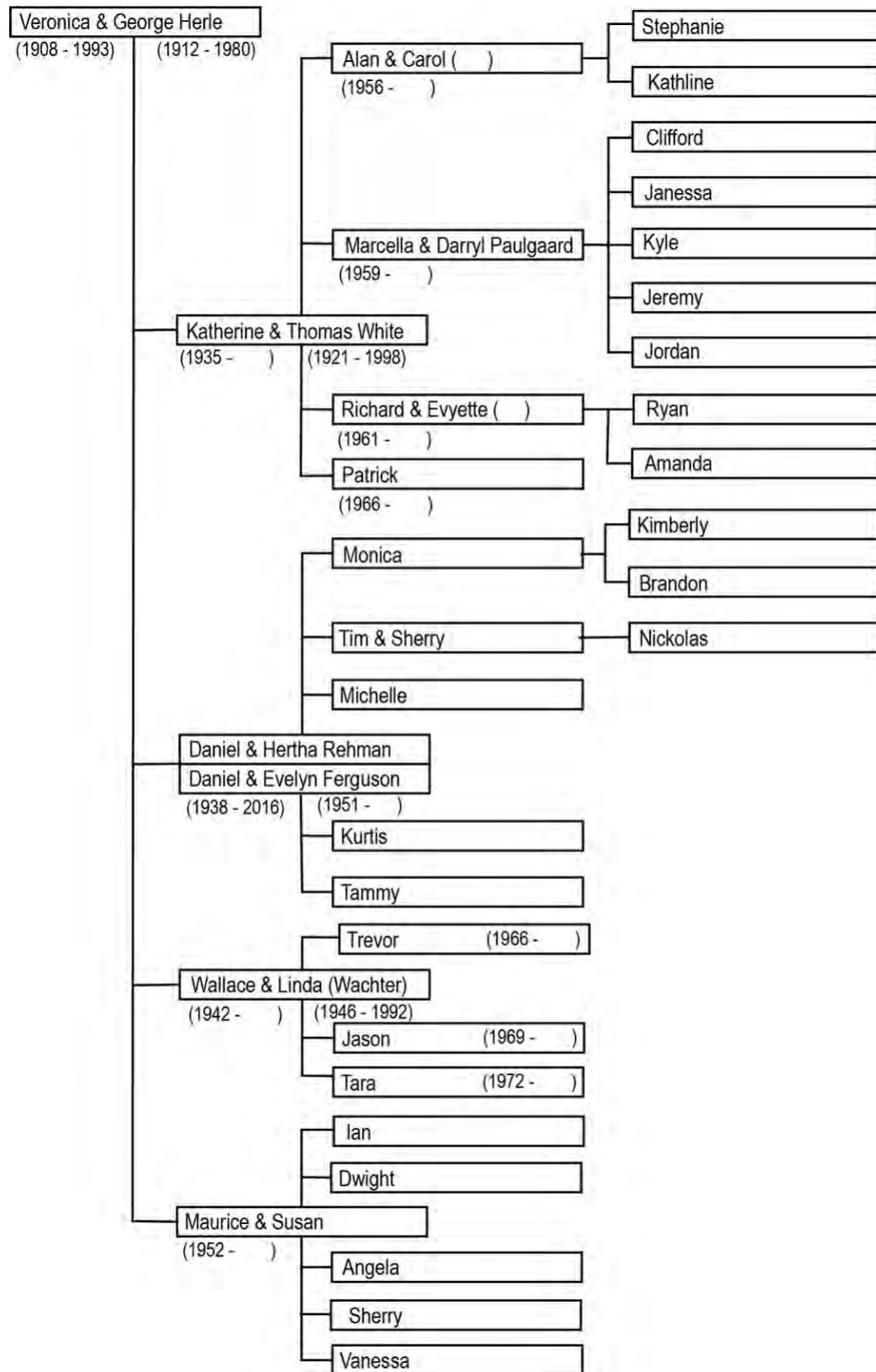


Figure 41: Veronica and George Family Tree

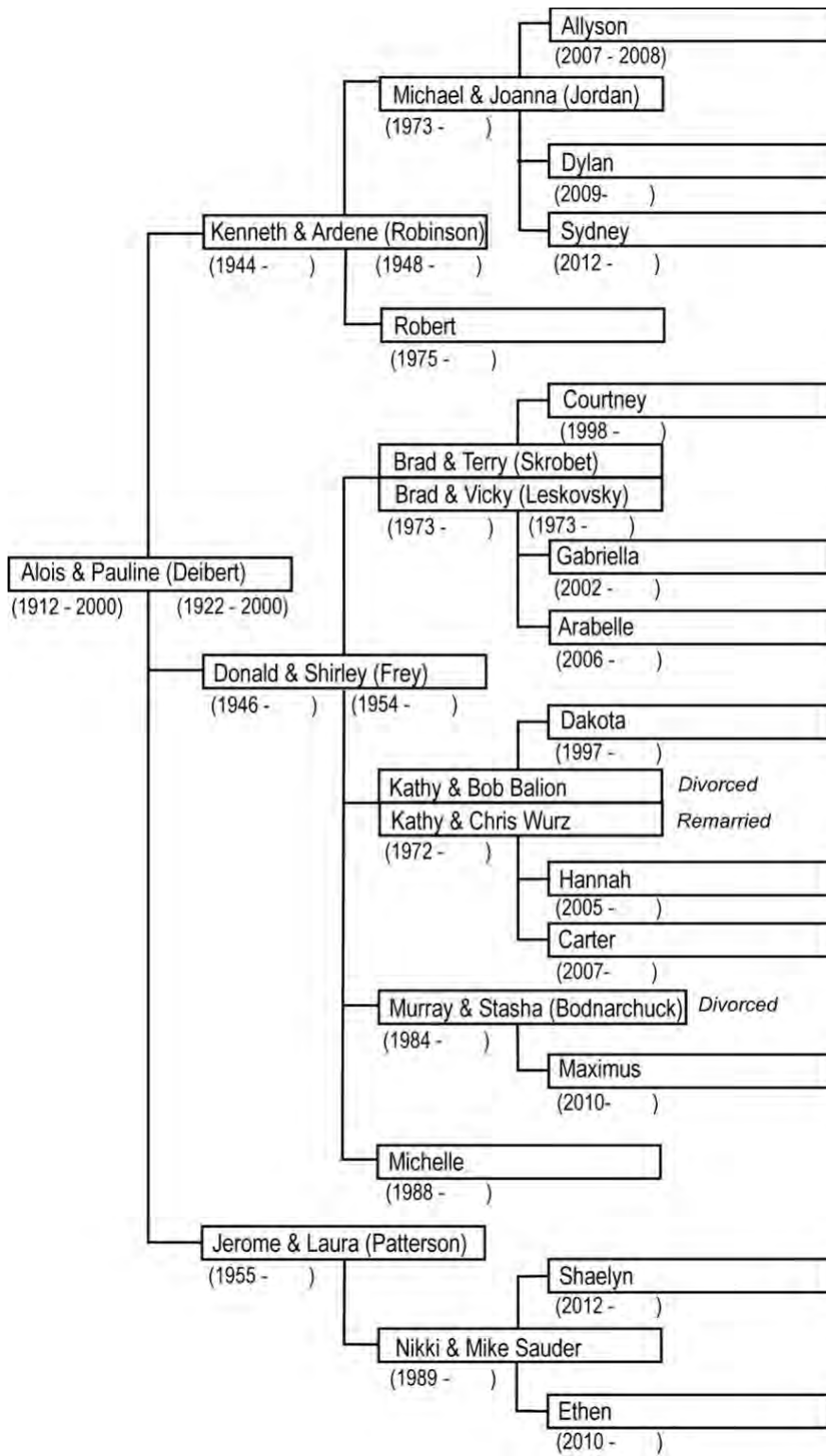


Figure 42: Alois and Pauline Family Tree

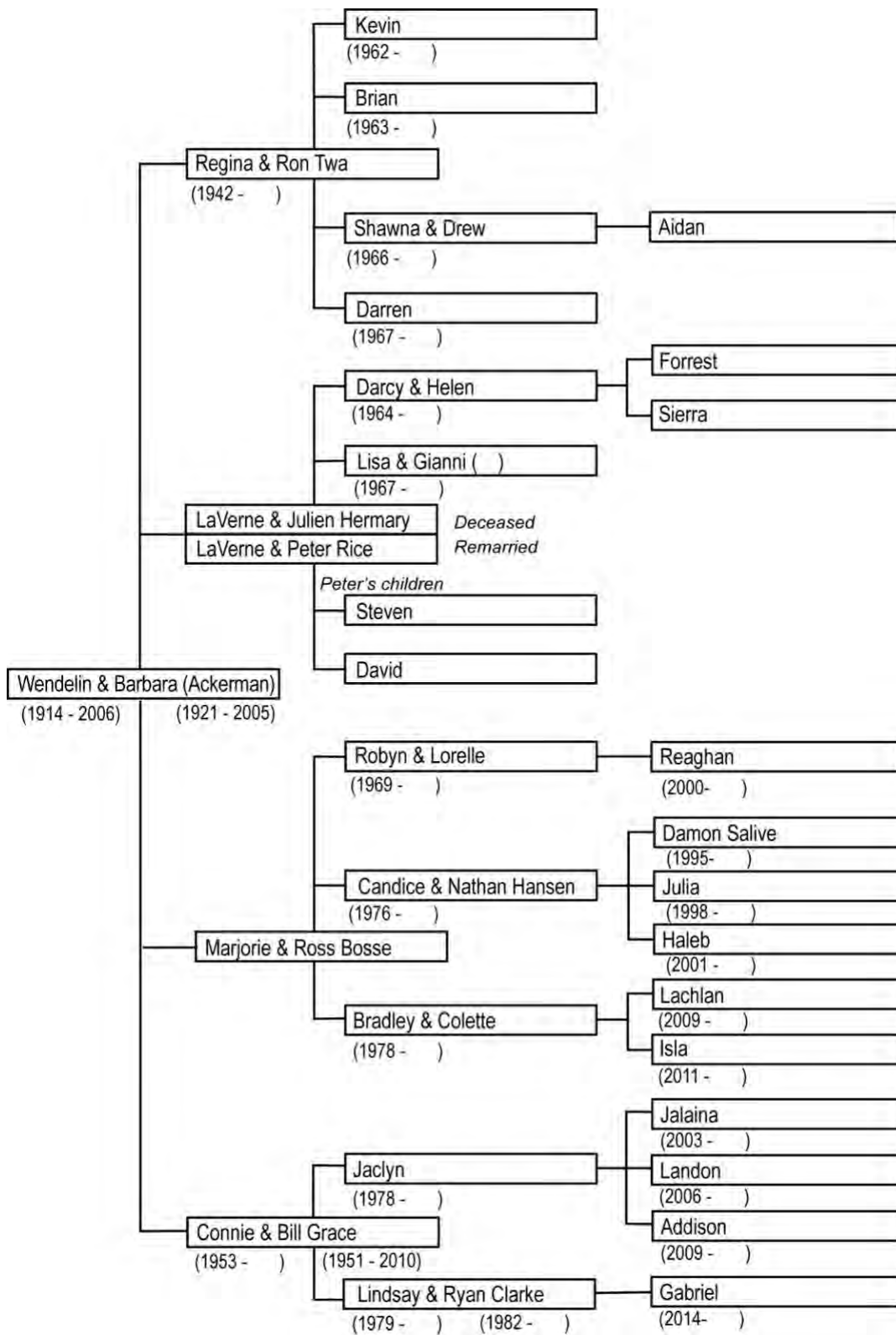


Figure 43: Wendelin and Barbara Family Tree



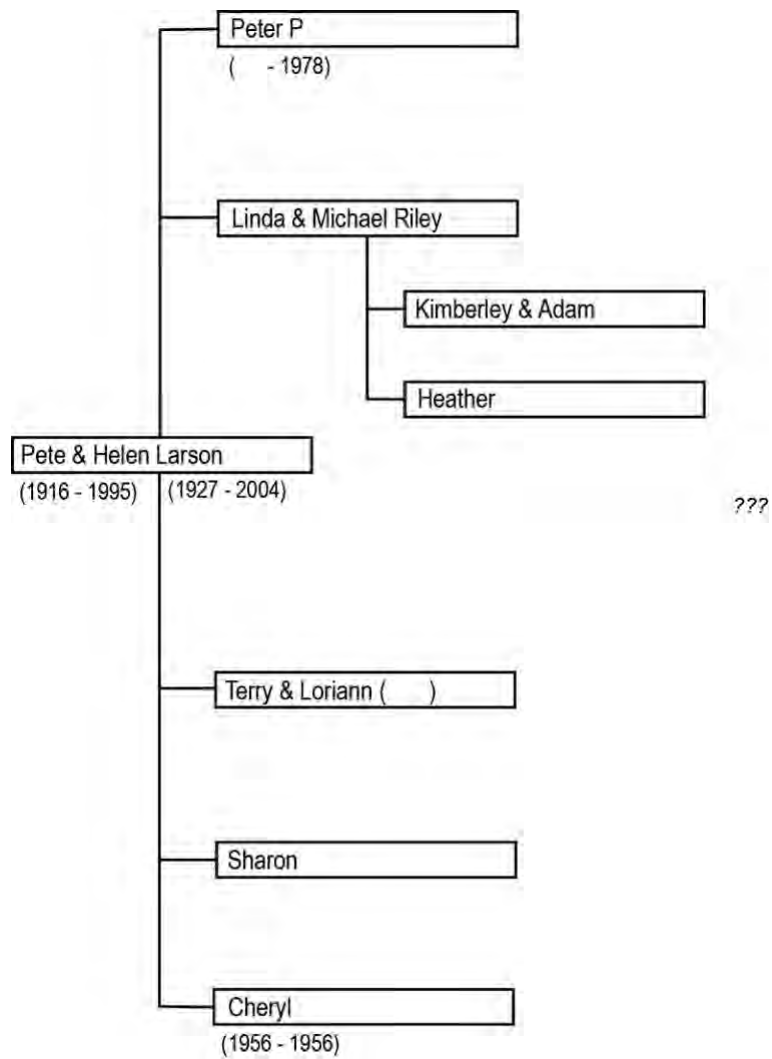


Figure 44: Pete and Helen Family Tree

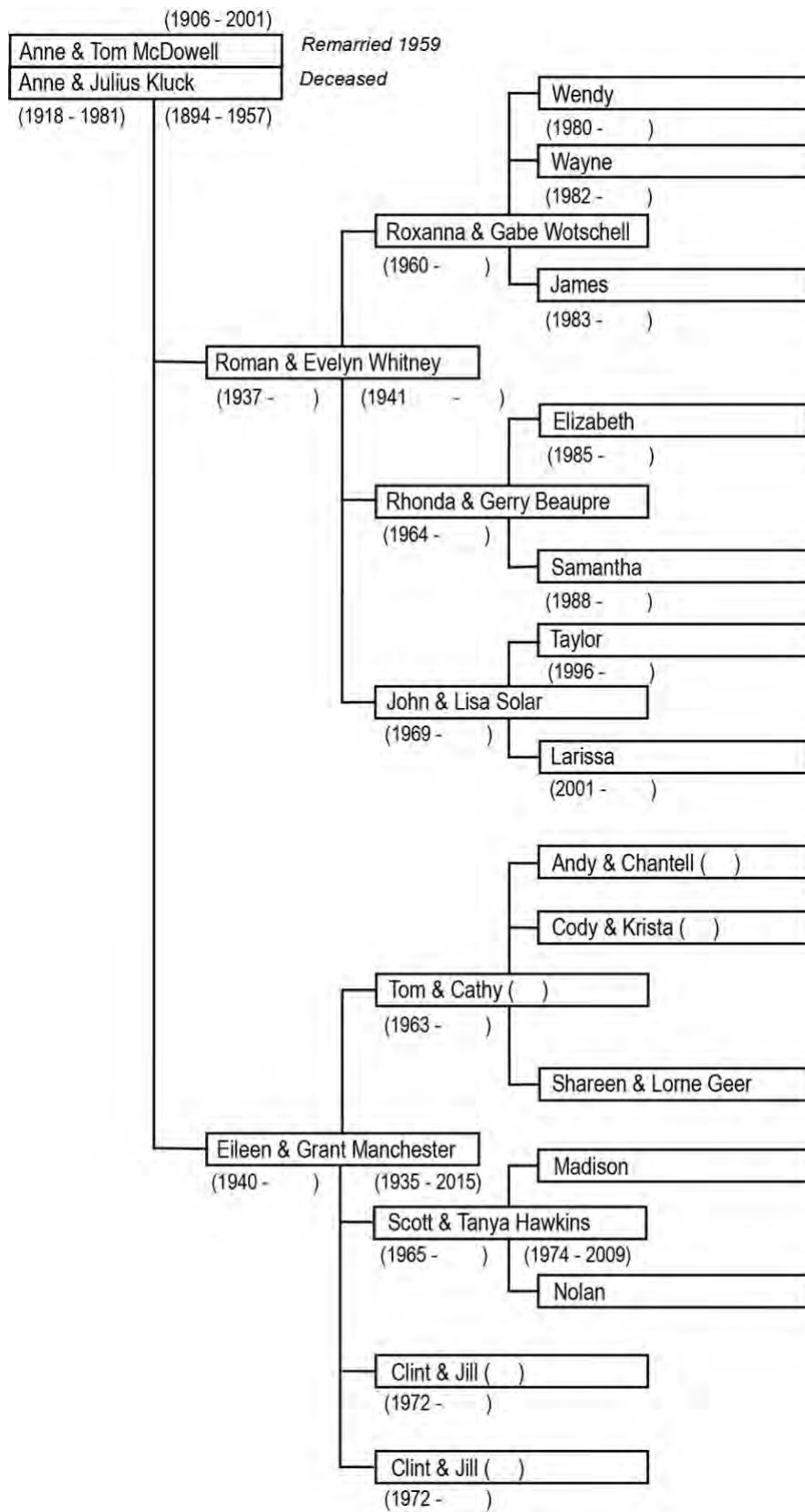


Figure 45: Anne and Julius Family Tree

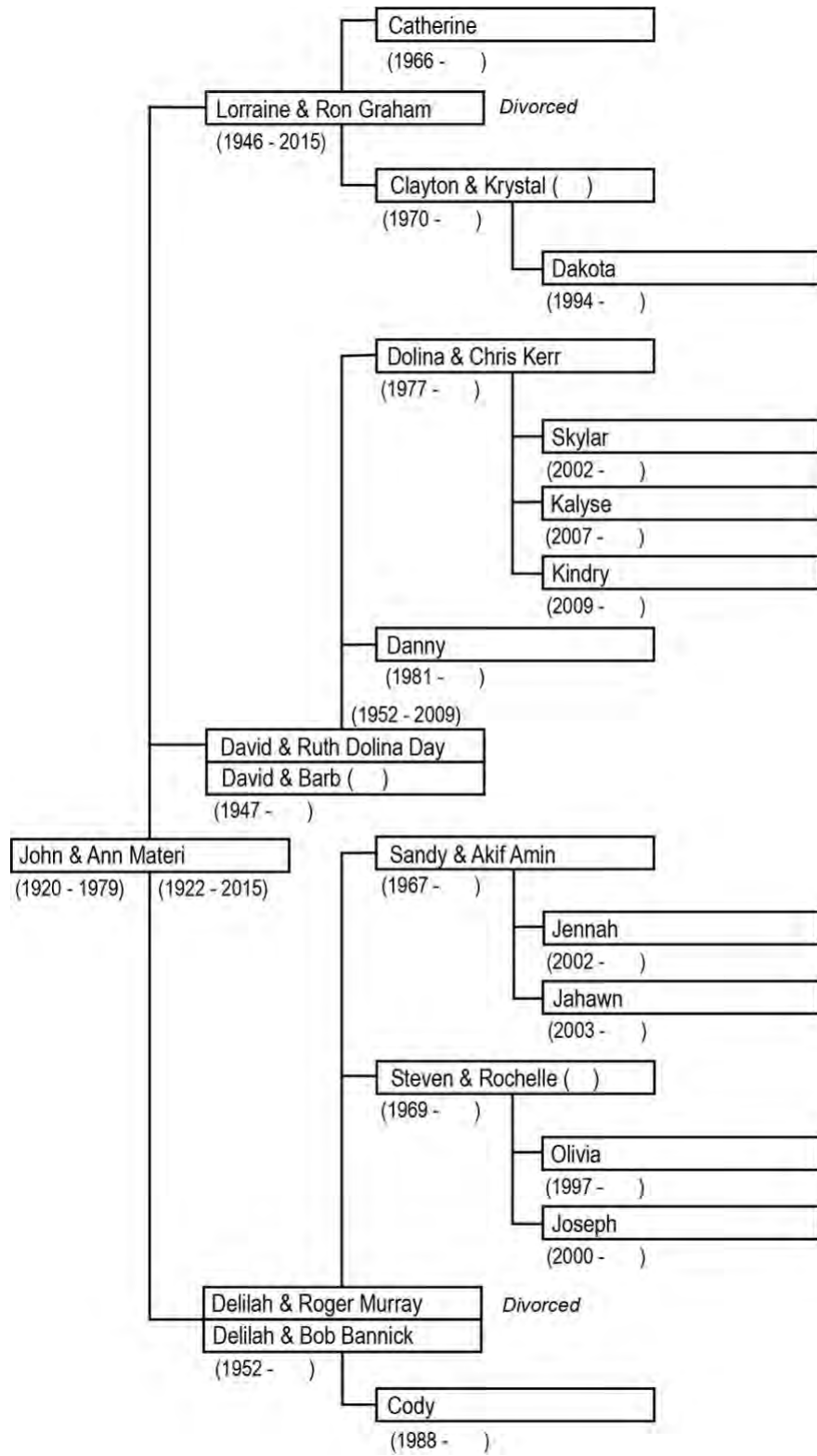


Figure 46: John and Ann Family Tree

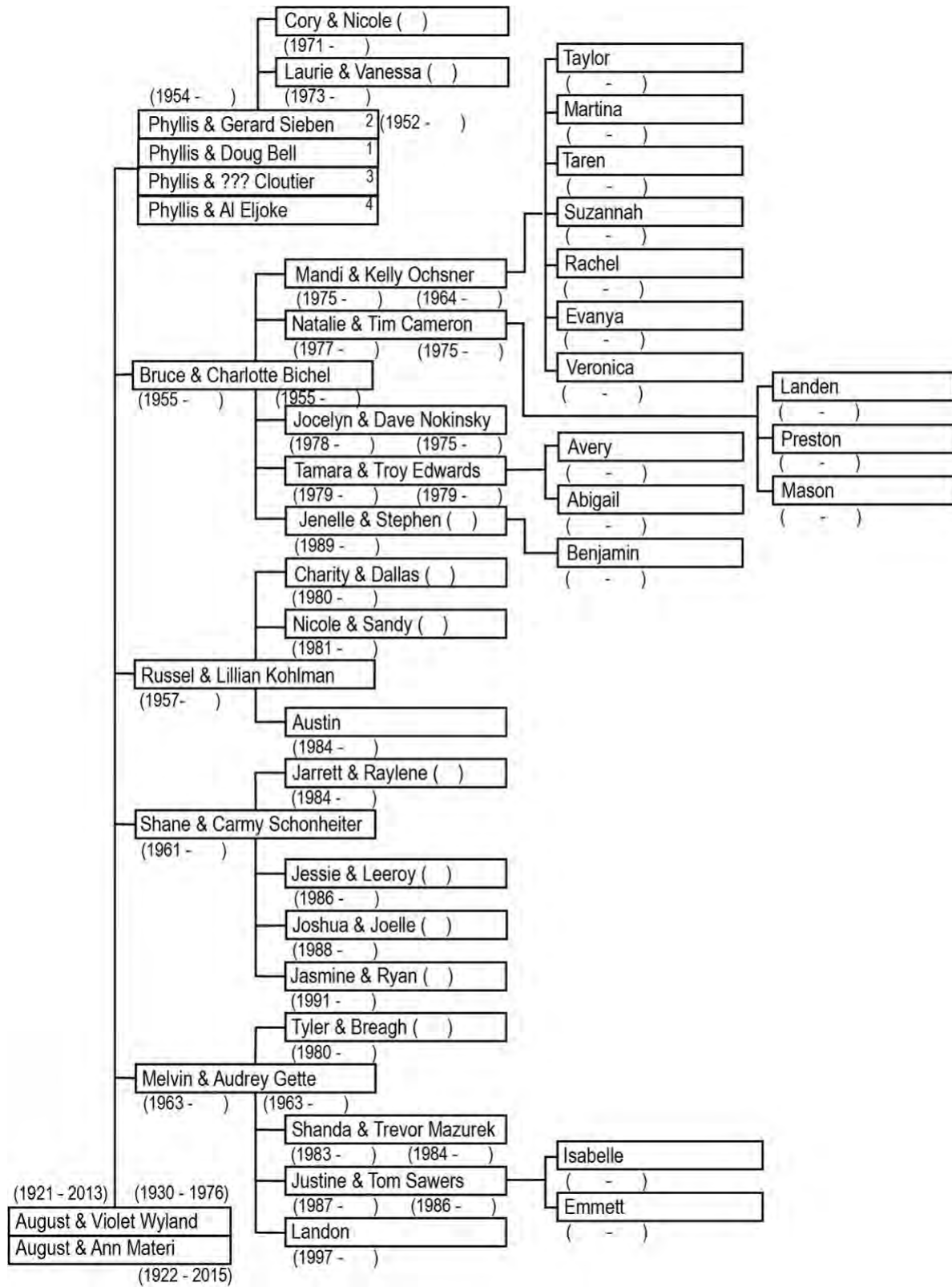


Figure 47: August and Violet Family Tree

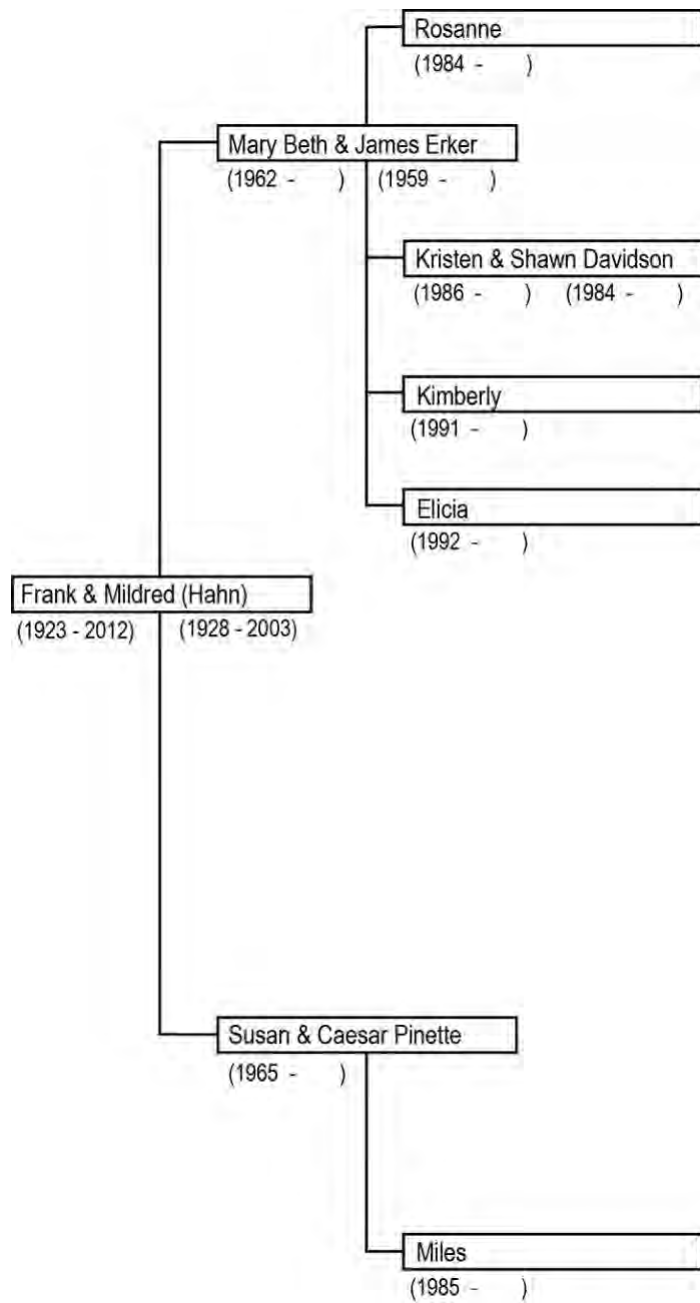


Figure 48: Frank and Mildred Family Tree

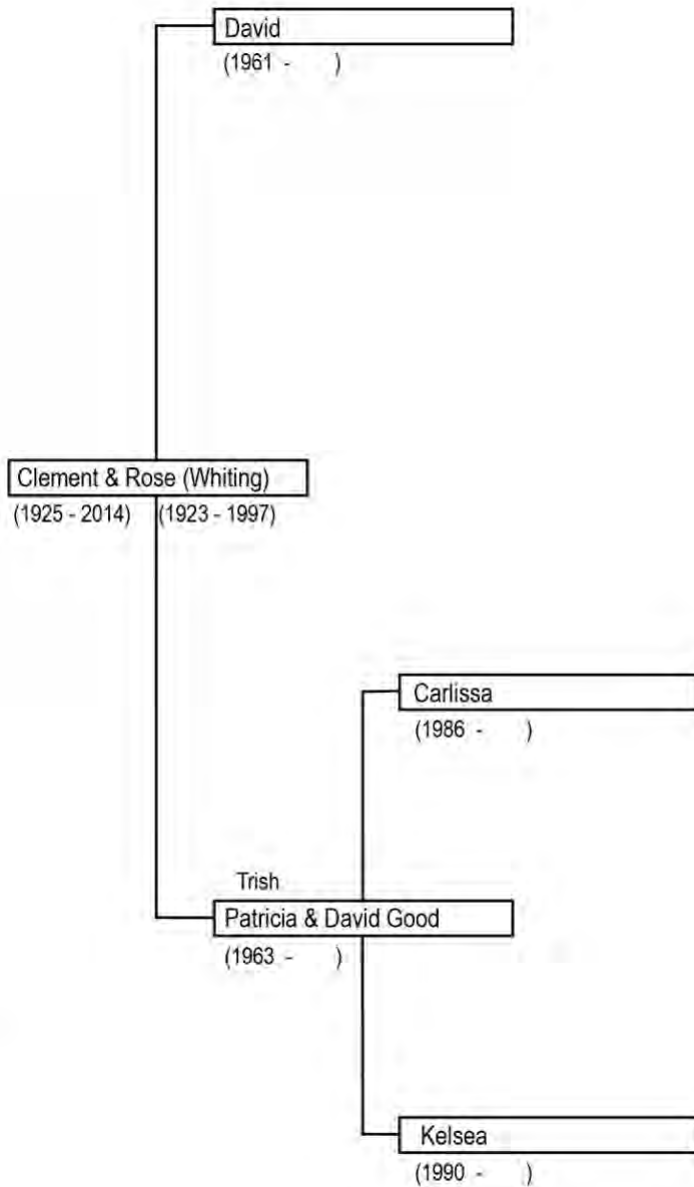


Figure 49: Clem and Rose Family Tree

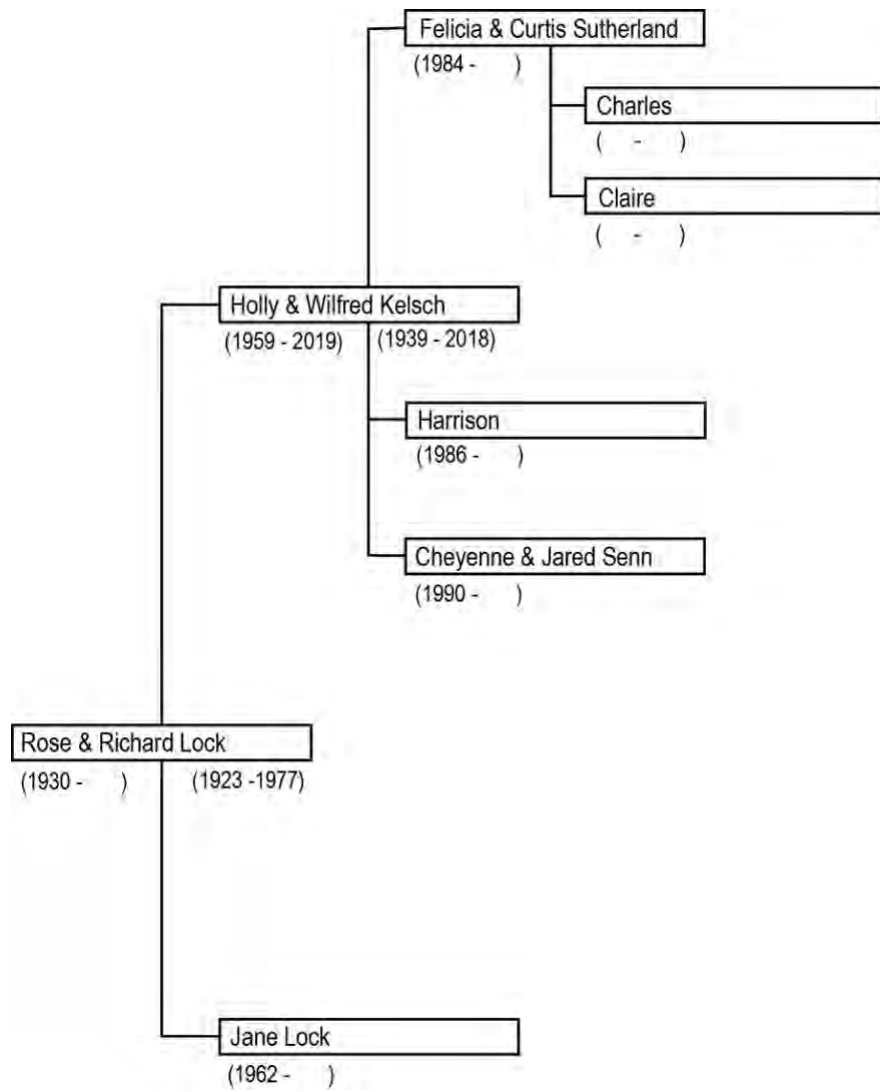


Figure 50: Rose and Richard Family Tree



Isador and Mary



Isador and Mary



Veronica and George



Joe



Alois and Pauline



Alois and Pauline



Wendelin and Barbara



Wendelin and Barbara





Pete



Pete



Pete and Helen



Anne and Tom



Anne



John and Ann



John and Ann



Gus and Vi



Gus and Vi



Ann and Gus



Frank



Frank and Millie



Clem



Clem and Rose



Rose and Richard



Alois Regina Wendelin Barbara Rosa John Ann, Frank in doorway



Anne, Rose and Veronica



Frank, Wendelin, Alois and Gus in 1992



Gus, Rose, Wendelin and Frank in 2000



**VOLLMAN** - Alois John Vollman passed away at the age of 87 at the Buena Vista Lodge at Kerrobert, Sk. on Friday, March 10, 2000 at 1:30 a.m. He resided there for the past one and a half years. He is predeceased by his parents, John and Rosa Vollman; brothers, John (infant), Isador, John, Joseph, and Peter; sisters, Veronica and Ann. Alois is survived by his loving wife of 56 years, Pauline; sons, Kenneth (Ardene) , Donald (Shirley) and Jerome (Laura); brothers and sisters, Wendelin, August, Frank, Clem and Rose; grandchildren, Katherine, Bradley, Michael, Robert, Murray, Michelle and Nikki; and great-grandchildren, Dakota, Landon and Courtney; and numerous nieces and nephews. Alois was born and raised in Cosine, Sask. on a farm. He married Pauline Deibert, from Denzil, on January 10, 1944. They resided north of Denzil for one year, then bought a farm north-west of Luseland, where they lived for 21 years. Alois loved farming, gardening, and all outdoor activities. He was very proud of his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Funeral mass was held on Monday, March 13, 2000 at 10:00 a.m in St. Eugene De Mazonod Church, Luseland, Sk. with Rev. Fr. Clem Novakowski, Celebrant. Interment followed in the Luseland Cemetery. Prayers were held on Sunday, March 12, 2000 at 7:30 p.m. in the Church. Memorial donations directed to the Saskatchewan Heart and Stroke Foundation. They will be gratefully accepted c/o the Luseland Credit Union. Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the Kerrobert Funeral Home.

A tribute to my Grandpa  
 A treasure chest full of memories is what I have to keep,  
 As Grandpa slowly drifts into a peaceful, eternal sleep.  
 Grandpa was a farmer, that is how I will remember him best.  
 I believe that over his land is where his soul will gently rest.  
 There isn't many days when I can't picture him on the farm,  
 Brad and I trying to sneak the lunch Grandma sent him, using our youthful charm.  
 The harvest brings special memories to mind as Grandpa was always there.

We would be shelling peas, Grandpa would never eat one, but Grandma and I would eat our share.  
 Grandpa was a proud man, that is one of the things I remember most.  
 But even though he worked hard to make the farm look it's best you'd never hear him boast.  
 I will never forget you and all the lessons you left behind.  
 Your love is in my heart and your dreams and wisdom in my mind.  
 Sleep peacefully Grandpa, to a better place your soul will go.  
 I know this in my heart yet I will still miss you so.  
 Love always,  
 Your granddaughter Kathv.

### Obituary for August Vollman



August John Vollman was born August 10, 1921 in Macklin, Saskatchewan to John and Rosa Vollman. He passed away peacefully, with his family at his side, at the St. Joseph's Health Center on February 9th, 2013 at 91 years of age.

August leaves to mourn him his wife, Ann; daughter, Phyllis Cloutier (Al Eljoke); sons, Bruce (Charlotte Bichel), Russell (Lillian

Kohlman), Shane (Carmy Schonheiter), Melvin (Audrey Gette); grandchildren Cory (Nicole), Laurie (Vanessa), Mandi (Kelly), Natalie (Tim), Jocelyn (Dave), Tamara (Troy), Jenelle (Stephen), Jarrett (Raylene), Jessie (Leeroy), Josh (Joelle), Jasmine (Ryan), Charity (Dallas), Nicole (Sandy) , Austin, Tyler (Breagh), Shanda (Trevor), Justine (Tom), Landon; 29 Great Grandchildren; sister, Rose Lock; brother, Clem Vollman, and many other extended relatives and friends.

Gus was predeceased by his wife Violet; brothers and sisters: Isador (Mary) Vollman, Veronica (George) Herle, John Vollman (died as an infant), Joe Vollman, Wendlin (Barbara) Vollman, Pete (Helen) Vollman, Anne McDowell, John Vollman, and Frank (Mildred) Vollman; his brothers in law, Richard Lock and Tom McDowell.

## Obituary for Frank Vollman

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Frank Joseph Vollman was born on August 31, 1923 in Macklin, Saskatchewan to John & Rosa Vollman.

He passed away peacefully on May 4, 2012 at the St. Mary's Hospital in Camrose, Alberta at the age of 88 years.

Frank leaves to cherish his memory two daughters; Mary Beth (Jim) Erker and Susan (Ceasar Pinette) Vollman;

grandchildren, Rosanne (Brad), Kristen (Shawn), Kimberly (Kodie), Elicia (Gavin), Miles (Sarah), Jayme, Juli (Daren) and Michael (Hara); great grandchildren, Zion, Sollei, Syarra, Nahum and Ezra; brothers, August (Anne) Vollman and Clem Vollman; sister, Rose Lock; as well as numerous nieces, nephews other relatives and friends.

Frank was predeceased by his wife, Mildred; brothers and sisters, Isador (Mary) Vollman, Veronica (George) Herle, infant, John Vollman, Joe Vollman, Alois (Pauline) Vollman, Wendelin (Barbara) Vollman, Pete (Helen) Vollman, Anne (Julius) Kluck, John Vollman, sister in law, Violet Vollman, Rose Vollman; brothers in law, Richard Lock and Tom McDowell; special friends, Pete Fischer, Paul Sieben, Anthony Kelsch, John (Katie) Weinkauf, as well as numerous nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

### OBITUARY

#### MRS. ROSE VOLLMAN

The death occurred in St. Joseph's Hospital, Macklin, March 18, of Mrs. Rose Vollman, a pioneer of this district at the age of 74, after a lengthy illness.

Mrs. Vollman with her husband who predeceased her in 1941 came to Canada and settled south of Macklin.

She is survived by nine sons

and three daughters; Isadore and Joe at Provost; Alois, Luse land; Wendell, Chickwell, Alta. Pete, New Westminster, B. C., John, Calgary, Gus, Frank and Clem at Macklin; Mrs. Tom (Ann) McDowell and Mrs. Richard (Rose) both of Macklin, also a brother, Mr. Kelch of Macklin.

Funeral service was held in St. Mary's Catholic Church in Macklin on Monday, March 21. Burial was in the family plot at St. Peter's Church cemetery south of Macklin.



John and Rosa  
St. Peters Cemetery



Isador and Mary Provost Public Cemetery



John Joseph  
Grosswerder Cemetery



George and Veronica  
Provost Public Cemetery



Alois and Pauline: Luseland Cemetery



Joe: Macklin Cemetery



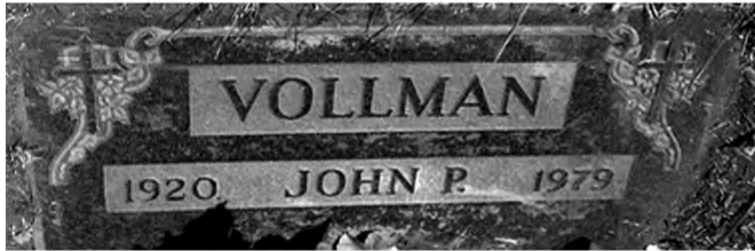
Wendelin and Barbara:



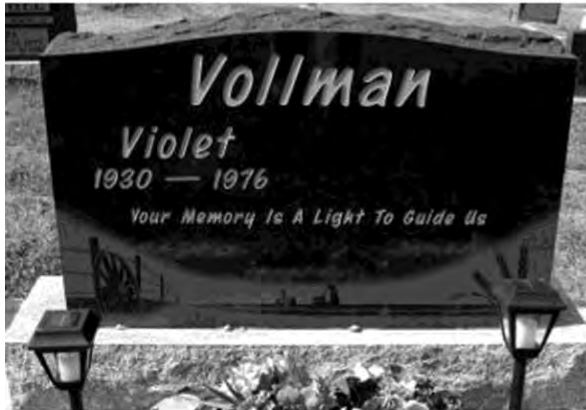
Julius Kluck: Rosenheim Cemetery



Tom and Ann McDowell: Provost Public Cemetery



John Vollman:  
St. Mary's Cemetery, Calgary



Violet: Lakeview Cemetery 2 Macklin



Mildred and Frank: Lakeview Cemetery 2 Macklin



Richard Lock:  
Lakeview Cemetery 2 Macklin

### 13. The Prelate Colony Vollmans

The biggest surprise of my research was learning that Johann was not the only Vollmans from Rosental parish that came to Canada. In earlier years I often encountered other Vollmans in Western Canada who, to the best of my memory, did not connect with the John and Rosa family tree. Up to now, I assumed we were not related or, if we were, it was in some very distant way. To my surprise I found that at least two other families from Rosental parish came to Canada, both settling in Prelate Colony. The first, Philipp Vollman and his family came to Saskatchewan three years after John and Rosa<sup>38</sup>.

Philipp and Amalia Vollman were married in 1889 and all eight of their children were born in Crimea. Amalia and her youngest child died before the family emigrated. Philipp then married Monika nee Hoerner, widow of Adam Moser.

Data extracted by Merv Weiss. December 2013, Saskatoon					
Name of the married	#	Date of the marriage	When, where and who married the couple?	Names, age and parish of the married	Parents and witnesses
Philipp Vollmann	22		On November 20, 1889 in Scheich-Eli. Rosental Roman-Catholic Parish administrator Josef Loran performed the marriage.	Rosental settler: Philipp Vollmann, 21 years old, and Kronental settler Amalia Neigum, 18 years old.	Bridegroom's parents: Philipp Vollmann and Ekaterina nee Martens. Bride's parents: Martin Neigum and Maria nee Weiser. Witnesses: Johann Sautner and Alvina Lukagiewich.

Figure 51: Marriage Record for Philipp and Amalia (English extraction)

Philipp Vollmann, his sons and daughters and Monika came to Canada in 1911 and settled in Prelate Colony. Prelate is the fourth large German settlement area that I referred to in Section 7; see also Map 7 (the northern part of which is also referred to as the Happyland region). The series of colonies included the parishes of Sts. Peter and Paul at Blumenfeld (1908); St. Francis Xavier at Prelate (1910); Prussia Colony, centred on Leader (1919); St. Anthony, serving Mendham and the Speyer district (1914); Immaculate Conception at Krassna (1911); Sacred Heart at Liebenthal (1914); St. Mary at Rosenthal (1913); St. Mary at Richmond (1912); Sacred Heart at Lancer (1918); St. Joseph at Shackleton (1916); St. Joseph at Josephtal (1915); Holy Trinity at Rastadt (1922); and Maple Creek (1913). Later parishes included St. Mary at Fox Valley (1929), St. John at Johnborough (1943), St. Mary at Lemsford (1948), Golden Prairie (1949), and St. Michael at Burstall (1969).

<sup>38</sup> Kircher



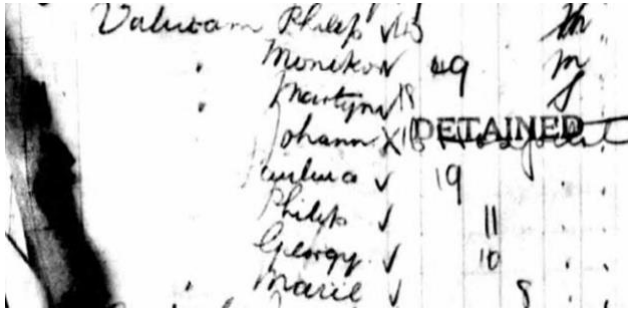


Figure 52: Philipp Vollmann's Family from S.S. Ausonia Manifest

Phillip's family traveled on the ship S.S. Ausonia out of Southampton, England, departing on 16 May 1911 and arriving in Quebec 26 May 1911. She carried 690 passengers. The ship's manifest includes the information reproduced in Figure 52 with respect to Philipp Vollmann, his wife Monika and six of their seven children. Note that the manifest shows Johann as detained, which I will discuss later. There

is another interesting thing about this manifest entry. The ship's purser would usually record the amount of money the head of the family was travelling with. Recall the St. Joseph settlers were travelling with several hundred dollars for each family, which would be needed to buy supplies. No amount is shown beside Philipp's name and only \$50 is shown next to Johannes Ruckaber below. There could be several explanations for this, but it does support the story that the Bakschai emigrants did not own their land and thus had limited means to raise cash before their departure.

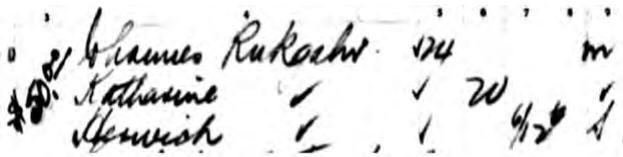


Figure 53: Ruckaber Family from S.S. Corsican Manifest

Phillip's second eldest child Katharina is not listed on the Ausonia manifest. We know that she married John Ruckaber while still in Russia and came to Canada in 1910, a year earlier than the rest of the family. We have Katharina, Johannes and Heinrich listed on the passenger manifest

of the Corsican which arrived in Quebec on 27 May 1910. The Vollman and Ruckaber families are shown together in the 1911 Canada Census shown in Figure 54.

Vollmann Philipp	at Ausonia	M	Head	M	May	1862 43	Russia 1811	German	German	Catholic	Polish
Monika	wife	F	wife	M	June	1866 45	Russia 1811	German	German	Catholic	none
Martha	son	M	son	S	Apr	1891 20	Russia 1811	German	German	Catholic	Polish
Johann	son	M	son	S	Apr	1893 18	Russia 1811	German	German	Catholic	Polish
Julia	son	M	son	S	Aug	1897 12	Russia 1811	German	German	Catholic	Polish
George	son	M	son	S	Jan	1901 10	Russia 1811	German	German	Catholic	school
Pauline	son	F	only da	S	Sept	1897 14	Russia 1811	German	German	Catholic	at home
Mary	son	F	only da	S	Jan	1903 8	Russia 1811	German	German	Catholic	school
Ruckaber Johannes	at Ausonia	M	Head	M	Aug	1826 25	Russia 1811	German	German	Catholic	Polish
Katharina	wife	F	wife	M	May	1838 20	Russia 1811	German	German	Catholic	none
Heinrich	son	M	son	S	Feb	1909 2	Russia 1811	German	German	Catholic	none

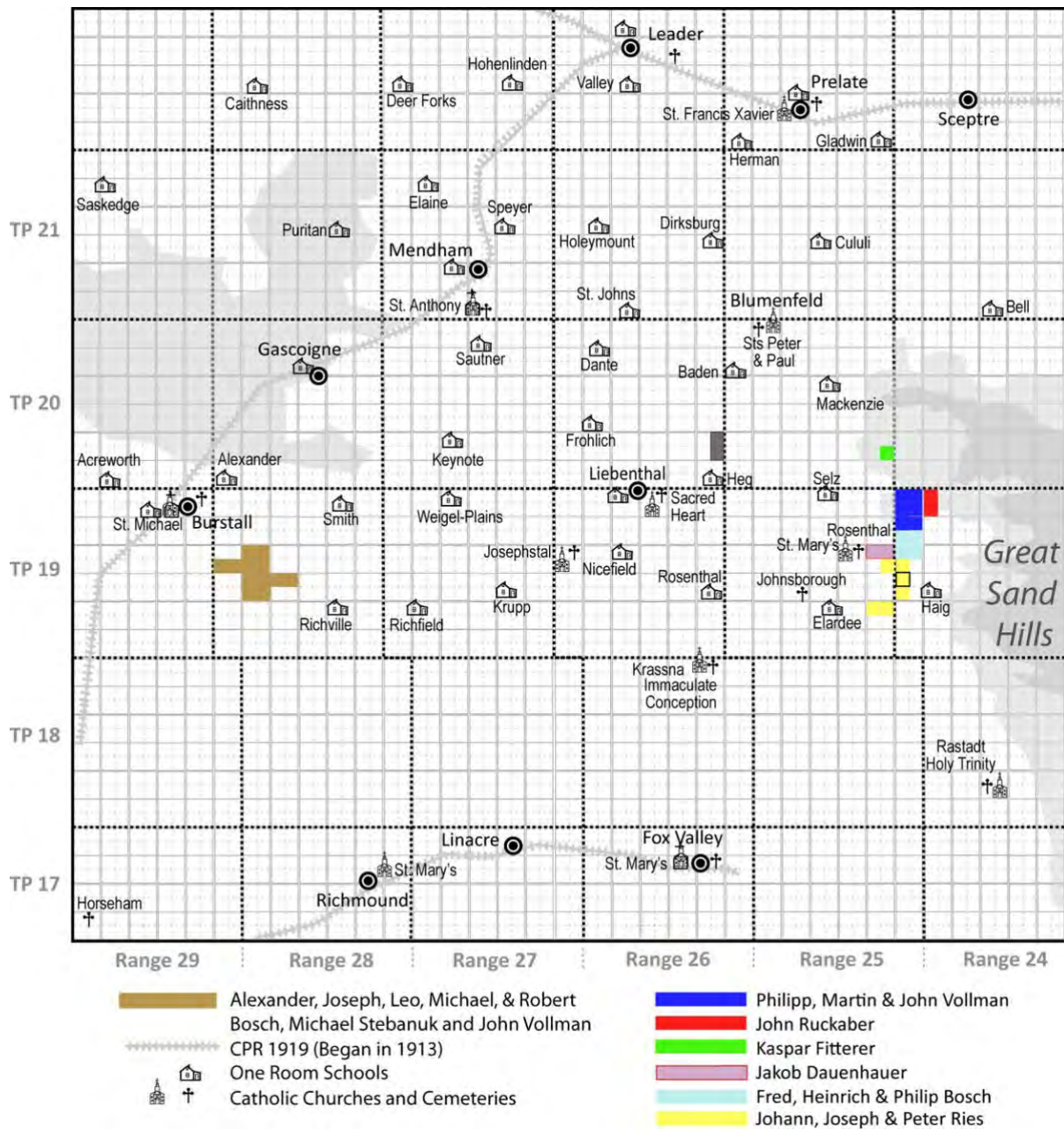
Figure 54: Vollman and Ruckaber Families from 1911 Canada Census

Pauline's age on the Ausonia manifest is an obvious error and I noted significant discrepancies in the ages provided for some of the other children as well. A different set of implied ages is shown in Figure 54, the 1911 Canada Census which was taken shortly after Philipp's family arrived in Canada.

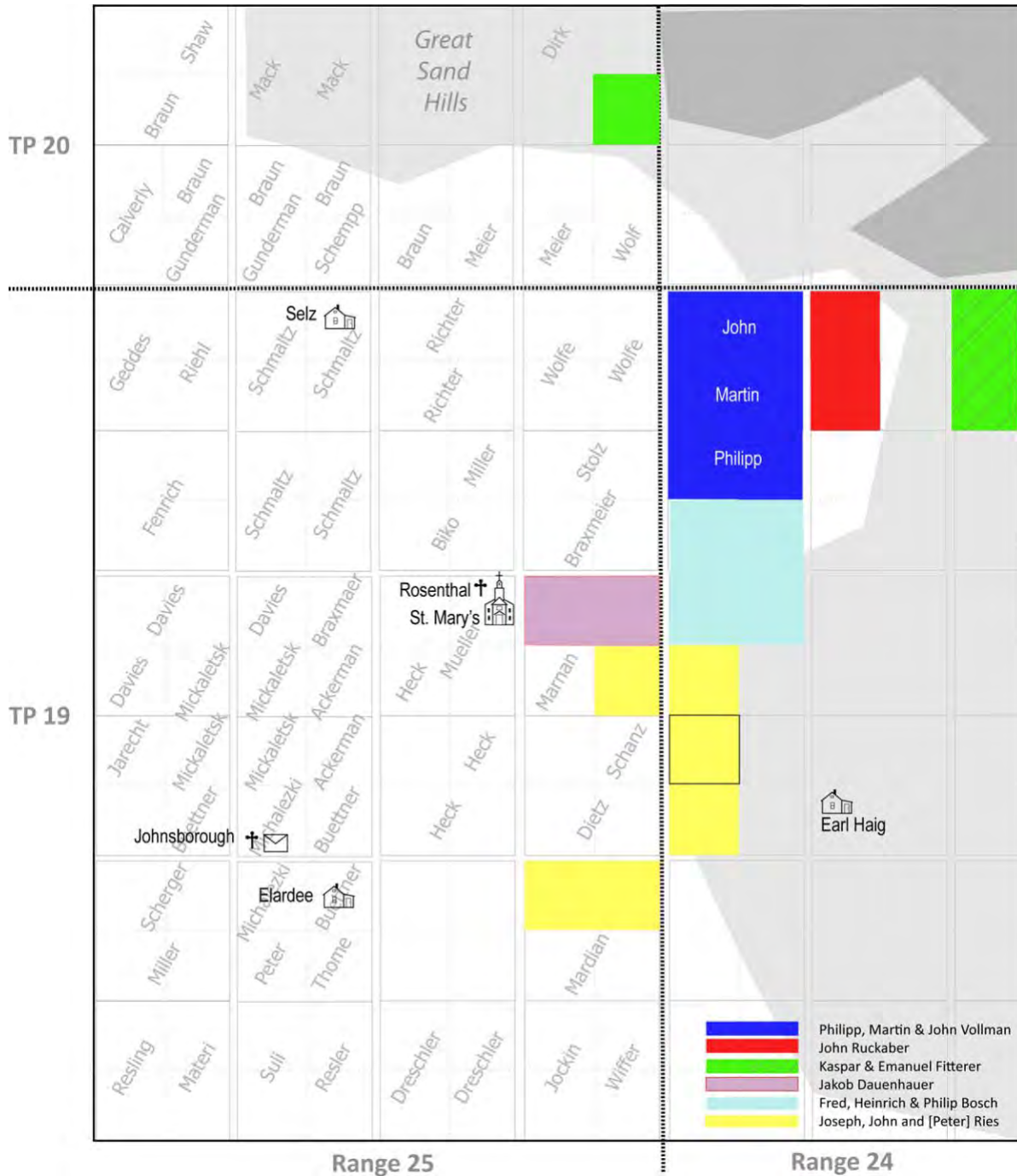
Similar variations appear in the 1916 and 1921 census, U.S. border entry forms and information on ancestry.ca. I'm told these types of discrepancies are common in ancestry research, but I

couldn't help but wonder whether the death of their birth mother in Russia added to the confusion. The correct birth dates from parish registers in Rosental are shown on the family trees later in this section.

The CPR had completed a railroad from Regina, west through Swift Current and Maple Creek. So the homesteaders were able to travel by train to Maple Creek, which was south of Prelate Colony. From Maple Creek the journey north was made by ox or horse drawn wagons.



Map 11: Location of Vollman Homesteads, Churches, Schools and Cemeteries in Prelate Colony



Map 12: Expanded View of Vollman Homesteads, Church, Schools and Neighbours

The families secured three homestead and three pre-emption properties. The land selections were made in Regina. The homesteads were all close together in sections 30 and 31, 19-24-W3. When I plotted the homesteads on Map 11 it appeared that they were near the perimeter of the Great Sand Hills. It made me wonder how wisely they had chosen the land, but by 1910/11 most of the good land had already been taken. I suppose the good news is that the sandy soil was easy to plow! A satellite image shows that much of the land has been returned to nature.

Katharina and John Ruckaber's half section was next door to the Vollmans and Pauline and Kasper Fitterer's quarter section was a mile away. For a decade Philipp had his extended family close by in this new land of opportunity.

The Vollman and Bosch families were close in several senses of the word. They had left Rosental together to start the daughter colony of Bakschai. Now they had left Bakschai together to travel to Canada. John Vollman had married Elizabeth Bosch in Bakschai; see Figure 66. Amalia Neigum, wife of Philipp Vollman, and Magdalena Neigum, wife of Fredrick Bosch, were half sisters; see Appendix 12. An examination of the family trees shows other Vollman-Bosch marriages. Similarly, the Ruckaber and Ries families were tied in by geography and marriage. There were aunts, uncles and cousins everywhere!



Figure 55: St. Mary's Rosenthal Church

Within a few years they would build a church and a school. The Church which was completed in 1913, was christened as St. Mary's Rosenthal, and was located less than two miles southwest of the homesteads. (In 1943 the church would be moved to higher ground at Johnsborough and renamed St. John's). The children went to the Earl Haig School which opened in 1917. It was located at SW 17-19-24W3, less than three miles south of the homesteads. The school operated until 1958 when the building was sold and moved to SE 19-19-24W3.<sup>39</sup>

Some of the descendants remained on the homesteads but John (in 1921) and Martin (in 1922) moved their families to Oregon.

Hence we have many Vollmans in the West Coast States who can trace their roots to Philipp and ultimately to Rosental, Crimea. Kasper moved off the homestead in 1926 and bought a farm west of Blumenfeld

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<sup>39</sup> Fox Valley/Liebenthal History Book



Figure 56: Earl Haig School

As noted above, Katharina and John Ruckaber were married in Rosenthal and came to Prelate Colony in 1910, one year before Katharina's siblings and their parents. Katharina gave birth to six children before she died in 1918. John then married widow Marie Winter (nee Fleckenstein) who brought with her five children from her

marriage with Edmund Winter. Marie would have eleven more children with John which, after deducting deaths, brought the household to 18 children! I don't have details, but I understand that some children stayed with relatives. One I'm aware of is the eldest boy Joseph who stayed with his grandparents Peter and Christina Fleckenstein until he was sixteen.

The greatest sport in the Ruckaber family was riding broncs and cows. Clem, Pete, Philip and Bill all rode in rodeos but it was Rocky who made a great name for himself in rodeo, holding both saddle and bull riding championships. John Ruckaber worked hard to provide for the large family by raising what he could and supplementing their diet with wild game. He has a legacy as a great hunter, bringing in game in the form of bush rabbits, prairie chickens and partridge by the gunny sack to feed his large family during the summer when fresh meat was scarce. He was gifted with his hands. The blacksmith shop where he worked, including the large forge, is still standing on the farm. Here he sharpened plough shares, fixed wagon wheels and anything else he or his neighbours needed. Many of the crosses in the Rosenthal cemetery were also made here. They were donated to the family of the deceased. The last cross that was made stayed at the farm until 1984 when his children placed it on his own grave in the Rosenthal cemetery.

John left Sceptre in October 1921 with his wife Frances and children Philip, Barbara and Emma and moved to Oregon. (The story is that he sold his half-section to Zacheus Both for a load of grain.) They accompanied Frances' family, the Dauenhauers. The move was likely initiated by the Dauenhauers who had settled first in the Dakotas, didn't like the rugged land there, moved to Prelate Colony and didn't like the sandy soil any better. They were obviously much happier with the fertile farmland in Oregon. John lived in several places including Shaw, Willamina and Salem. John was a farmer and his descendants think he was also involved in the Van Duzer Corridor Project, possibly by hiring out his teams for highway construction. We know for certain that his son Phillip worked as a child labourer on the Project during the depression.

Martin left the homestead in June 1922 and also moved to Oregon. With him were his wife Elizabeth and children Mary and Monica. Not on the immigration papers is Regina who was born between Mary and Monica. Apparently Regina had been staying with Monika and Philipp because she was ill and they didn't want the other children to get sick as well. When Regina's

health improved, Monika would not return Regina home. Sadly, Regina was always sickly after that and passed away in 1929. Unlike John, who remained in Oregon his whole life, Martin returned to Saskatchewan in 1925. Elizabeth gave birth to twins in Oregon and they had four more children after returning to Saskatchewan. It is said that Martin was not too keen about the move to Oregon and it may not have been totally voluntary, which explains the relatively short stay in Oregon. When Elizabeth died in 1953, Martin would marry a third time.

Pauline and Kasper remained on their homestead until 1926. Pauline gave birth to her first ten children in the small two room homestead house built of mud and straw. In 1926 they moved to a new farm, eight miles south and west of Prelate, near the Dirksburg school. There Pauline gave birth to two more children in the 4 room house. Then in 1930 a new spacious house was built. Unfortunately Kasper developed tuberculosis in the early 30s and spent his final years in the Qu'Appelle Sanitarium until succumbing to a heart attack in 1936. Pauline and the children moved to Prelate until 1938 when Pauline Pauline married Anton Materi.

Philip had a relatively short life, passing away in 1929 at the age of 31. He spent his life on the homestead where he and Petronella (Nellie) had seven children. In 1931 Nellie and the seven children moved into the town of Prelate. In 1939 Nellie married Max Matt and the family moved to Balgonie Colony, east of Regina. There Martin would farm, Henry worked as a labourer and George was a mechanic. The fourth son, John, was killed in World War II in Italy where he is buried in the Villanova Canadian War Cemetery. Vollman Lake in northern Saskatchewan is named in John's memory.

A review of current land titles shows that only the Ruckaber and Bosch descendants have retained title to the original homesteads. The Vollman, Ries, Fitterer and Dauenhauer names do not appear. But wherever the hundreds of descendants now call home, they owe their freedom and prosperity to those brave souls who endured much to make a better life in a new land.

Land Description	Homestead Grant	Current Title Holder
NE 31-19-24-W3	Vollman, John	RM of Clinworth No. 230
NW 31-19-25-W3	Vollman, John	RM of Clinworth No. 230
SW 31-19-24-W3	Vollman, Martin	RM of Clinworth No. 230
SE 31-19-24-W3	Vollman, Martin	RM of Clinworth No. 230
NW 30-19-24-W3	Vollman, Philipp	Ruckaber
NE 30-19-24-W3	Vollman, Philipp	Ruckaber
NW 32-19-24-W3	Rukaber, John	Ruckaber
SW 32-19-24-W3	Rukaber, John	Ruckaber
SE 12-20-25-W3	Fitterer, Kaspar	Duchscherer
NW 33-19-24-W3	Fitterer, Emanuel	Ternes
SW 33-19-24-W3	Fitterer, Emanuel	Her Majesty the Queen
SW 30-19-24-W3	Bosch, Frederick	Bosch
SE 30-19-24-W3	Bosch, Frederick	Bosch
NE 19-19-24-W3	Bosch, Heinrich	Bosch
NW 19-19-24-W3	Bosch, Philip	Bosch
NE 24-19-25-W3	Dauenhauer, Jacob	Schneider
NW 24-19-25-W3	Dauenhauer, Jacob	Schneider
SW 24-19-25-W3	Ries, Joseph	Bosch,
SW 19-19-24-W3	Ries, Josef	Bosch
NW 18-19-24-W3	Ries, Peter	Greenwald
SW 18-19-24-W3	Ries, John	Greenwald
NW 12-19-25-W3	Ries, Joseph	Wagner
NE 12-19-25-W3	Ries, Joseph	Wagner

Figure 57: Current Title Holders of Homestead Grants

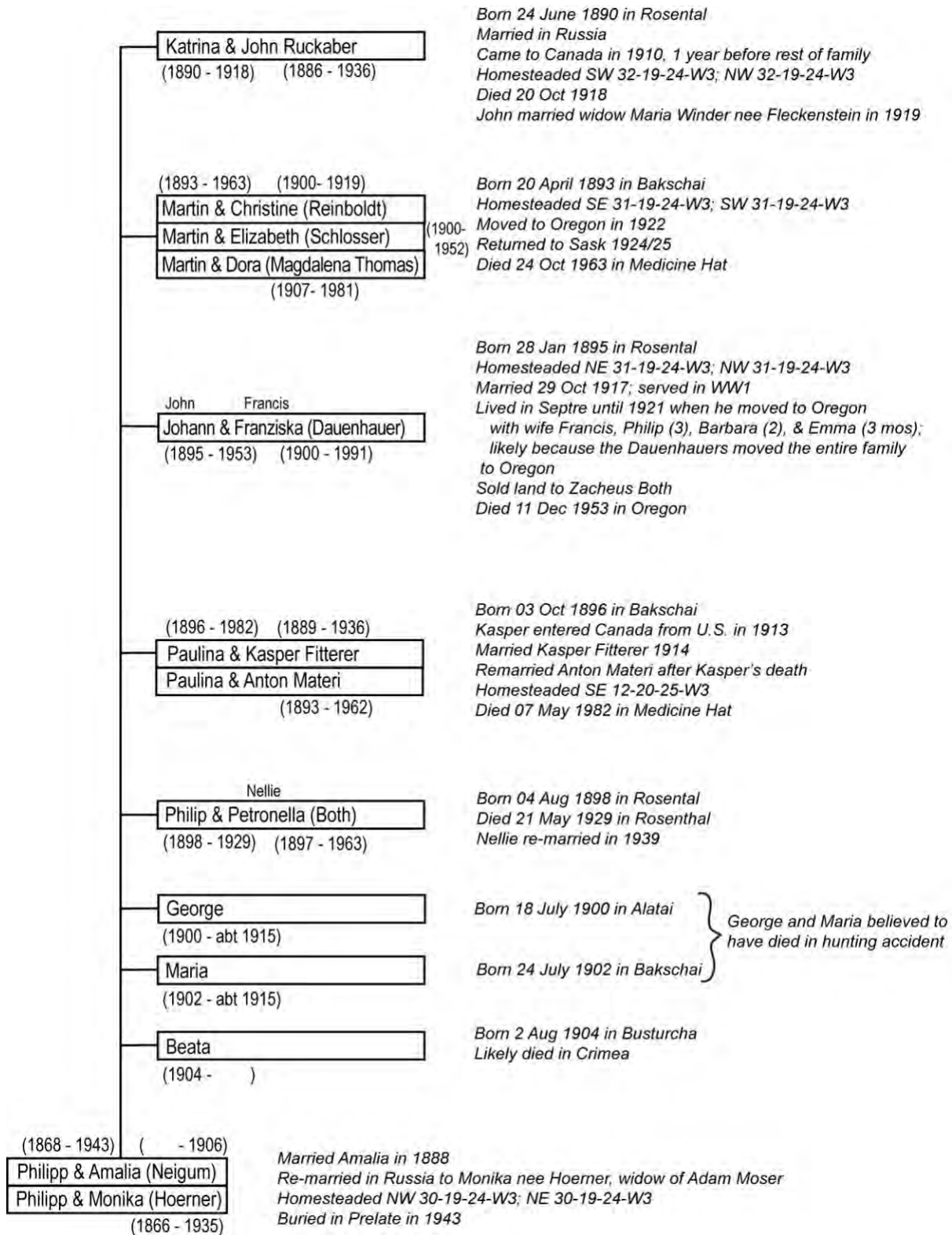


Figure 58: Children of Philipp and Amalia



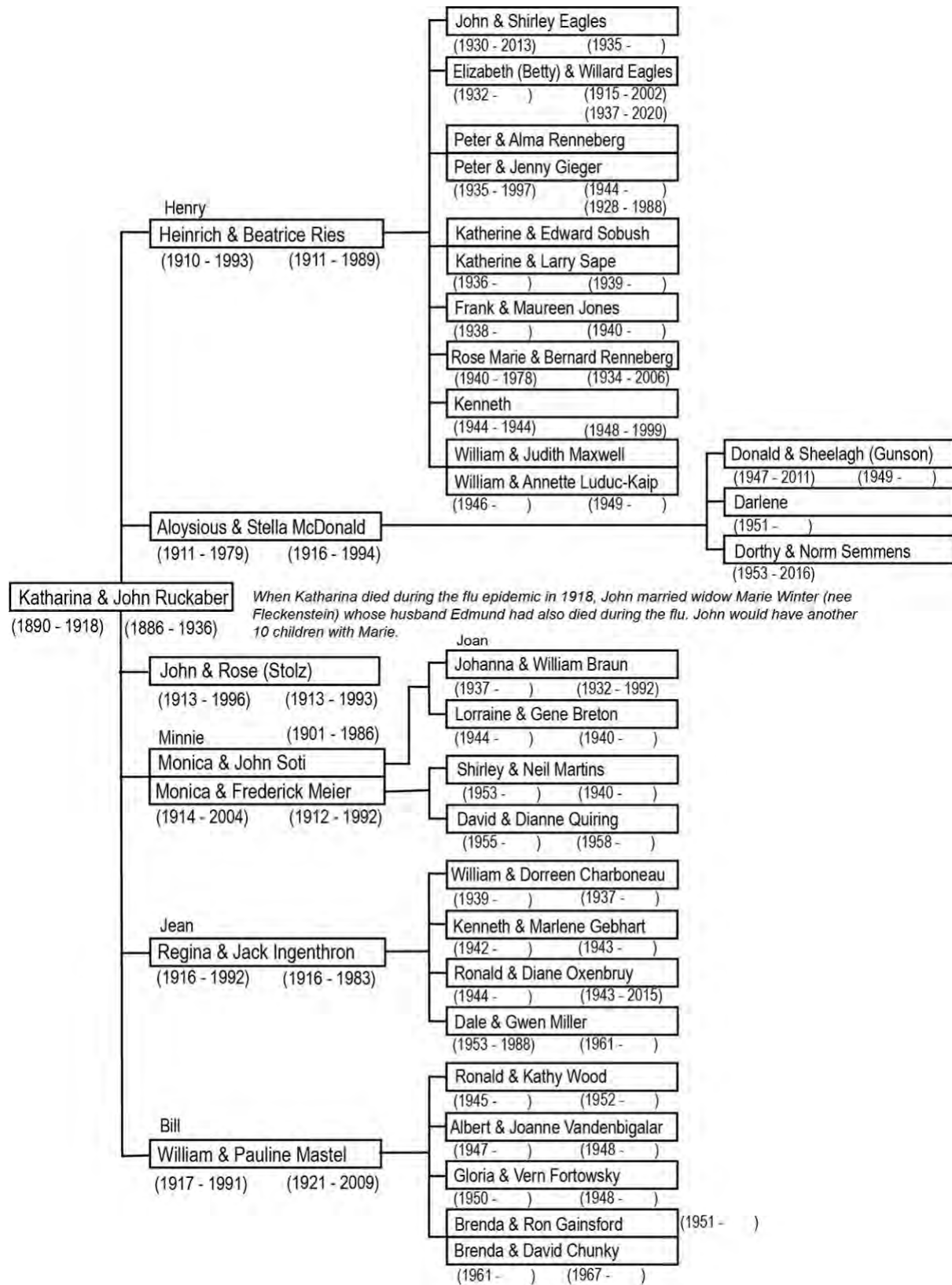


Figure 59: Katharina and John Family Tree

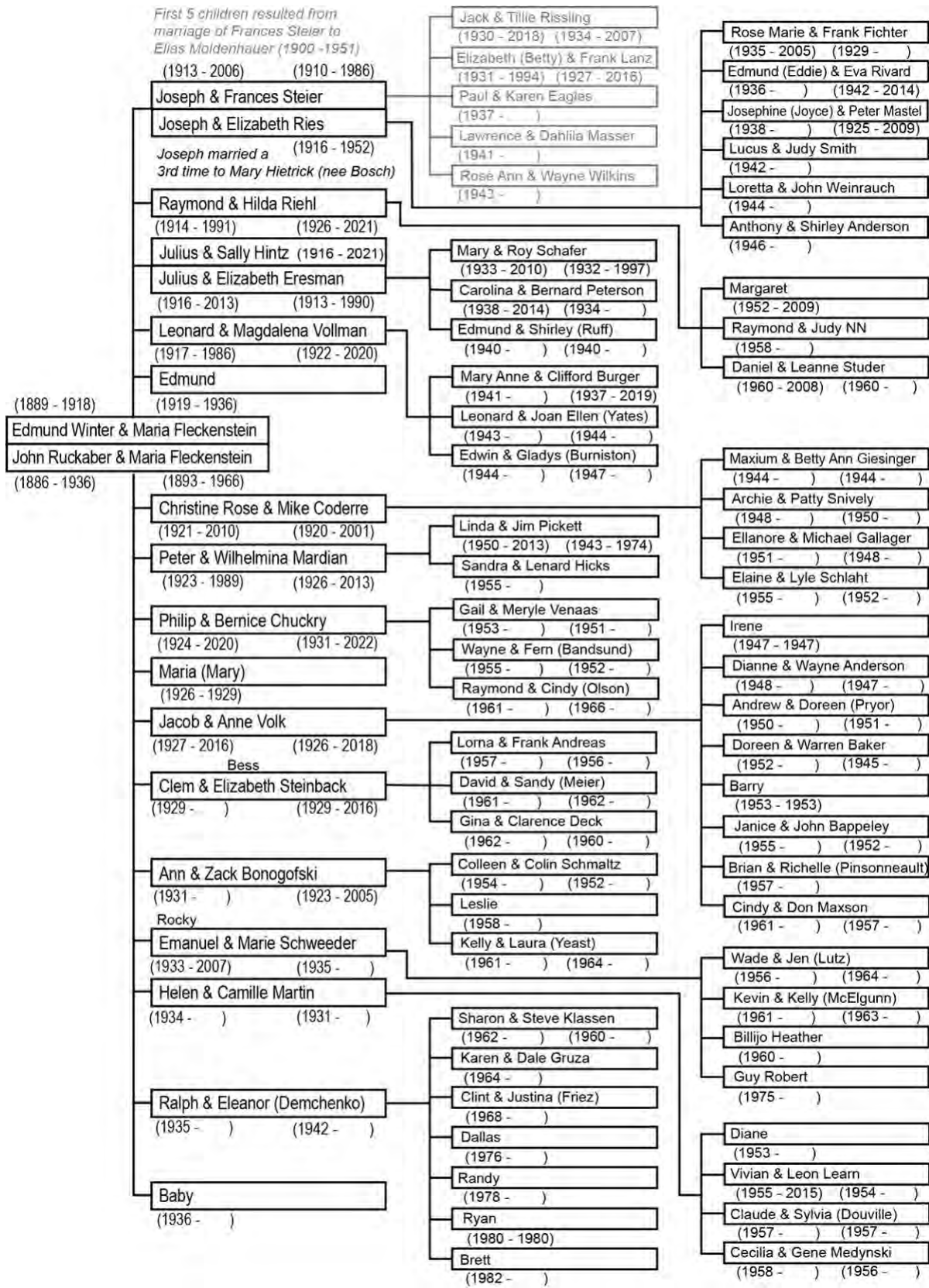


Figure 60: Winter, Ruckaber and Fleckenstein Family Tree

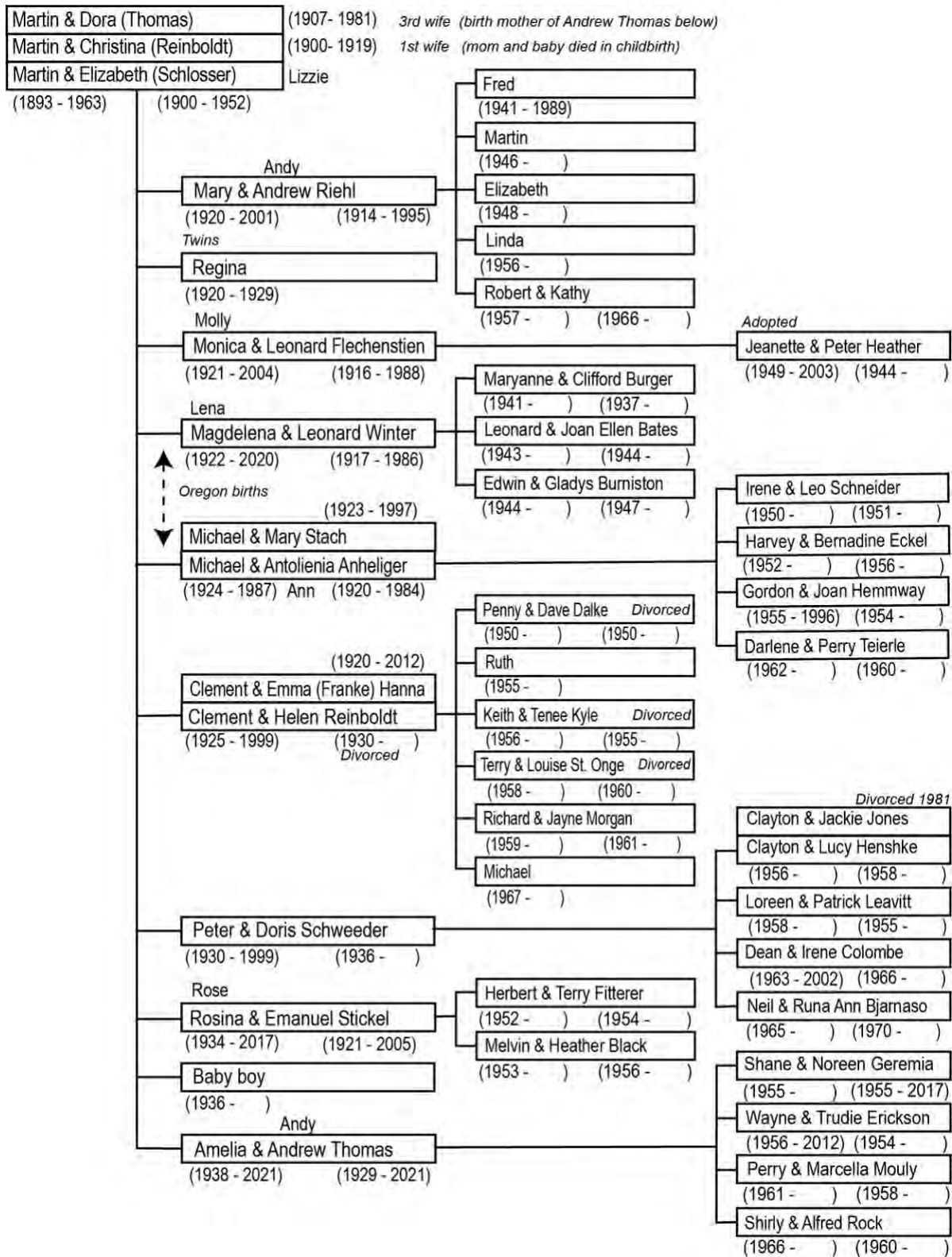


Figure 61: Martin and Elizabeth Family Tree

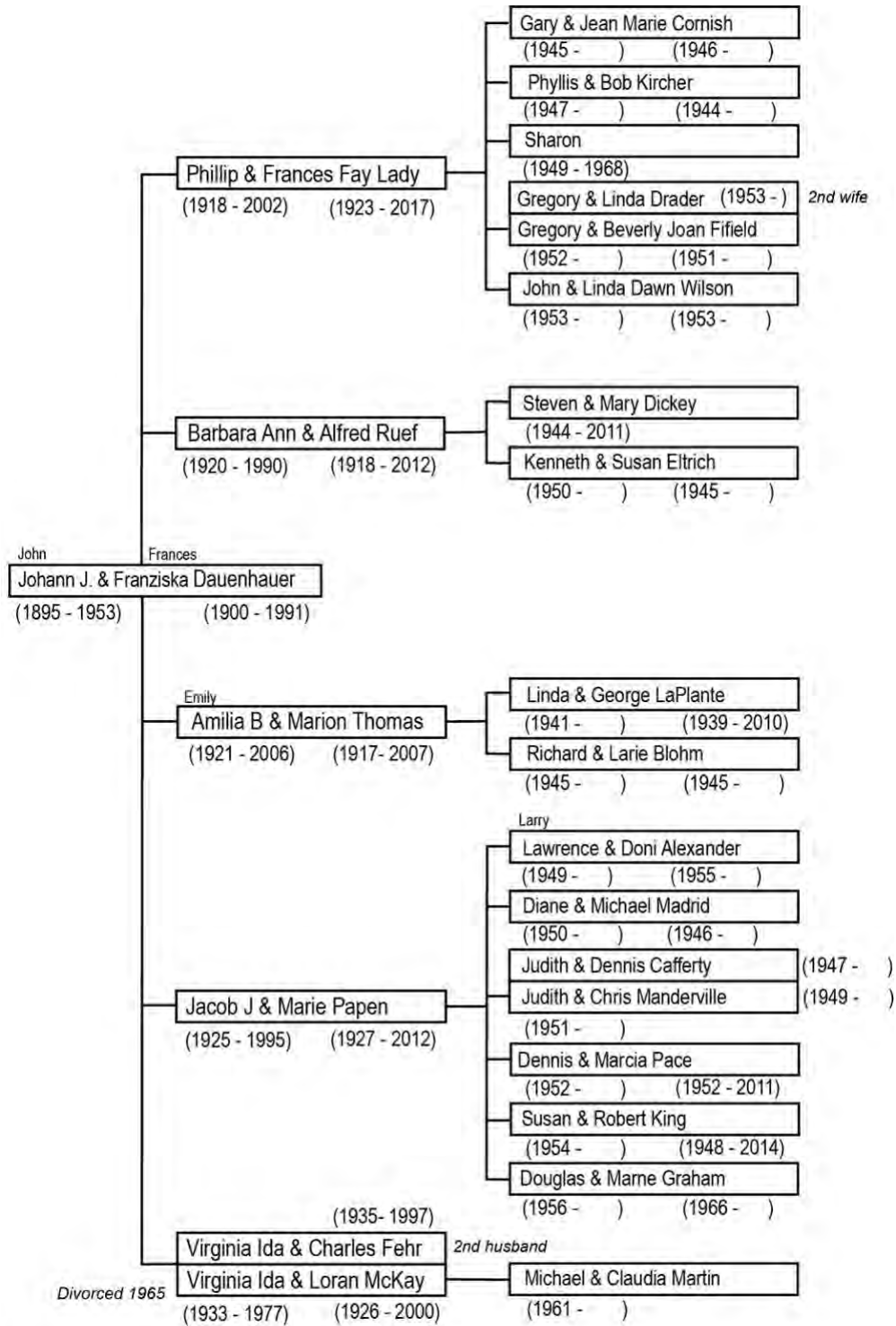


Figure 62: John and Franziska Family Tree

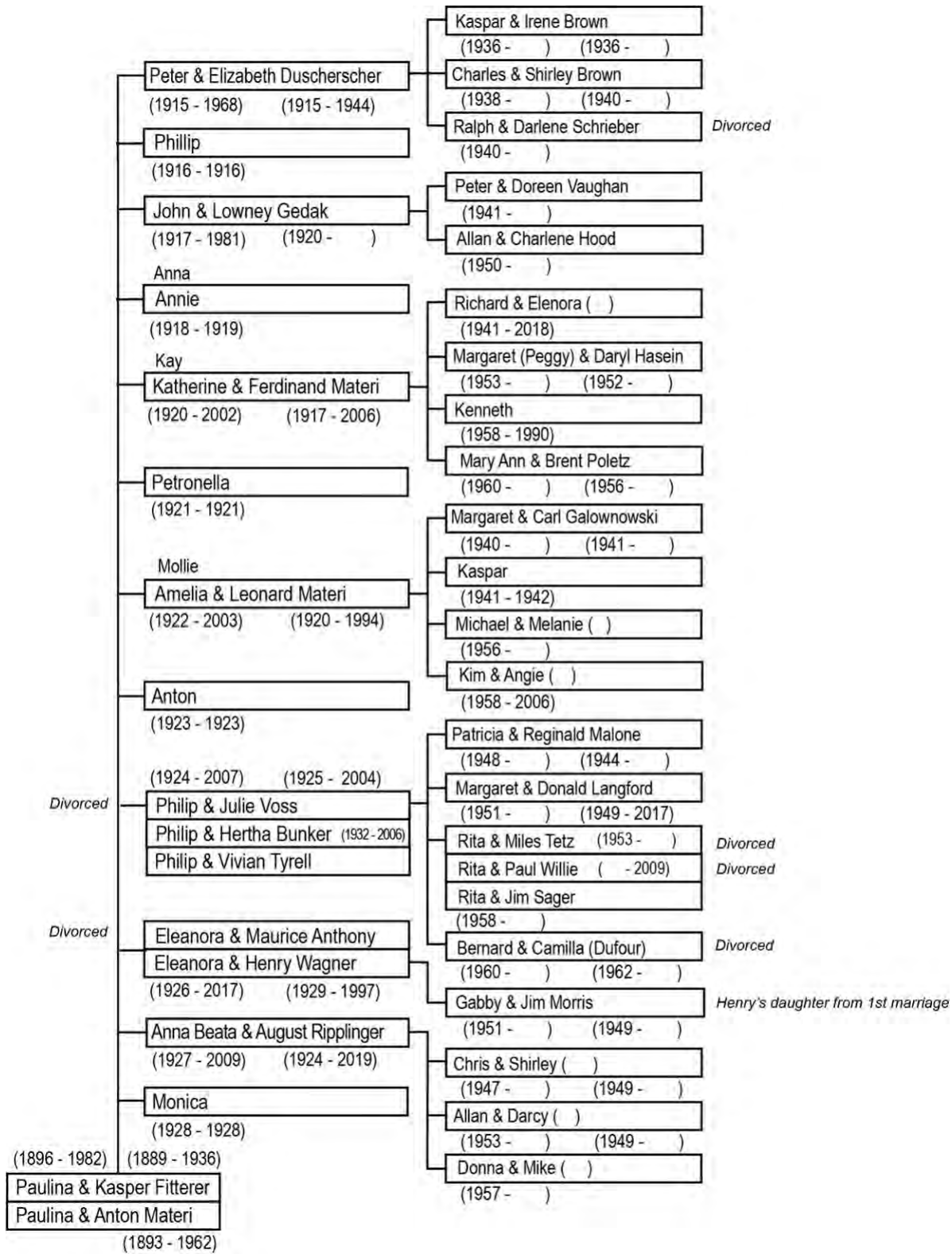


Figure 63: Paulina and Kasper Family Tree

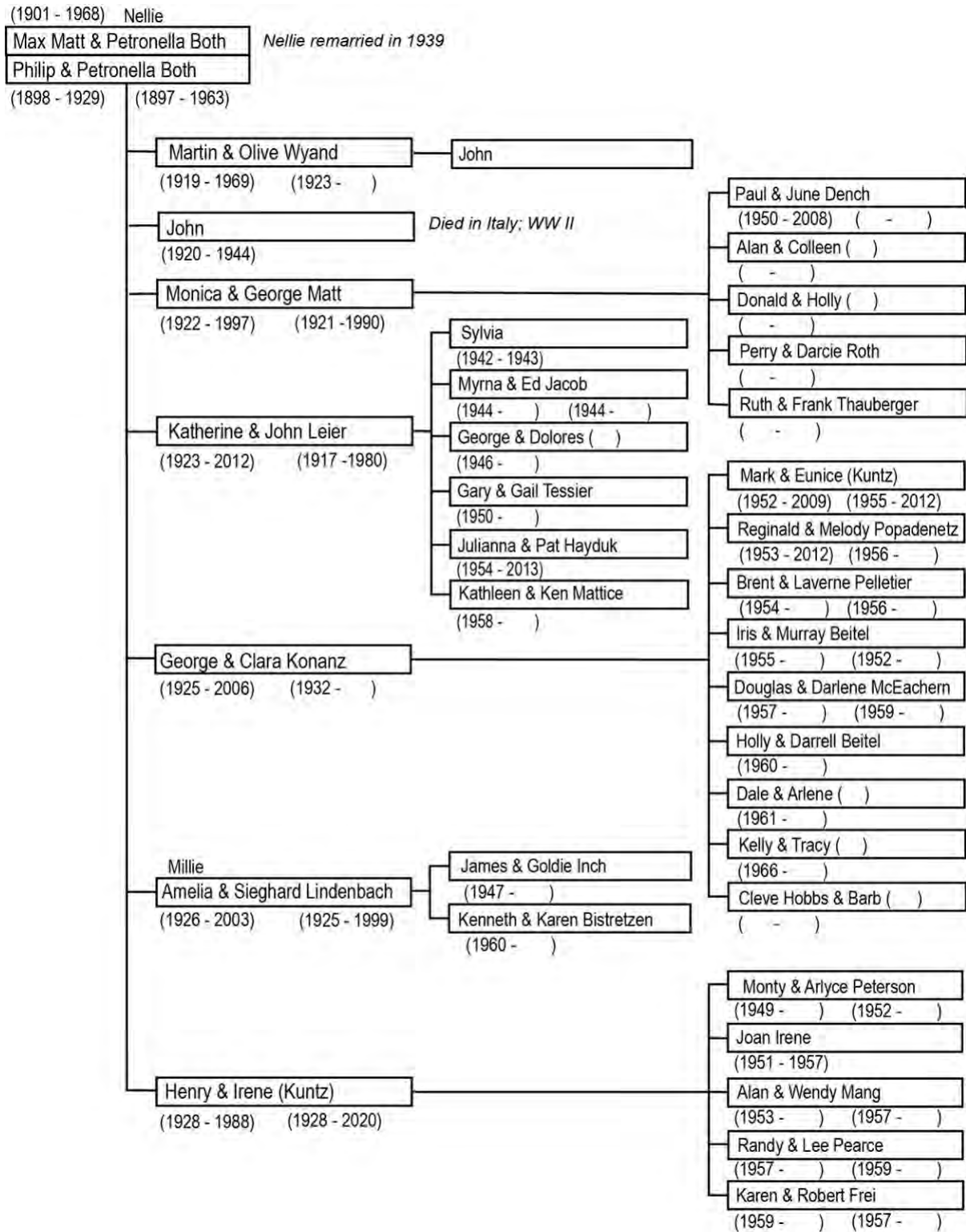


Figure 64: Philip and Petronella Family Tree



Philipp and Amalia: 1st wife



Philipp and Monica: 2nd wife



Philipp and Monika



Katharina and John Ruckaber



John Ruckaber and Maria



Martin and Christina: 1st wife



Martin and Elizabeth: 2nd wife



Martin and Dora: 3rd wife



John and Frances



John and Frances



Pauline and Kaspar



Pauline and Anton



Philip and Petronella



Philip and Petronella





Petronella, Philip, Martin and Elizabeth



Martin



Frances & John J with Emily, Phillip & Barbara

## Memorial Obituary



Entered Into Eternal Rest

December 11, 1953

**John J. Vollman**

Funeral services were held Tuesday morning at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Sheridan for John J. Vollman, 58, who died in McMinnville, December 11. Recitation of the Rosary was held Dec. 14, at Macy and Son Funeral Home in McMinnville. Interment was in the St. James Cemetery, McMinnville.

Born in Odessa, Russia, on Jan. 6, 1895, Mr. Vollman moved to Prelate, Sask. with his parents in 1911. In 1917, he married Frances Dauenhauer, and in 1923 they came to Oregon, living in the Sheridan Williamina area for 26 yrs.

Surviving is his wife, Frances; 2 sons, Phill of Willamina and Jake in Stockton, Calif.; 3 daughters, Barbara Ruel (Tillamook), Emily Thomas (Tigard), and Virginia McKay (Junction City); a brother, Martin and a sister Pauline Materi, both of Sask., Canada; and 13 grandchildren.



Philipp and Monica: Rosenthal Cemetery

Katherina and John: Rosenthal Cemetery



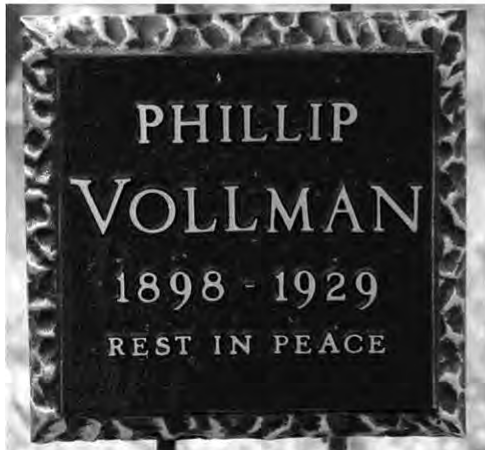
Martin, Elizabeth and Dora: Medicine Hat Hillside Cemetery



John and Frances: Saint James Cemetery, McMinnville



Pauline and Kasper: Medicine Hat Hillside Cemetery



Phillip Vollman: Rosenthal Cemetery

Another Vollmann arriving in Prelate Colony from Crimea was also called Johannes Vollmann! This Johannes was born in Bakschai, Crimea. He married Elizabeth Bosch in 1906.

Bakschai was a daughter colony located about 25 miles north of Rosental. It was a small village populated by Roman Catholics. There was one broad street with houses on both sides. I found this undated list of dwellings:

Fredrick Bosch	Franz Bosch
Philip Ruckhauer	Nicholas Bosch
Michael Bosch	Philip Vollmann
Gottlieb Yaley	Martin Neigum
Nickolas Wissue	Church and School
Ninnama (Gypsy)	Wendlin Bimm
	Helena Stebanuk

The colony was established on rented land and about 1910 the village was given an opportunity to buy their land or it would be sold. The villagers had owned only their dwellings, animals and machinery. Many villagers decided to move to Canada instead of purchasing the land, mainly I suspect because they didn't have the money.

Before coming to Canada, John and Elizabeth had a son Nikolas who was born in 1907 and died in 1909. They also had a son Josef, born in 1905, who also died in Russia.

There is a record of a John Vollman and wife Elizabeth coming to Canada on board the S.S.

AMOUNT OF CASH IN \$	NAME IN FULL.	AGE OF ADULTS.		CHILDREN UNDER 14 YEARS.		Married, Single or Widowed.	Have you ever been in Canada before?
		Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.		
	<i>J. Vollman</i>						
	<i>Elizabeth</i>						
	<i>Stankovitch</i>						
	<i>Vollman</i>						
	<i>Elizabeth</i>						
	<i>Alvareda</i>						

Figure 65: Extract from S.S. Dominion Manifest

Dominion, arriving in Quebec May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1910. This is likely the Prelate Colony John and Elizabeth. My research suggests that the Alexander shown on the manifest is the son of Michael and Rosena Bosch. He came to Canada a year before his parents and found employment in Regina with a construction firm.

We also have a 1911 Canada Census which records a John and Elizabeth Vollman living in Regina, with a son Albert age 6 and a daughter Mary age 3. We know that shortly after their arrival in Canada that John and Elizabeth, and the other Bosch sons, travelled to Regina to make arrangements for homesteads. So it is possible John and Elizabeth were in Regina during the 1911 census. That would explain the location, but not the existence of two children. I wonder if they were taking care of other Bosch children? The Bakschai Boschs came to Saskatchewan in large numbers! The families of John Vollman, Michael Stebanuk, Alexander Bosch, Michael &, Leo Bosch, Robert Bosch and Joseph Bosch homesteaded on adjoining half sections.

In drawing a family tree, I have placed weight on the community memory that John and Elizabeth had two sons; Josef and Nicholas, both died at a very young age. John and Elisabeth later adopted a child Andrew Stebanuk. Andrew was born to Elizabeth's sister Katherina, nee Bosch, wife of Michael Stebanuk. Katherina died giving birth to Andrew or shortly thereafter.

Elisabeth passed away in 1935, leaving Andrew motherless again. Several years later John remarried to Christina. After Christina's death, John sold the farm and moved to Acadia Valley to farm with Andrew. After John's death, Andrew moved around before settling in Red Cliff with Grace Elizabeth Sadler (Betty). We know with certainty that John and Elizabeth are buried in the Mendham Cemetery.

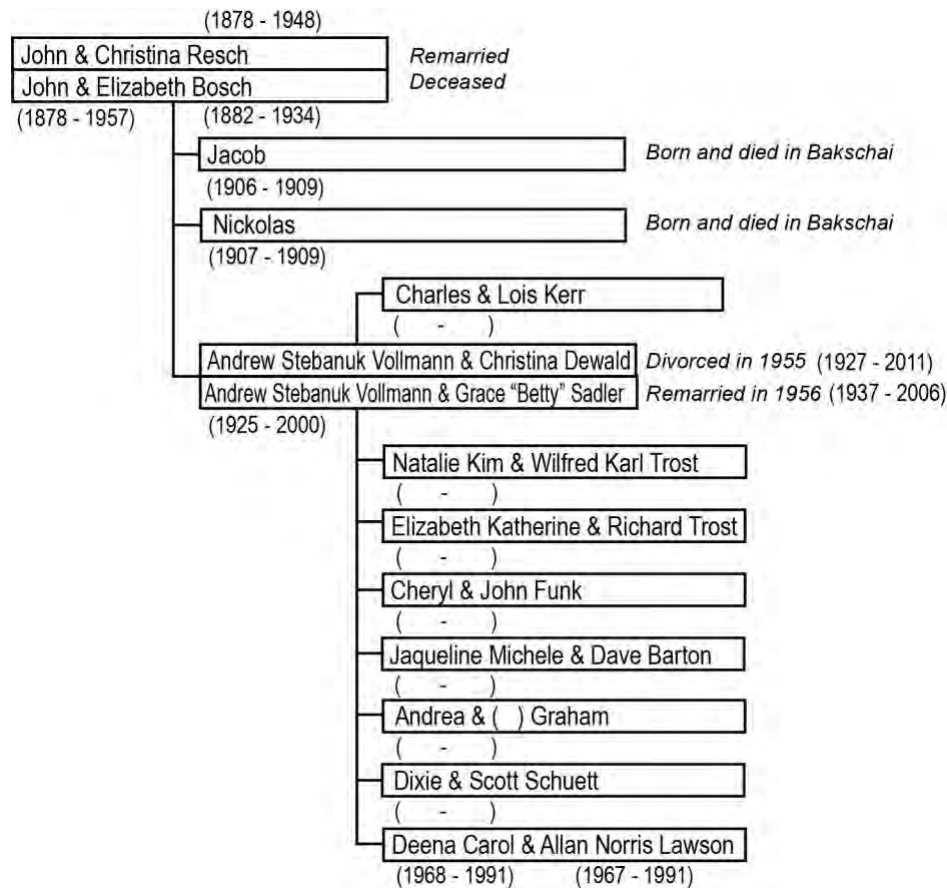


Figure 66: John and Elizabeth Family Tree

Finally, in reviewing ship manifests I came across what initially seemed to be a yet another John Vollman. He traveled to Canada on the ship Montezuma, departing from Antwerp and arriving in Quebec in November 1910. As the manifest extract shows, he travelled alone and with the stated purpose of joining his brother who was a farmer. He said he was 21 years old.

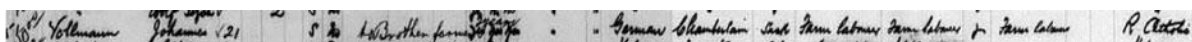


Figure 67: Ship Manifest for another John Vollmann

My best explanation is that this manifest refers to the son of Philipp Vollmann who is shown as “detained” on the S.S. Ausonia Manifest (see Figure 52). There is however a problem with the dates; i.e., how could John who was “detained” arrive six months before his family. If he did, I suppose he could have joined his sister Katharina and husband John Ruckaber who immigrated a year before Philipp’s family.

The family stories I heard about the Prelate settlers, like other colonies, deal with hard work, deep faith and overcoming innumerable hardships. They also involve the good times. Family gatherings featured music and dancing, with the accordion or harmonica being the instrument of choice.

Too many people died young, often from pneumonia and diseases that today are vaccine preventable (e.g., diphtheria, tuberculosis, influenza, typhoid and polio).

In Crimea, our ancestors grew grapes and produced their own wine. Coming to the new country, it would have been natural for them to continue producing their own liquor. Grapes were out of the question, but it was not uncommon for each settler to have a still. Stories abound about booze-fueled wagon rides, weddings and parties, and even illicit sales. The settlers used clever means to hide their stills from the RCMP and their sniffing dogs. Failure to do so resulted in fines and even jail time.

There seems to be some evidence that the “Burstall group” and the “Elardee group” did visit each other; they were after all cousins. On 5 February 1914 Johannes Tumbach writing to the Der Staats-Anzeiger newspaper in Bismarck said that:

*On the first day of the Christmas Holiday, Mr. and Mrs. Phil. Vollman visited us. During the next day, I harnessed up and we drove together to Michael Bosch from Karmen and experienced a merry day. On New Year’s Day was celebrated at my house and on the Feast of the Three Kings, we celebrated at the home of Friedrich Braun, nephew of Mr. Braun from Eupatoria.*

To help interpret this passage I plotted the location of Johannes Tumbach’s homestead on Map 11. It’s shown as the grey area on section 12, just northeast of Liebental. My interpretation of the letter is that Philipp and Monika travelled first to Tumbach’s homestead and from there the group travelled onward to Michael Bosch’s place. Not definitive proof, but it looks likely that the two groups did visit each other.

Tumbach also documents Philipp’s arrival in the colony in a July 16<sup>th</sup> 1911 letter to the same paper in which he writes:

*Andreas Doll from Winnipeg is thinking about homesteading some land in this area. My assessment is that the good crop land is becoming scarcer even though Canada is a large country and there is much land to settle.*

*Franz Bosch and Philipp Vollmann recently came here from South Russia and are Homesteading.*

The first paragraph tends to support my suspicion that the best farm land in the colony had been claimed by the time Philipp arrived in 1911.

There is no such evidence that the St. Joseph Colony and Prelate Colony Vollmann families communicated with each other, or even an indication that they were aware of each other's presence in Saskatchewan, even though their homesteads were only some 130 miles apart. The only family member in Russia who kept up letter correspondence with Rosa and John was the wife of John's brother Philipp. Her letters were frequent at first. However, when Russia became besieged by unrest, she began to indicate in her letters that she feared for own life and safety, and therefore wanted to discontinue any further contact. True to her word, Philipp's wife stopped writing to Rosa and John. So it is quite possible that the cousins were unaware of each other's presence in Canada.



## 14. What Happened to the Vollmanns Who Remained in Crimea

John and Rosa left behind them many relatives and friends. Because of the rapidly changing negative events in Russia there was little correspondence and we have very poor information about the Vollmanns who decided to stay in Rosental. Much of what we know is from general history. As tough as the homestead years were, it is clear that those who emigrated from Russia were the lucky ones.

We do not know, for example, what role the Vollmanns played in World War I. Some settlers fought with the Soviets and others assisted the Soviet army by providing supplies. In general however, the war served to foster suspicion, particularly among politicians and the press, that many of the settlers in Crimea were disloyal to the country. In 1914 Tsar, Nicholas II forbade the use of the German language in public. The next year, German newspapers were banned in Russia, and German-language books could no longer be printed.

Many German inhabitants remaining in Russia when the Bolsheviks staged their revolution in October 1917 had their property confiscated by the Communists. Our German ancestors were hardworking and intelligent, became prosperous, and hung on to all land acquisitions with both hands. The Russian word kulak simply means fist, hence the nickname "kulak." Understandably, the kulaks did not support the Revolution, and the new Soviet Union under the dictatorship of Lenin came down hard on them. The Communists regarded them as excessively rich. The landowners were dispossessed at once, and the rural population was divided into three social classes:

- *Kulaki* (wealthy, landowning farmers),
- *Seredniaki* (middle-class farmers with little land), and
- *Bedniaki* (poor, landless peasants).

In each village the Soviet Government set up Committees of Landless Peasants to implement the new laws and strengthen Soviet power in the countryside. The Committees of Landless Peasants lasted from 1920 to 1933. Goods taken away from the German kulaks were distributed among the poor peasants in both the German villages and the neighboring Russian (Ukrainian) villages, with the lion's share, of course, going to the new Bolshevik activities.

The nationalization of the land by the Soviet Government brought the end of productive farming. This land distribution lasted until the beginning of collectivization, when all land in the villages was taken over by the collective farms. The German colonies disintegrated after a few years of Soviet rule. This period was also one of regular food shortages, caused by Stalin's induced famine and the lack of long distance transportation of food during the fighting. Coupled with the typhus epidemic of the early 1920s, as many as a third of Russia's Germans may have perished.

When Stalin announced his "Five-Year-Plan" in October of 1928, collective farms were established and many men were shot or taken to prison camps because they refused to turn over their possessions to the collective farms.

From the archives in Crimea it is known that de-kulakization lasted from 1929 to 1933. “De-kulakization” describes the process whereby successful farmers (kulaks) were stripped of their property, their rights, and were exiled. In the year 1930 alone, over 25,000 people were exiled from the area of the Crimean peninsula, most of them to the Urals but elsewhere as well. In 1926 Rosental had 67 homes, which housed 87 families with children. After de-kulakization, 27 families (31 percent) had disappeared, including the families Bäuerle, Wander, Dyck, Krug, Rissling, Faut, and Fix. The families Antoni, Hoerner, Eisenbraun, Kelsch, Moch, and Reinbold appear to have been decimated. Every third family had no head-of-household. We do not know the extent to which Vollmanns were exiled or murdered.

For me, the horrors of de-kulakization were made more vivid in an article by Riss<sup>40</sup> published in 2000 and translated by Merv Weiss in 2015. I thought it would be next to impossible to summarize the article, so decided to insert it exactly as translated by Weiss:

*In Rosental, Crimea a collective was established with the name “Wpered” (Forward), which was converted in 1929 into the Kolkhoz “Thälmann”. At first, the poor farmers had no choice but to join the collective (“Kollektiv”); the richer ones were reluctant to do so. They did not want to simply gift their horses, oxen, cattle and wagons to the Kolkhoz. In order to break their resistance, representatives of the Soviet regime from the local and district administrations came more and more often to the village. A new word arose in the language of those times – “Kulak” – rich farmer.*

*Several families were identified as “kulaks”, but first, those whose personal holdings were beneficial for the kolkhoz<sup>1</sup> were labeled “in conflict” First, the house of Anton Fix was requisitioned for the administration of the Kolkhoz, his family of four expelled from Rosental and forbidden from returning. In Valentin Hörner’s house a club, a canteen and a silkworm nursery were established, while the family of five was evacuated to the Swerdlowsk district. On the farmyard of Friedrich Kelsch a cattle-breeding farm, a horse barn and a warehouse were established; the family of five was similarly banned to the Urals district. The estate of Georg Fauth was converted to a kindergarten, while his two daughters, Maria and Philippiken (both nuns) had to re-locate to Karaganda [Kazakhstan-MW]. The kolkhoz chairperson Hermann Reinhold chose for himself the house of Josef Moch, whose three sons, Wendelin, Johann and Egidi and their families were dragged off] to Swerlovsk district and their houses declared to be property of the kolkhoz. Soon it was the turn of the others, who were initially ordered to pay triple taxes of between 300 and 1500 Rubels per family.*

*The taxes were ratcheted ever higher until families could no longer muster the required tax demand within 24 hours, and then they were expelled from the village. This policy was a catastrophe for the farmers. Several families received these tax notices (Nalogi): such as Peter Dick (8 persons dragged off to the Urals); Jakob Krug and his sons Georg and Jakob with their families (17 persons) were arrested in March 1930 and deported to Swerdlowsk district. On 04 April they were abandoned in the virgin forest, equipped with saws, axes and the following recommendation: “ If you want to survive, then build yourself some shacks. Peter Antoni lived well in Rosental; he was a reputable person; twice he paid his taxes, but he could not handle the third demand. He suspected the time would come when the militia would come for him, but he could not endure the shame, and he took his own life. When the militia arrived, they found his note which read: “ you have taken everything from me; now you can have me too.” Peter wanted to express his protest with his suicide.*

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<sup>40</sup> Riss, 2000

Still more village residents were declared as kulaks, persons with strong wills, believers in faith, all those whom the kolkhoz administration deemed to be dangerous. Soon the family of Gottlieb Antoni (9 persons) was expelled from the village; then on 30 March the family of Egidy Antoni (11 Persons) was arrested and taken away [verschleppt] to the boreal forest region (taiga) near Perm. Anton Antoni had to move to Schortandy, Kazakhstan in 1933. Valentin Wander (teacher), a family of 10 persons, was first expelled from the village and later displaced to the Urals district. They banned Bertha Hörner to Karagnada in 1930 because of her strong faith. The family of Gottlieb Eisenbraun (7 people) was deported to Archangelsk where his wife and daughter soon perished. The family of Franz Moch was also banished to Archangelsk. Philipp Krug was declared to be a kulak, was separated from his family and evacuated alone.



Map 13: The Urals and Caucasus Mountain Regions

Wendelin Kelsch was expelled to the Urals, while his family of 7 persons was forced to join him in the Spring of 1930. Peter Reinbold and family (6 persons) was also sent to the Urals. They sent Martin Riesling to the construction site "Dneproges"2. His wife and children (6 persons) were homeless and the oldest daughter was not allowed to work in the kolkhoz until she publicly disassociated herself from her parents. After the "hunt" for the rich farmers, it was the turn of the "middle peasants" to be afraid and to "voluntarily" join the kolkhoz, provided they renounced their parents, disavowed their faith, and pledged themselves to be involved in the village and to visit the village club (former Church). During the period of collectivization approximately 23 out of 87 families (26 %) were expelled. The families Wander, Dick, Krug, Riesling, Fix completely disappeared from the village registry. Moscow's order to "liquidate the kulaks as a class" was thus carried out in Rosental, Crimea.

Finally, the second world war with Germany led to the complete demise of the German presence in Crimea. History records that Stalin wanted to prevent any collaboration of the Germans from Russia with Nazi Germany, so he issued a decree calling for the deportation of our ancestors to Siberia, Kazakhstan and the Urals. It is just as likely that the evacuation was a political smokescreen to divert attention from the military's bungled reaction to Hitler's attack. In any event, in 1941 more than 63,500 Germans, including their non-German family members, lived in Crimea. In only one week, from August 16 to 22, 1941, they were deported.<sup>41</sup> Some of these people were taken off the transport trains in the Caucasus to assist with harvest before being deported a second time to the Urals. During World War II the Urals became the industrial backbone of Russia, as most important industrial enterprises were moved there from the western Russia occupied by Germans.

We have some fragmented information about the fate of the Vollmanns. Again it is from Riss<sup>42</sup> who was born in Rosental and who was part of the deportations in August 1941. She states that the majority of the Crimean Germans were deported to labour camps in Swerdlowsk Region, although they went to other labour camps in the Urals as well. On route, many were assigned to collectives in the Caucasus to help with the harvest. She provides a list of 400 names of Crimean Germans who went to Swerdlowsk District and the names Kelsch (Alexander, Wendelin, Gottlieb, Johann, Leo and Nikolau) and Vollmann (Wendelin and Grigori) are on that list. Another writer<sup>43</sup> states that the majority of Rosental residents were relocated earlier to the northern regions of Kazakhstan, and he includes Peter Vollmann on his list. Ekaterina Riss (nee Vollmann) was arrested for associations with some church and died in Crimea. He also states that Anton, Joseph and Ivan Kelsch were arrested in 1937, that Franz Kelsch was exiled to Siberia, and that Simon, Jakob, Ivan, and Vendle Kelsch were exiled to the Urals.

In his book, Aberle<sup>44</sup> describes the brutal and cruel manner of the deportations as follows:

*The people were driven together as cattle and then hauled in trucks or forced to march to the railroad stations, where they were loaded under the supervision of the Red guards into cattle cars, irrespective of sex or age. The families were often torn apart never to see each other again. Those who did not follow the crowd or dared to step a few steps aside, were shot down without warning. The guards kept driving the sobbing crowds ahead and at the railroad stations forced them into cattle cars. They laid down on their stomachs, side by side, on shelf after shelf, five or six tiers high. They were literally packed into the cattle cars like sardines and then hauled four or five thousand miles from their homes. Only every other day were they allowed to leave the cars for a few hours to stretch and to be fed. Those who were dead were thrown on a pile along the railroad track. Many thousands perished on the way and many more thousands after they reached the cold and icy regions of Siberia.*

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<sup>41</sup> Riss

<sup>42</sup> Riss, H., pp 2-3

<sup>43</sup> Riss, G., para 55

<sup>44</sup> Aberle, p 198

The living and working conditions in the camps were deplorable. One report describes the barracks as damp, unheated and half underground with small windows. There was less than one square metre of floor space per person. The working day of hard manual labour was 11 hours.

The Crimean peninsula was the scene of some of the bloodiest fighting in World War II. It was conquered by the German army in 1942 and then recaptured by the Red Army in 1944. As the Red Army retreated in 1942, it destroyed anything of use to the German army; the famous "scorched earth policy." It is unlikely that many German settlers were still in Crimea at this time.

Basically the Labour army was dismissed in 1945, but Germans were held for much longer. In 1948 they were transferred to the status of "special settlers" and were not allowed to return home. In 1955, after the official visit of Chancellor of Germany Adenauer to the Soviet Union and the signing of a number of Soviet-German agreements, this status was abolished (the process of resettlement of Germans to Germany was started at this time as well).

The Germans who managed to survive the labour camps were now members of Russian society and many of them went on to very successful lives. By the 1980s and 1990s many did return to Crimea. According to a recent newspaper report,<sup>45</sup> the German culture has seen a revival, with new cultural centres and Deutschklubs appearing. Over 30,000 school children are studying German in 182 schools of the autonomous republic, while four German Sunday schools and six schools with advanced study of German language are functioning in Crimea. The Republican Society of Crimean Germans in Simferopol continues to hold events to ensure we never forget the inhumane evacuations of Germans from Crimea. However, I could not find any evidence of Vollmanns returning to Crimea.

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<sup>45</sup> Semena, M., para 6

## 15. Some Personal Reflections

Genealogy has been defined as “a line of descent traced continuously from an ancestor.” Many families produce data bases or charts of various types linking ancestors together from one generation to the next. A somewhat broader term is family history which adds context to the research by looking at social and historical factors as well as hooking the boxes together. The terms are often used interchangeably. From the outset I was interested in telling stories of our Vollmann ancestors, how they lived and the social and historical factors that shaped their lives.

This motivation became stronger as I began my research and found there was very little information available on the Rosental Vollmanns. Now that I had the time, I felt a sense of responsibility to preserve the past for future generations, and since I had adequate financial means, to do the research necessary for accurate storytelling.

As a rule, newbie genealogists like me are advised to begin with the present and work back in time. I suppose I did it backwards because I was keen to learn as much as I could about our German-Crimean roots. As noted earlier in the report, this can only properly be done by purchasing church records from the archives in Russia. I was not prepared for my reaction when I received the first batch of records and held them in my hands. The feeling is hard to describe, but I knew that what I was holding were more than words and numbers, it was about the lives of people to whom I had a genetic link. I could visualize them standing in a church, with a priest and fellow colonists, engaged in an important religious rite such as a baptism or marriage. As the saying goes, I was “hooked” and determined to learn as much as I could by reading every book and article written about the Germans in Crimea and purchasing as many records as I could afford!

As my pile of evidence-based research grew, I was a bit sad to learn that what we thought we knew about our heritage was often highly exaggerated or even totally fictitious. This included non-consequential things like the folklore that my grandfather came over on a cattle boat and that one stormy night his experience as a sailor helped right the ship and save the passengers. In fact they came over on a 9,240 ton passenger steamship, 470 feet in length. I think it is quite improbable that the captain needed to consult a peasant German in steerage on how to navigate his vessel.

There were more consequential stories like one of the other settlers having been an aristocrat in Crimea who had to flee the country and leave all his worldly possessions behind. In fact there was no aristocracy among the German colonies in Crimea and it seems that this particular relative didn't even own any land, describing his occupation on the ship manifest as farm labourer. I knew that as relatives read drafts of my report they would be disappointed to learn that the things they had believed for years were not true. I was a bit worried about the “shoot the messenger” saying, but actually people were quite gracious. The following is one response to the aristocracy fallacy that I appreciated: “Thanks for the great insight into the past.

Wonderful! I didn't know this! The idea gave way for great imagination when I was a little girl, albeit untrue. It made for a good story!"

Being a scientist and engineer in my "real life", ascertaining facts and sourcing information were just the right and ethical ways to do things. I was dismayed to see the amount of plagiarism that pervades ancestry websites. There were many instances where I saw lengthy passages on websites that looked familiar and when I checked I found they had been lifted from copyright books with no citation or acknowledgement. Equally troublesome was the fact that data in many family trees are unsourced so it is impossible to verify the data. Again, we see people copying and pasting data from other trees to their own without citation. So the same error is perpetuated and becomes more plausible when it is found on tree after tree. Most large genealogy sites remind family historians that source citation is important when conducting genealogical research. I suppose it is impractical to police this sort of thing but one learns to be suspicious of all unsourced information on internet websites. On one branch of our tree I found that almost half of the dates put on the website for the Crimean portion were wrong. It seems it's often the women who best remember important family events and dates. In the case of our homesteaders, the women were often the second or third wife and all they knew about past dates is what the men told them. Good luck with that!

I have tried to provide acknowledgements and references whenever possible on all the data I have taken from other sources so that readers can verify my interpretation should they choose. Which brings me to acknowledge my living relatives for the contribution of family information, photos, and stories for the most recent sections of the report. I am deeply indebted to the following relatives:

Bernie Voss	Liz Anderson
Bob Kircher	Lorna Leipert
Cathy Manchester	Margaret Langford
Charity Elston	Marjorie Vollman
Clayton Vollman	Mary Beth Erker
Connie Grace	Peggy Hasein
David Vollman	Phyllis Cloutier
Delilah Bannick	Shirley Vollman
Irene Schneider	Susan Vollman-King
Jane Wheat	Susan Vollman
Jeanne Golanowski	
Linda Sobush Pal	

Besides their contribution of material, these relatives helped shape the report. For example, my first draft had few photos and readers wanted to see more of them. One of the most satisfying aspects of my work was to meet relatives to share stories and reconnect relationships.

I want to talk a bit about family names. I knew there would likely be some spelling variations of our last name, but I was surprised at the number of variations I discovered. The records

included the following spellings; Vollmann, Vollman, Tollmann, Valman, Voolman, Volkmann, Volckmann, Foldman, Folman, Fullman and Fulman. Some of this can be explained by the fact that the record taker (for example doing the ship's manifest) did not speak German and was doing his best phonetic interpretation of what he heard. Also, we are dealing with records that were recorded in Latin, German and Russian and they all had to be interpreted at some point.

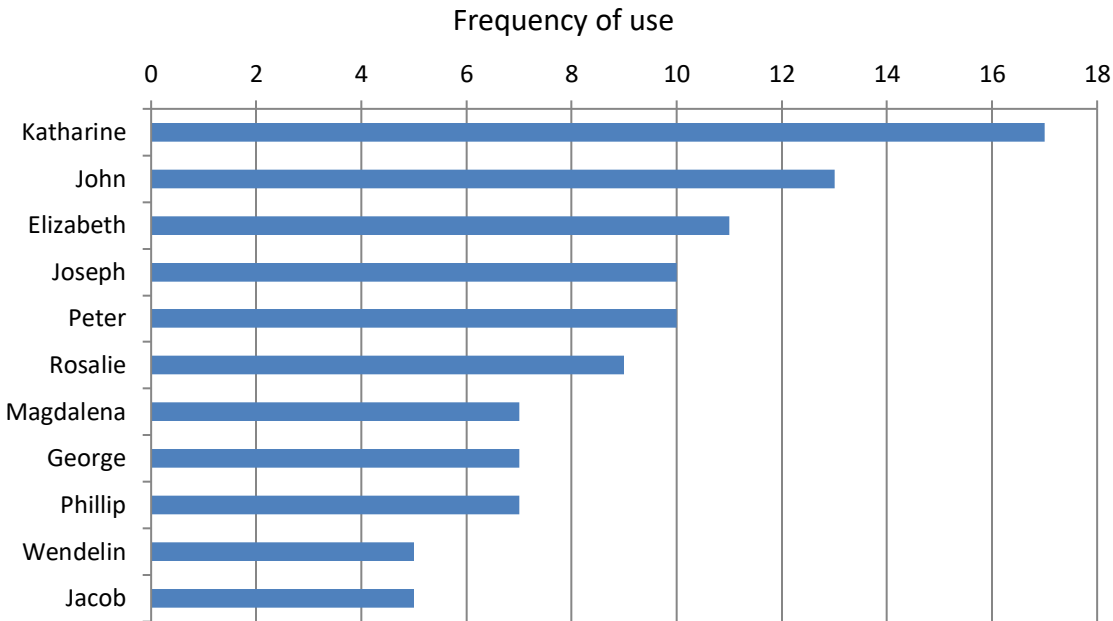
I have long wondered where the surname Vollmann came from and what it means. I knew that German family names most often derive from given names (i.e., patronomic), geographical features, place names, occupational designations, bodily attributes or even traits of character. Of these the only ones that would seem to be applicable to Vollmann are the patronomic or bodily attributes options. I had tried searching the web for answers but one often encounters shady retail sites that try to convince everyone they descend from royalty and for a fee they will give you more information and provide you with your coat of arms. I was actually duped into one of these offerings many years ago and of course what I received was some garbage for the gullible.

A literal translation can be found by looking in a German-to-English dictionary. Voll has a number of meanings including; full, thorough, undiluted, undivided, complete, whole, plenary, bombed-out, fraught, chubby, brimful, plentiful, plump, thick, mellow, ripe, rotund, rich, slewed, solid, unqualified, canned, plastered. I recall my father and uncles favouring the full or complete man option. When my father was asked the question I still remember him smiling and flexing his arms in a Hercules fashion and saying something that sounded like "ful". A slightly less flattering version would be someone who was quite robust or rotund. A friend of mine with a sense of humour said that when Germans say "Er ist voll", it can mean "He is drunk", no doubt a colloquial off take of the canned or plastered meaning!

These are of course modern literal interpretations and it may be more useful to look at etymology. The surname Voll appears to be of patronymic origin, that is, a surname derived from the first name of the father or other ancestor. It is based on the Germanic personal name Volz, which was very popular in former times, and simply means "son or descendant of Volz or Folz."

Personal names are also interesting for at least a couple of reasons. It was quite common for our German ancestors to go by their second given name. The first name was usually that of a saint, respected ancestor, or wealthy member of the community. More perplexing however was the repetition of the same names over and over, which meant it was often difficult to place people in the family tree even after obtaining an official record. In Rosental Parish alone, and limiting it to the Vollman family, the name Katharine was used 17 times and the name John was used at 13 times. Other frequently used names are shown in the following illustration.





Finally, I feel very fortunate to have been able to draw on the expertise of two experienced researchers like Merv Weiss and Matt Klee. They showed enormous patience in answering my rookie questions at the outset and I hope with time they found my questions more sensible. Going to conventions such as the one GRHS holds each year is also invaluable. There are so many little tips and tricks one needs to know to help make sense of the records that can't be learned by reading the literature. For example, it raised my eyebrows a bit when I first noticed the same woman marrying brothers in turn. I later learned that it was a custom, or nearly an obligation, for a brother to look after the widow should his sibling pass away. It was also a good deal for the brother who stepped into the breach because he would inherit land that was hard to come by.

I have concluded that this report is complete enough to share with a broader group of readers and that it adequately documents the Rosental Vollmanns for future descendants. While my research work will slow down now, I will maintain my interest and have several activities planned to learn more. New information may come from a broader readership. Also, there is a rapid growth in information available on line as record holders digitize their collections. I have no specific plans for a revised report but will do one if and when I have sufficient additional information.

Please feel free to pass this report along to any relative that is not listed on page 104. Also, if you extract anything from this report I would really appreciate an acknowledgement.

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*Note: Birth and wedding records taken from the last two references are extracted from original parish records and should be very reliable. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of other records taken from a variety of sources including living relatives, community history books, family albums and the internet.*

## Conversion Factors

dessiantine	a unit of land measurement equal to 2.7 acres or 1.09 hectares
guilder	a Bavarian gold penny used between 1754 and 1873; not to be confused with today's guilder
knot	a unit of speed equal to 1.852km/h or 1.151 mph
morgan	a unit of land measurement equal to 0.25 dessiantine
pud	a unit of weight equal to 36 pounds, or 16.38 kilograms
ruble	a unit of currency equal today to about 3 cents
sashen	a measure of length equal to 2.13 metres or 7 feet
verst	a measure of distance equal to 3500 feet, 0.6629 miles or 1.067 kilometres

## Appendix 1: Other Colonies in Crimea

Throughout the nineteenth century, the counties and municipalities in the Crimea Peninsula and adjoining mainland were ruled by the Taurida Governorate. The governorate's centre was the city of Simferopol. The colonies that will be discussed here are only those on the peninsula.

In 1804 the first planned colonies in Crimea involved some sixty families. The majority established the two colonies of Neusatz and Rosental, while small groups went on to found three other small villages: Sudak, on the Black Sea coast 60 versts to the southeast; Herzenberg, near Feodosia; and Otus, between Feodosia and Sudak.

In the meantime, 49 Swiss families, recruited without government authorization, arrived unexpectedly in Russia in the summer of 1804 also hoping to settle in Crimea. After some delays they were permitted to proceed and in 1805 were settled on a piece of land 35 versts northwest of Feodosia, founding the colony of Zürichtal. Also in 1805, two groups from Würtemberg, one of 25 families, the other of 40 families, founded Friedental, near Neusatz, and Heilbrunn, near Zürichtal.

In 1810 another 105 families, these predominantly Catholics from Alsace, Baden, and the Palatinate, arrived in Crimea. These filled vacant places in existing colonies and founded one new colony, Kronental, 25 versts west of Simferopol.

The following group of nine colonies are often referred to as the mother colonies in Crimea, although some experts limit the list to as few as six<sup>46</sup>.

	Colony	Year Founded	Denomination	Also Called:
1	Neusatz/Novi Sad	1804	Luthern	Krasnohorske
2	Rosental	1805	Catholic	Aromatne
3	Sudak	1805	Luthern	-
4	Herzenberg	1805	Luthern	Pionerske
5	Otus	1805	Luthern	-
6	Zürichtal	1805	½ Catholic & ½ Evangelical	Zolote Pole
7	Friedental	1805	Luthern	Kurortne
8	Heilbrunn	1805	Luthern	Pryvitne
9	Kronental	1810	½ Catholic & ½ Evangelical	Koltschuhyne

Purchases of land by mother colonies for their land-less sons seems to have occurred first in Crimea, as these land grants had been smaller than in other Black Sea colonies. The first daughter colony was formed in 1839 and by 1859 there were five daughter colonies. During the period of 1853-1856, while the Crimean War raged, severe economic depression effectively halted land purchases in Crimea. However, good crops after the war helped the colonists to

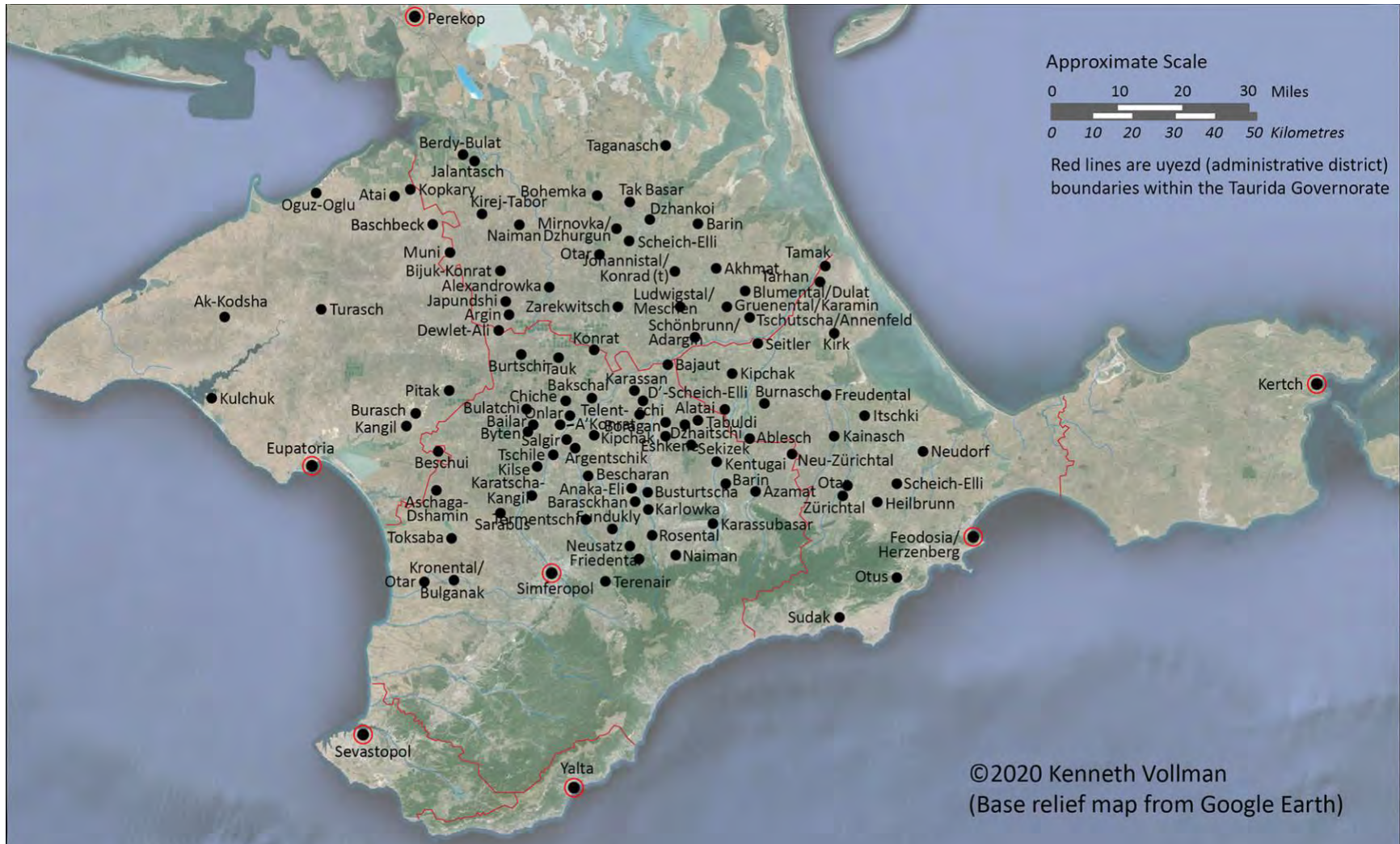
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<sup>46</sup> Stumpp, 1959



recover quickly and new daughter colonies were formed in earnest. Between 1856 and 1860, twenty-five new colonies were founded in lands ranging from Bessarabia to Crimea.

Of the new colonies in Crimea, some were formed by mother colonies there, but many were formed by colonists from mother colonies on the mainland. Twenty new colonies were formed in the 1860s, thirty colonies in the 1870s, and fifty colonies in the 1890s. By 1914 there were more than 250 villages and the total population of German villagers was estimated at 60,000. These villagers owned approximately 360,000 dessiatines of land in Crimea alone. In addition to the colonists living in the German villages, many lived on their own land. In 1912, an estimated 41 percent of the arable land on the Crimean peninsula was in the hands of German colonists. Another source claims the German population owned  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the arable land in Crimea by 1914 involving over 314 villages and estates comprised over 600,000 hectares.



Perekop

Berdy-Bulat

Taganasch

Jalantasch

Atai

Kopkary

Muni

Bijuk-Konrat

Alexandrowka

Japundshi

Argin

Dewlet-Ali

Burtschirauk

Pitak

Burasch

Kangil

Beschui

Aschaga-Dshamin

Toksaba

Kronental/Otar

Bulganak

Simferopol

Terenair

Neusatz

Friedenta

Otar

Sevastopol

Yalta

Bohemka

Kirej-Tabor

Naiman

Dzhurgun

Otar

Johannistal/Konrad(t)

Konrat

Bajaut

Karassan

Chiche

Bulatchi

Bailar

Byten

Salgir

Tschile

Kilse

Karatscha

Anaka-Eli

Barasckhan

Sarabus

Armentschik

Indukly

Rosental

Naiman

Sudak

Taganasch

Mirnovka/

Naiman

Dzhankoi

Barin

Scheich-Elli

Blumental/Dulat

Gruental/Karamin

Schönbrunn/Adarg

Seitler Kirk

Tak Basar

Dzhankoi

Barin

Scheich-Elli

Akhmat

Tarhan

Blumental/Dulat

Gruental/Karamin

Schönbrunn/Adarg

Seitler Kirk

Kipchak

Burnasch

Freudental

Itschki

Kainasch

Neudorf

Kentugai

Neu-Zürichtal

Otar

Scheich-Elli

Heilbrunn

Feodosia/Herzenberg

Otus

Kertch

Sevastopol

Yalta

Taganasch

Mirnovka/

Naiman

Dzhankoi

Barin

Scheich-Elli

Blumental/Dulat

Gruental/Karamin

Schönbrunn/Adarg

Seitler Kirk

Kertch

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(Base relief map from Google Earth)

## Appendix 2: Topographical View of Aromatne in 2013



Google Earth satellite view looking south from Aromatne (Rosental) toward Black Sea. Image shows valley formed by Burultscha River which flows out of the Crimean Mountains. In the foreground we see the flat steppes, then the mountains and southern coast.



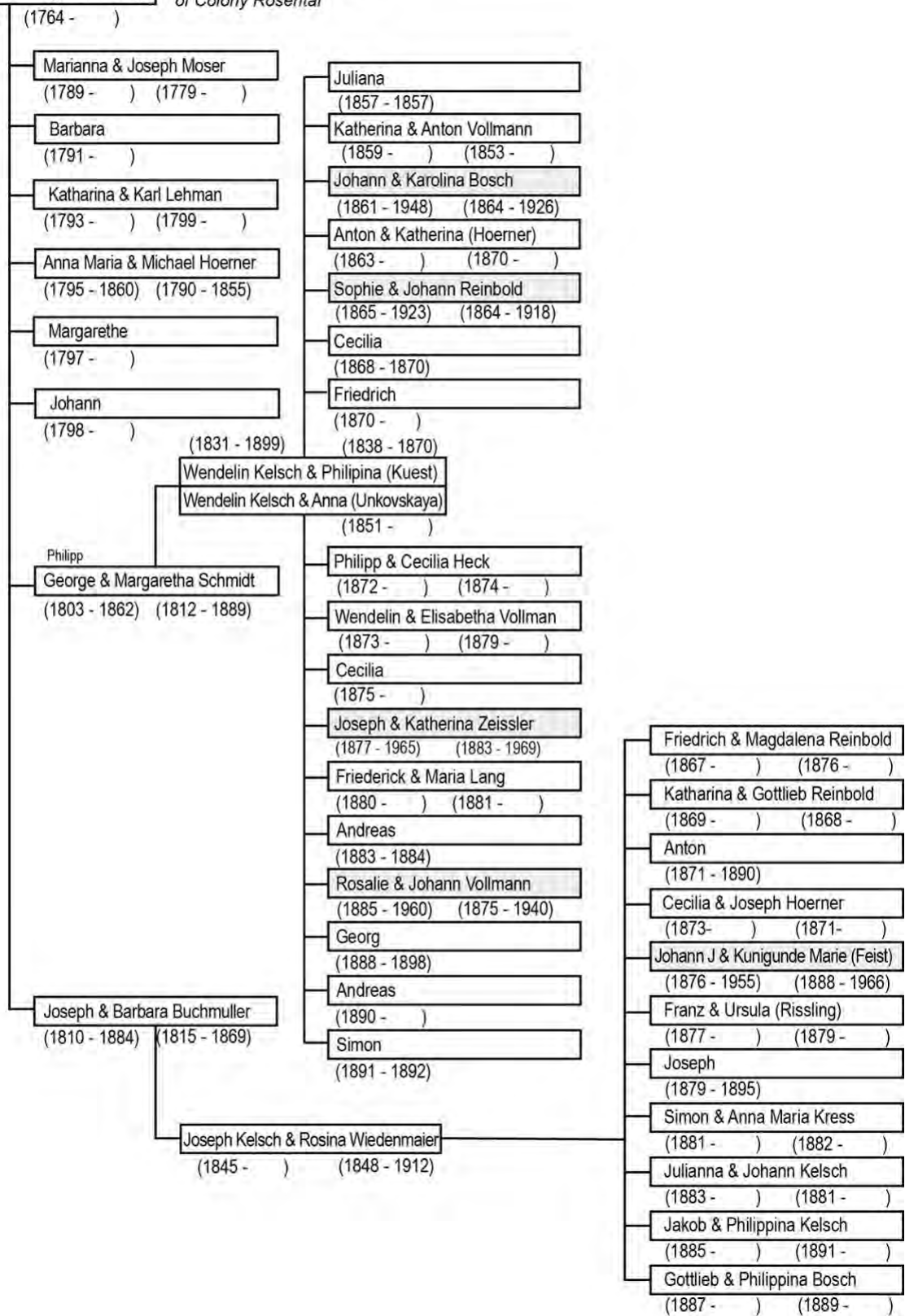
Appendix 4: Original Marriage Record for Johann and Rosalia

Obtained from Saratov Archives, Russia  
December 2013 Kenneth Vollman

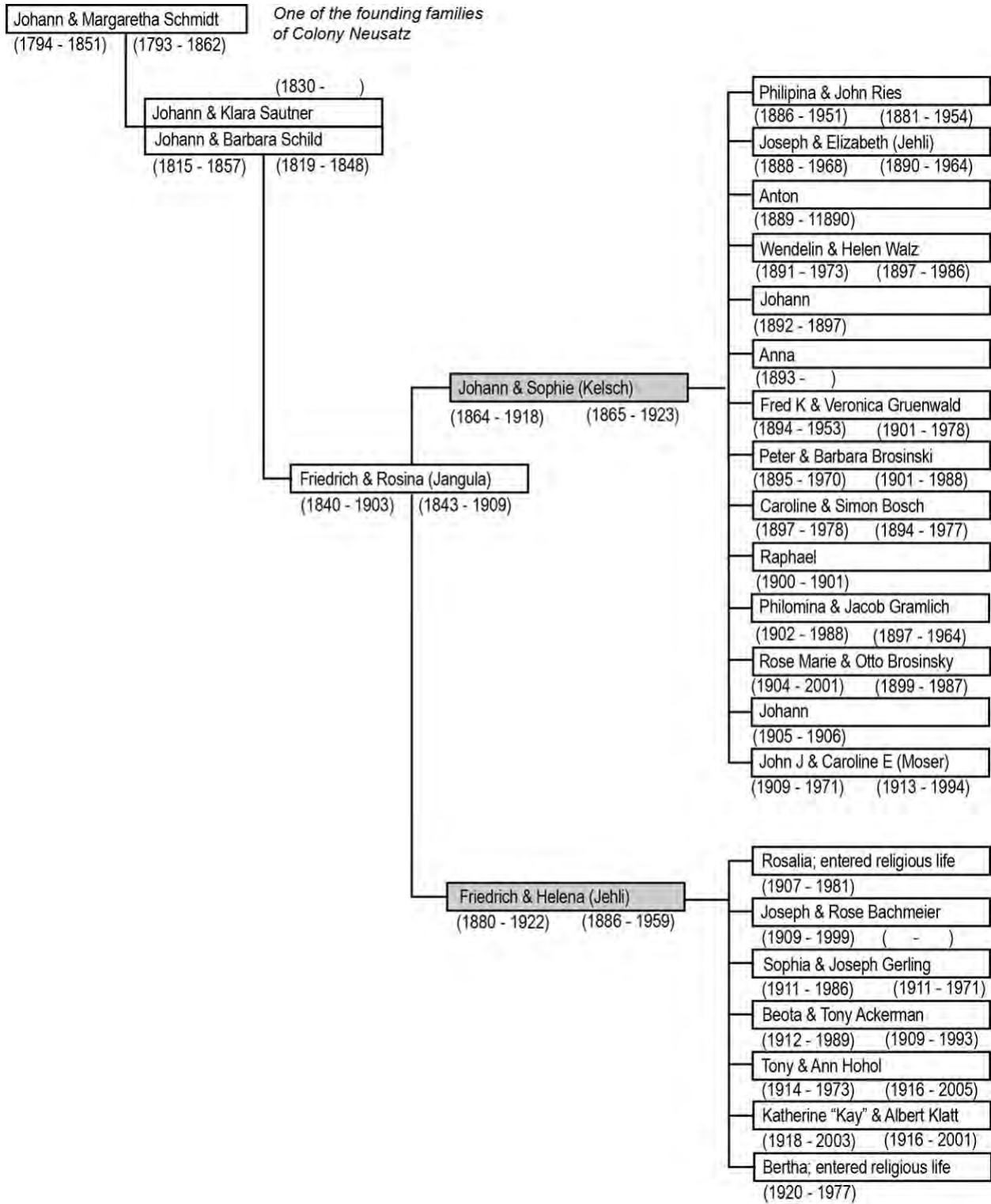
14. 23	Тысяча девятсотъ шестого года	Поселения селенія Розсифа	Свифрофиминна
11. 11	двадцатого числа	свифрофиминна	и свифрофиминна
11. 11	дней въ Розентальской Римско-Католической приходской церкви священникъ Розалия	дочь съ Розалия	дочерью
Розалия	Настоятель оной-же церкви, по троекратномъ оглашении, предъ иждомъ, на Литургии собранномъ	дочери съ Розалия	дочерью
Розалия	свифрофиминна	дочери съ Розалия	дочерью
Розалия	свифрофиминна	дочери съ Розалия	дочерью
Розалия	свифрофиминна	дочери съ Розалия	дочерью
Розалия	свифрофиминна	дочери съ Розалия	дочерью
Розалия	свифрофиминна	дочери съ Розалия	дочерью

## Appendix 5: Kelsch Partial Family Tree

Franz Alexander & Margaretha Jaugh (1762 - ) (1764 - ) *One of the founding families of Colony Rosental*



## Appendix 6: Reinbold Partial Family Tree



Appendix 7: John Vollman's Homestead Documents

1596325

Form A.

Form No. 1.

No. 24204



APPLICATION FOR A HOMESTEAD ENTRY.

I, Johannes Vollman ✓  
of Battleford Sask do hereby apply  
for a Homestead Entry, under sub-clause 38 of clause 38 of "The  
Dominion Lands Act," for the SW Quarter-Section of Section Number 22  
of the 37 Township in the 28 Range west  
of the 3rd Meridian.

Johannes Vollman



District.

19

1022

Note.—The statistical information called for below will be obtained and filled in by Agents when granting entry

Number in family, including entrant, giving their ages.				COUNTRY OF BIRTH.	SUB-DIVISION OF COUNTRY OF BIRTH.	LAST PLACE OF RESIDENCE.	PREVIOUS OCCUPATION.
Male Adult.	Female Adult.	Children under 12	Total.				
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>Russia</u>	<u>Russia</u>	<u>Crimica</u>	<u>Farmer</u>
<u>35</u>							



AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF  
CLAIM FOR A HOMESTEAD ENTRY

BY A PERSON WHO HAS NOT PREVIOUSLY OBTAINED HOMESTEAD ENTRY.

E. J. Wollman do solemnly  
swear that I am over eighteen years of age; that to the best of my

knowledge and belief the land in respect of which my application is made, is of the class open for Homestead  
Entry; that there is no person residing on the said land, nor are there any improvements thereon,

none and that

this application is made for my exclusive use and benefit, with the intention of residing upon and cultivating  
the said land, and not directly or indirectly for the use or benefit of any other person or persons whomsoever;

and that I have not heretofore obtained entry for a homestead on Dominion Lands.



Subscribed and

day of \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_ before me

W. R. Redinger  
Local Agent  
Johannes Wollman

SENIOR ASSISTANT

Sworn Statement of Joseph K. Kosh  
of Sec. 22 Twp. 37 Rge. 284 of 3rd Meridian, in  
reference to the application for patent of Johannes K. Kosh  
for S.W. of Sec. 22 Twp. 37 Rge. 284 of 3rd Meridian.

1. What is your occupation, and how long have you known the applicant?

Farmer, since May 1908  
all the time on my homestead  
S. 22 - 37 - 284 3rd M.

2. Where have you resided, since you have known the applicant, give place and date?

(i) When did he build his house? and (ii) when did he commence actual residence therein, making it his permanent home?

(i) June 1908 (ii) May 25 1908  
continuously from May 25  
1908 to H. Kosh

3. (a) What portion of each year since commencement of residence has he lived upon the land? Give actual dates.

(b) If his residence has been on land owned by himself, or duly authorized relative, describe such land, and give actual dates of residence together with father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister, as the case may be.

yes all the time.

4. Has homesteader's family resided with him? Give actual dates.

5. How much fencing, and what area has been cropped in each year since his homestead?

Year 1908	acres	cropped	acres
Year 1909	35	-	7
Year 1910	708	-	38
Year 1911	-	-	150
Year 1912	-	-	-
Year 1913	-	-	-

6. What stock of which applicant is owner has he had on his homestead or purchased land each year since date of perfecting entry?

1908	cattle	4	horses	0
1909	-	3	-	0
1910	-	6	-	2
1911	-	6	-	6

7. What is the size of his house on his present homestead, and what material, and what is its present cash value?

28x12, side chimney, val. \$150

8. What extent of fencing has been made on his homestead, and what is the present cash value thereof?

not  
2x4x12, 14x12, 16x18 with top  
with value \$50

9. What other buildings have been erected on his homestead? What other improvements have been made thereon, and what is the cash value of the same?

10. Have you any interest, direct or indirect, in this application?

no

11. Do you believe the applicant has acted in good faith in obtaining his entry, and in making his application for patent?

yes

Division of Lands  
Province of Saskatchewan  
 To Wit:

I Joseph K. Kosh of homesteader  
make oath and say that the answers to the foregoing questions are true and correct in every particular.  
SO HELP ME GOD.

Sworn before me at Maskinonge  
this 10th day of May 1911

Joseph K. Kosh

B. G. Schaefer  
Agent of Dominion Lands or Homestead Inspector  
for the Saskatchewan District.



21480

Sworn Statement of Johannes Vollmann  
of Grosswender in support  
of his application for Homestead Patent for S. 24 1/4  
of Sec. 22 Twp. 37 Rge. 28 1/2 of 3rd Meridian.

1. What is your name in full, age, occupation and Post Office address?

Johannes Vollmann, 36 years,  
Farmer, Grosswender, Dist.

2. (1) Are you a British subject at the present time? and (2) have you always been one? (3) are you a British Subject by Birth, Naturalization or Repatriation?

(1) Yes (2) No  
(3) Naturalization

Note—If by naturalization or repatriation, certificates must be furnished. If through parents, certified copy of certificate required, or description of land homesteaded by Father or Mother.

3. (a) When did you obtain homestead entry, (b) when did you build your house thereon, and (c) when did you commence actual residence thereon?

(a) 1908 May 29<sup>th</sup> 29476  
(b) June 1908  
(c) 1908 May 25<sup>th</sup>  
continuously from May 25<sup>th</sup> 1908  
to the present

4. What portion of each year since commencement of residence have you lived upon the land, giving actual dates?

5. When absent from your homestead where have you resided and what has been your occupation?

not absent

6. Of whom do your family consist; when did they first commence residence upon this homestead, and for what portion of each year since that date have they resided upon it?

wife & 4 children. They have  
lived with me all the time

7. If residence has been performed on land owned by yourself or duly authorized relative, describe such land:—

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Twp. \_\_\_\_\_ Rge. \_\_\_\_\_

(a) When (1) and how (2) was such land acquired?  
(b) By whom (3) was the land acquired, and who (4) is the present owner thereof?

(a) (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (4) \_\_\_\_\_

8. What buildings are on such land, and what is the present value thereof?

Title to this land is subject  
to indebtedness to Crowl's  
See Sec 18 of Chap. 25 of  
80-81. Vic D. 5.  
9/10/11

(a) State each month or part of month you have resided on your land.

(b) State each month or part of month you and your (Father, mother, son, daughter, sister, brother) have resided on the sister's land.

9. How much breaking have you done upon your homestead in each year since you obtained entry, and how many acres have you cultivated each year?

Year	Broken	acres	cropped	acres
1908	0		2	6
1909	35		7	
1910	30		35	
1911	0		100	
Year 1				
Year 1				

1908 rather 4 horses  
1909 " 7  
1910 " 6  
1911 " 6

10. What stock of which you are the owner have you had on your homestead each year since date of perfecting entry?

21480

10 5-11

*[Handwritten mark]*

- 10. What is the size of your house on your homestead, of what material, and what is its present cash value?
- 11. What other buildings have you erected on your homestead? What other improvements have you made thereon, and what is the cash value of the same?
- 12. What extent of fencing have you made on your homestead, and what is the present cash value thereof?
- 13. Are there any indications of minerals or quarries on your homestead? If so, state nature of same, and whether the land is more valuable for agricultural than any other purpose.
- 14. Have you had any other homestead entry? If so, describe it and say what became of it.
- 15. Have you mortgaged, assigned or transferred, or agreed in mortgage, assign or transfer your present homestead or any part thereof? If so, when and to whom?

*28x12, post & lumber, value \$1000  
2 stables and 14x16, a 1/2 acre, value \$800  
Well 4500*



*Dominion of Canada  
Alexander Deschamps*  
To Wit:

I, *Johannes Willmann* do solemnly swear that the answers to the foregoing questions are true and correct in every particular. That I claim a Patent for this Homestead under the provisions of the "Dominion Lands Act."

That I obtained an entry, and claim a Patent for the same for my own benefit, and not in the interest or for the benefit of any other person or persons whomsoever.

SO HELP ME GOD.

Sworn before me at *Marklin*  
*May 10th* A.D. 1911

*Johannes Willmann*

Having first been read over and explained to the said applicant.

*G. J. Schroeder*

Sub Agent of the Dominion Lands, or  
Homestead Inspector for the *Saskatoon* District.

I recommend the foregoing application for Patent, believing that the homestead requirements of the "Dominion Lands Act" have, in this case been complied with.

Dated at *Saskatoon* *May 17 1911* A.D. 1911



*[Signature]*  
Sub Agent of Dominion Lands for District  
**SASKATOON.**

Ottawa, JUN 1 1911 19

Accepted as sufficient,

*W. R. Dixon*  
Assistant Deputy Commissioner.

I hereby certify that \_\_\_\_\_ has to-day produced evidence showing ownership of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Section \_\_\_\_\_ Twp. \_\_\_\_\_ Rge. \_\_\_\_\_ Mer., from the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ to the present time.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 1911



The Officer taking this application for patent is requested to exercise particular care that the name of the homesteader is given in full and correctly spelt.

2402377

Sworn Statement of Friedrich Reinhold  
of Sec. 14 Twp. 37 Rge. 28<sup>th</sup> of 3<sup>rd</sup> Meridian, in  
reference to the application for patent of Johannes Wittmer  
for S.W. of Sec. 22 Twp. 37 Rge. 28<sup>th</sup> of 3<sup>rd</sup> Meridian.

1. What is your occupation, and how long have you known the applicant?

Farmer since May 1<sup>st</sup> 1908  
at the time in my homestead  
M. 27/4 - 37 - 28<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> 177.

2. Where have you resided, since you have known the applicant, give place and dates?

(i) June 1908 (ii) May 25<sup>th</sup> 1908  
continuously from May 25<sup>th</sup> 1908  
to the present

3. (i) When did he build his house? and (ii) when did he commence actual residence therein, making it his permanent home?

4. (a) What portion of each year since commencement of residence has he lived upon the land? (Give actual dates.)

(b) If his residence has been on land owned by himself or duly authorized relative, describe such land, and give actual dates of residence together with father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister, as the case may be.

yes all the time

5. Has homestead's family resided with him? (Give actual dates.)

Year 1908	0	acres cropped	0
Year 1909	35		35
Year 1910	90 <sup>+</sup>		56
Year 1911			100
Year 1912			
Year 1913			

6. How much fencing, and what area has been cropped in each year upon his homestead?

7. What stock of which applicant is owner has he had on his homestead or purchased (and each year since date of purchasing entry)?

1909	with 4 horses	0
1909		0
1910		2
1911		6

8. What is the size of his house on his present homestead, and what material, and what is its present cash value?

20x12, sod, value \$150<sup>00</sup>

9. What extent of fencing has he made on his homestead, and what is the present cash value thereof?

no  
2 stables and 14x12x16x18 and 12x12  
with out 85<sup>00</sup>

10. What other buildings have been erected on his homestead? What other improvements have been made thereon, and what is the cash value of the same?

11. Have you any interest, direct or indirect, in this application?

no

12. Do you believe the claimant has acted in good faith in obtaining his entry, and in making his application for patent?

yes

Dominion of Canada  
Province of Saskatchewan  
 To Wit:

I Friedrich Reinhold of grosswelder  
make oath and say that the answers to the foregoing questions are true and correct in every particular.  
SO HELP ME GOD.

Sworn before me at Markham } Friedrich Reinhold  
this 10<sup>th</sup> day of May 1911 }

R. G. Schaefer  
Local Agent of Dominion Lands or Homestead Inspector.  
for the Saskatchewan District.

21480

File No. 1596325

**Department of the Interior.**

OTTAWA, JUL 14 1911 1911

Sir:—

I have to inform you that a patent for S.W. 1/4  
of Section 22 in Township 37  
Range 28 West of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meridian,  
bearing date the  
15<sup>th</sup> June 1911 has issued in your name, and that  
it has been forwarded to the Registrar of the Land Registration  
District of **SASKATOON.**  
who will issue the certificate of title upon receipt of your application  
to him therefor, and upon payment of the proper fees, if any.

For this purpose please place yourself in communication with  
that official, giving him your full name and your Post Office address.

His address is THE REGISTRAR,  
Saskatoon, Sask.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

PERLEY G. KEYES,  
Secretary.

To Johannes Hollman Esq,  
Grosswender  
Sask.

Appendix 8: John Vollman's Pre-emption Documents

Form A. Form No. 1.  
50,000-02  
 No. 25825 1666408  
 Application for Entry for a Homestead, a Pre-emption or a Purchased Homestead.

I, Johannes Vollman  
 of Battleport do hereby apply for an Entry  
 for a Pre-Emption under the provisions of Section 27 in that  
 behalf of the Dominion Lands Act, for the Q1W Quarter Section of Section number  
15 Q1W, in Township 34/37, Range 28W of  
 the 3 Meridian.

(2.) I am a British subject.

(3.) I am a citizen (or subject, as the case may be) of Russia, but I declare that it is my intention to become a British subject under the laws of Canada.



Sig. Johannes Vollman  
 District

Note.—Strike out paragraph 2 if applicant is not a British subject.  
 Strike out paragraph 3 if applicant is a British subject.

Note.—The statistical information called for below will be obtained and filled in by Agent when granting entry.

Number in family, including entrant, giving their ages.				COUNTRY OF BIRTH.	SUB-DIVISION OF COUNTRY OF BIRTH.	LAST PLACE OF RESIDENCE.	PREVIOUS OCCUPATION.
Male Adult.	Female Adult.	Children under 14	TOTAL.				
1	1	2	4	Russia	Russia	Battleport	Farmer
0	0	1	1				
				10	10		

Form B.

Affidavit in support of an Application for Entry for a Homestead, a Pre-emption or a Purchased Homestead.

I, J. Hallman of Battleford, do solemnly swear (or affirm, as the case may be), that I am over eighteen years of age; that to the best of my knowledge and belief the land in respect of which my application is made is agricultural land and open to entry, and that there is no person residing on the said land; that there are no improvements thereon; that this application is made for my exclusive use and benefit, with the intention of my residing upon and cultivating the said land, and neither directly nor indirectly for the use or benefit of any other person or persons whomsoever.

(2.) That I have not heretofore obtained an Entry for a Homestead on Dominion Lands.

(3.) That I obtained Entry for a Homestead on the 9 day of May, 1908, for SW Quarter-section of

Section 22, Township 37, Range 28, of the 2 Meridian, but forfeited (or abandoned, as the case may be) the same.

(4.) That this application is made for my exclusive use and benefit, with the intention of my residing upon and cultivating the said land, and neither directly nor indirectly for the use or benefit of any other person or persons whomsoever.

(5.) That my homestead entry is in good standing at this date.

Sig. J. Hallman

Subscribed and sworn to this day of before me at Battleford, Sask.



Local Agent, [or Sub-agent, as the case may be.] W. P. Redington

Note.—Strike out paragraph 3 if applicant has already received homestead entry. Note.—Paragraph 5 is applicable only in the case of an application for a pre-emption entry.

SENIOR ASSISTANT.



**PRE-EMPTION.**

**Sworn Statement** of John Churawski  
of Section S.E. 12 Township 37 Range 28 W  
of 3rd Meridian, in reference to the application for patent of  
John Holloman for NW of Section 15  
Township 37 Range 28 W of 3rd Meridian.

1. What is your occupation, and how long have you known the applicant?  
Plumber Six years  
On Homestead St. 12, 37, 28
2. Where have you resided since you have known the applicant? (Give places and dates.)  
W 3rd March 1911 to  
March 1917 Continuously  
August 1911 to August 1915  
On Homestead Sec. 22, 37, 28, W. 3rd
3. Since the applicant applied for patent for his homestead, what portion of each year has he lived upon his homestead or pre-emption? (Give actual dates.)  
August 1915 to March 27th 1917  
(State clearly whether each period of residence was performed on the homestead or pre-emption.)  
On pre-emption NW. 15, 37, 28  
W, 3rd
4. Has applicant's family resided with him? (Give actual dates.)  
wife and six children same  
residence as applicant
5. How much breaking has been done and what area has been cropped in each year upon the applicant's homestead or pre-emption since he applied for patent for his homestead? (State clearly what acreage is on homestead and what on pre-emption.)  

Year 1911	<u>14.5</u> acres, cropped	<u>14.5</u> acres, on	<u>Pre-emption</u>
Year 12	<u>nil</u> " " "	<u>14.5</u> " "	<u>nil</u>
Year 13	<u>nil</u> " " "	<u>14.5</u> " "	<u>nil</u>
Year 14	<u>60</u> " " "	<u>35</u> " "	<u>nil</u>
Year 15	<u>85</u> " " "	<u>60</u> " "	<u>nil</u>
Year 16	<u>48</u> " " "	<u>85</u> " "	<u>nil</u>
6. What stock, of which applicant is the actual owner, had he on his homestead or pre-emption in each year since date of application for his homestead patent?  

	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917
Horses	<u>nil</u>	<u>nil</u>	<u>nil</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Cattle	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>
7. What is the size of the applicant's house on his homestead or pre-emption; of what material, and what is its present value? (State whether on homestead or pre-emption.)  
14 x 28 frame \$300. On pre-emption
8. What extent of fencing has the applicant made on his pre-emption, and what is the present cash value thereof?  
15 acres. \$200.  
28 x 14 frame \$700.
9. What other building has been erected on homestead or pre-emption? What other improvements have been made thereon, and what is the cash value of the same?  
frame frame granary \$200.  
well \$60.
10. Have you any interest, direct or indirect, in this application?  
No
11. Do you believe the applicant has acted in good faith in obtaining entry, and in making application for patent?  
Yes.

CANADA,  
Province of Saskatchewan  
Do Wit:  
John Churawski of Geosunder P.O.

make oath and say that the answers to the foregoing questions are true and correct in every particular. So  
HELP ME GOD.  
Sworn before me at Macklin  
in the Province of Sask  
this 29th day of March 1917  
having first been read over and explained to the witness

J. P. Peterstenhauf  
Sub for the Barclay District  
Local Agent of Dominion Lands or Homestead Inspector

PRE-EMPTION.

3896777

Form No. 138 A  
120015-6-11

Sworn Statement of John Vallman  
of Gronwader Co. in support of his  
application for Pre-emption Patent for North West  
of 3rd Section 15 Township 37 Range 28 W  
of 3rd Meridian, the appurtenant Homestead being South West  
of Section 22 Township 37 Range 28 W of 3rd Meridian.

*ESS*  
*4-5-1*

1. What is your name in full, age, occupation and Post Office address?  
John Vallman 43.  
Farmer Gronwader

2. Are you a British subject at the present time?  
Yes.

3. (a) When did you obtain homestead entry? (b) When did you obtain pre-emption entry? (c) When did you apply for patent for your homestead?  
March 1908  
14th September 1908  
August 1911

4. What portion of each year since applying for patent for your homestead have you lived upon the homestead or pre-emption, giving actual dates?  
August 1911 to August 1915  
on Homestead NW 22, 37, 28 W 3rd  
August 1915 to March 27th 1917  
on Pre-emption NW 15, 37  
28 W 3rd

5. When absent from your homestead or pre-emption, where have you resided and what has been your occupation?  
not absent

6. Of whom do your family consist; and for what portion of each year since you applied for patent for your homestead have they resided upon the homestead or pre-emption?  
Wife and six children  
same residence as applicant

7. (a) Has patent been issued for your homestead? (b) Do you still own it? (c) If not, what became of it?  
Yes.  
No.  
Lost under mortgage

8. Since applying for patent for your homestead how much breaking have you done upon your homestead and pre-emption in each year, and how many acres have you cultivated each year?  
(State clearly what acreage on homestead and what on pre-emption.)

Year	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917
Acres broken	nil	nil	145	145	145	145	145
Acres cultivated	60	85	60	85	60	85	85

9. What stock, of which you are the actual owner, have you had on your homestead or pre-emption each year since date of application for homestead patent?

Year	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917
Horses	nil	nil	nil	4	4	4	4
Cattle	6	7	8	6	3	3	3

10. What is the size of your house on your homestead or pre-emption; of what material and what is its present cash value?  
(State whether house is on homestead or pre-emption.)  
14 x 28 frame \$300  
On pre-emption  
23 x 14 frame stable \$100

11. What other buildings have you erected on your homestead or pre-emption? What other improvements have you made thereon, and what is the cash value of the same?  
four frame granary \$200  
well \$60

12. What extent of fencing have you made on your pre-emption, and what is the present cash value thereof?  
15 acres \$20

13. Are there any indications of minerals or quartz in your pre-emption? If so, state nature of same, and whether the land is more valuable for agriculture than any other purpose?  
none valuable for agriculture

14. (a) Have you had any other pre-emption entry? (b) Have you had a pre-emption homestead entry? If so, describe the land and say what became of it?

(a) No  
(b) No  
7

15. Have you mortgaged, assigned, transferred or agreed to mortgage, assign or transfer your present pre-emption or any part thereof? If so, when and to whom?

No.

7 CANADA, Province of Saskatchewan To WIT:

I, John Vollman, do solemnly swear that the answers to the foregoing questions are true and correct in every particular. That I claim a Patent for the Pre-emption under the provisions of The Dominion Lands Act.

That I obtained an entry, and claim a Patent for the same for my own benefit, and not in the interest or for the benefit of any other person or persons whomsoever. So HELP ME GOD.

Sworn before me at Macklin in the Province of Sask this 27th day of March A.D. 1917 having first been read over and explained to the said applicant.

John Wolverson Agent of Dominion Lands or Homestead Inspector for the Battleford District

CERTIFICATE OF OWNERSHIP OF HOMESTEAD.

(To be filled out if duties, or any part thereof, have been performed on homestead.)

I hereby certify that John Vollman has to-day produced evidence showing ownership of his homestead the S. W. of Section 22 Township 37 Range 28 West 3rd Meridian, from the 18th day of July 1911 to July 7, 1914; such evidence consisting of

Abstract of Title Matthew Amos Local Agent.

Date Dec. 26, 1918.

I recommend the foregoing application for Patent, believing that the Pre-emption requirements of The Dominion Lands Act have, in this case, been complied with.

Dated at Saskatoon April 18th A.D. 1917 Local Agent of Dominion Lands Saskatoon District

Accepted as sufficient, taken in conjunction with evidence upon which Patent was issued for the appertaining homestead.

OTTAWA, JAN 9 - 1919 (9) DEPUTY Commissioner.

Payments completed. No

Date 1917

The Officer taking this application for patent is requested to exercise particular care that the name of the applicant is given in full and correctly spelled. Also that the land is correctly described at the head of each statement.

PRE-EMPTION

4123890

Sworn Statement of Adam Sperling of Section S.R. 24 Township 37 Range 28 W of 3rd Meridian, in reference to the application for patent of John Wallman for NW of Section 15 Township 37 Range 28 W of 3rd Meridian.

1. What is your occupation, and how long have you known the applicant?

Farmer Six years

2. Where have you resided since you have known the applicant? (Give places and dates.)

Autonomous S.S. 24, 37, 28, 33d March 1911 to March 27th 1917 Continuously

3. Since the applicant applied for patent for his homestead, what portion of each year has he lived upon his homestead or pre-emption? (Give actual dates.)

August 1911 to August 1915 Autonomous SW 22, 37 28, W. 3rd August 1915 to

(State clearly whether each period of residence was performed on the homestead or pre-emption.)

March 27th 1917 On pre-emption NW 15, 37, 28, 33d

4. Has the applicant's family resided with him? (Give actual dates.)

Wife and six children same residence as applicant

5. How much breaking has been done and what area has been cropped in each year upon the applicant's homestead or pre-emption since he applied for patent for his homestead? (State clearly what acreage is on homestead and what on pre-emption.)

Year	Acres on Homestead	Acres on Pre-emption
1911	14.5	14.5
1912	14.5	14.5
1913	60	85
1914	85	60
1915	40	85

6. What stock of which applicant is the actual owner, had he on his homestead or pre-emption in each year since date of application for his homestead patent?

Year	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915
Horses	4	4	4	4	4
Cattle	6	7	8	6	3

7. What is the site of the applicant's house on his homestead or pre-emption; of what material, and what is its present value? (State whether on homestead or pre-emption.)

14 x 28 frame \$300 On Pre-emption

8. What extent of fencing has the applicant made on his pre-emption, and what is the present cash value thereof?

15 acres \$200

9. What other buildings have been erected on homestead or pre-emption? What other improvements have been made thereon, and what is the cash value of the same?

28 x 14 frame stable \$400  
four frame granaries \$200  
well \$60

10. Have you any interest, direct or indirect, in this application?

No

11. Do you believe the applicant has acted in good faith in obtaining entry, and in making application for patent?

Yes



CANADA, Province of Saskatchewan To WIT: Adam Sperling of Crosswader Rd,

make oath and say that the answers to the foregoing questions are true and correct in every particular. So HELP ME GOD.

Sworn before me at Macklin in the Province of Sask this 27th day of March 1917

Adam Sperling

W.D. Schuster Agent of Dominion Lands or Homestead Inspectors for the Battleford District.

41487



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
CANADA

*Land Patents Branch*

*Ottawa,*

JUN 27 1914

SIR:—

I beg to inform you that a patent for *20 1/4*  
of Section *15* in Township *37*  
Range *28* West of the *3rd* Meridian,  
bearing date the *23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1914.*  
has been issued in your name, and that  
it has been forwarded to the Registrar of the Land Registration  
District of *Saskatoon*  
who will issue the certificate of title upon receipt of your  
application to him therefor, and upon payment of the proper fees,  
if any.

For this purpose please communicate with that official,  
giving him your full name and your Post Office address. His address  
is The Registrar, Land Titles Office. *Saskatoon, Sask*

Your obedient servant,

N. O. COTÉ,

Controller.

To *Johannes Hollman, Esq.,*  
*Crossvender,*  
*Saskatchewan.*

## Appendix 9: Homesteads; Dominion Land Grant Information

Following the transfer of ownership of Rupert's Land and the North-West Territories from the Hudson's Bay Company to the Dominion of Canada in 1868, the Canadian government passed the Dominion Lands Act of 1872 to set out guidelines for the settlement of Western Canada. Starting in the 1870s, surveyors were sent out to mark boundaries and survey the area which would become Saskatchewan. The Dominion Government decided to develop a grid system for land description in the West, similar to that used in United States.

The Dominion Lands Policy evolved over time as circumstances warranted. Following are the rules that were generally in place when John and Philipp were securing their homesteads.

**SYNOPSIS OF  
CANADIAN NORTHWEST  
LAND REGULATIONS**

**What Land Available:** All surveyed agricultural Dominion land in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and 3,500,000 acres in northern British Columbia known as "Peace river block," which are not disposed of and not reserved or occupied, are open to homestead entry. Islands are reserved from entry.  
An entry does not include the Mineral or Water Rights.

**Who May Make Homestead Entry:** The sole head of a family, or any male over eighteen (18) years old, may homestead one (1) quarter-section of available Dominion land in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta or Peace river block in British Columbia. Applicant must appear in person at the Dominion Lands Agency or Sub-Agency for the district. Entry by proxy may be made at any Dominion Lands Agency (but not Sub-Agency), on certain conditions.  
An Agent may reserve one (1) available quarter-section as a homestead for a minor over seventeen (17) years of age until he is eighteen (18), on certain conditions.

**Where Entry Is Made:** Application for homestead entry may be made by a person eligible under the provisions of "The Dominion Lands Act," either at the Land Agency for the district in which the land is situated, or at the office of Sub-Agent authorized to transact business in the district.

**Duties:** Six (6) months' residence upon and cultivation of the land in each of three (3) years. A homesteader may live within nine miles of his homestead on a farm of at least eighty (80) acres, on certain conditions. A habitable house is required except where residence is performed in the vicinity.  
The area of cultivation is subject to reduction in case of rough, scrubby or stony land. Live stock may be substituted for cultivation under certain conditions.

**When to Begin Residence:** A homesteader is allowed six (6) months from the date of his entry within which to perfect the same by taking possession of the land and beginning his residence duties in connection therewith. Any entry not so perfected within that period is liable to cancellation.

**Pre-emptions:** In certain districts a homesteader in good standing may pre-empt one (1) quarter-section alongside his homestead. Price Three Dollars (\$3.00) per acre.

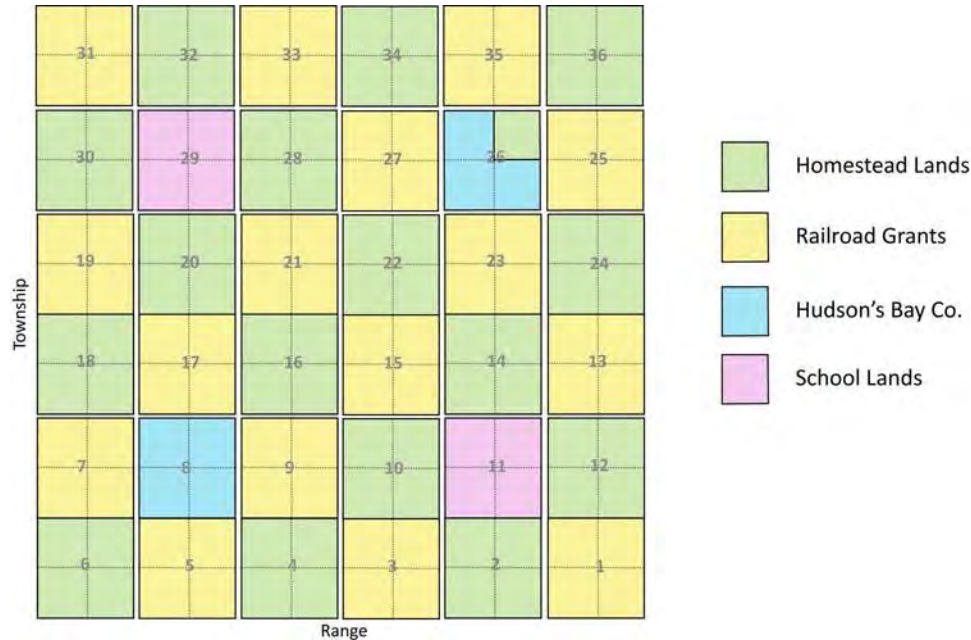
**Duties:** Six (6) months' residence in each of six (6) years after date of homestead entry; also fifty (50) acres extra cultivation. Pre-emption patent may be obtained as soon as homestead patent, on certain conditions.

**Purchased Homestead:** A settler who has exhausted his homestead right may take a purchased homestead in certain districts. Price Three Dollars \$3.00) per acre.

**Duties:** Six (6) months' residence in each of three (3) years; cultivation of fifty (50) acres and erection of a house worth Three Hundred Dollars (\$300.00).

## Various Dominion Land Acts

The land had to be accurately described and located through cadastral surveys before Letters Patent could be issued to a homesteader. The basic unit of the survey is the 36-square mile township. The townships are arranged in rows that run parallel to the international border (the 49th parallel). Each row is numbered progressively from the border, with the row closest to the border numbered 1. The townships in each row are distinguished by their distance or range from a meridian. The column of townships closest to the meridian is designated as Range 1.



During the early surveys, the Dominion Government set aside almost all of the even-numbered sections in Saskatchewan as 160 acre homestead grants. In addition, designated tracts in each township were reserved or appropriated for a variety of other purposes, including:

- Railway lands: all odd-numbered sections except 11 and 29 were reserved for railway grants, which were made to railway companies in partial payment for building railways;
- School lands: two sections (Section 11 and 29) reserved as school lands that could be sold by local school districts to raise money to finance the building of schools;
- Hudson's Bay Company Lands: section 8 and three-quarters of section 26 were retained by the Hudson's Bay Company as part of the 1870 Deed of Surrender; the company gradually sold these lands;
- Métis Scrip: Scrip, either as land or money, was offered to Métis families to compensate them for loss of their Aboriginal title and for grievances that led to the 1885 Resistance; and
- Free lands were given to certain military personnel including veterans of the Boer War and the First World War.

When a homesteader felt that he met all conditions of his homestead entry, as outlined in the Dominion Lands Act, he filed an application with his local Dominion Lands Office. On receipt of an application from the local lands office, the Dominion Lands Board had the responsibility of undertaking all initial screening and validation of the claim, including the dispatching of a homestead inspector to the property to confirm that the proper improvements had been made. If the Board approved the application, it would then be forwarded to Ottawa for the "preparation and issuance of patents" by the Lands Patent Branch.

### **Land Colonization Companies:**

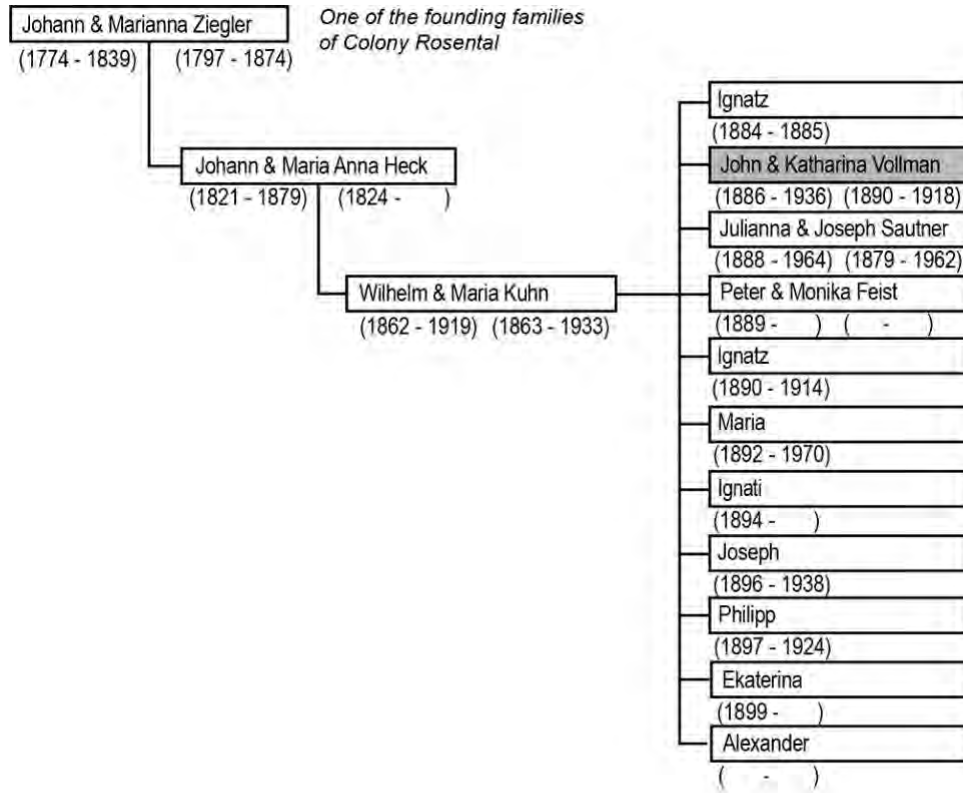
In the 1880s, as many as twenty companies contracted with the government to purchase sections of Dominion Lands in defined tracts, which the companies would sell in sponsored settlement schemes. One of the largest of these was the Luse Land Company which would bring prospective settlers into St. Joseph's Colony to view suitability of land for homesteading.



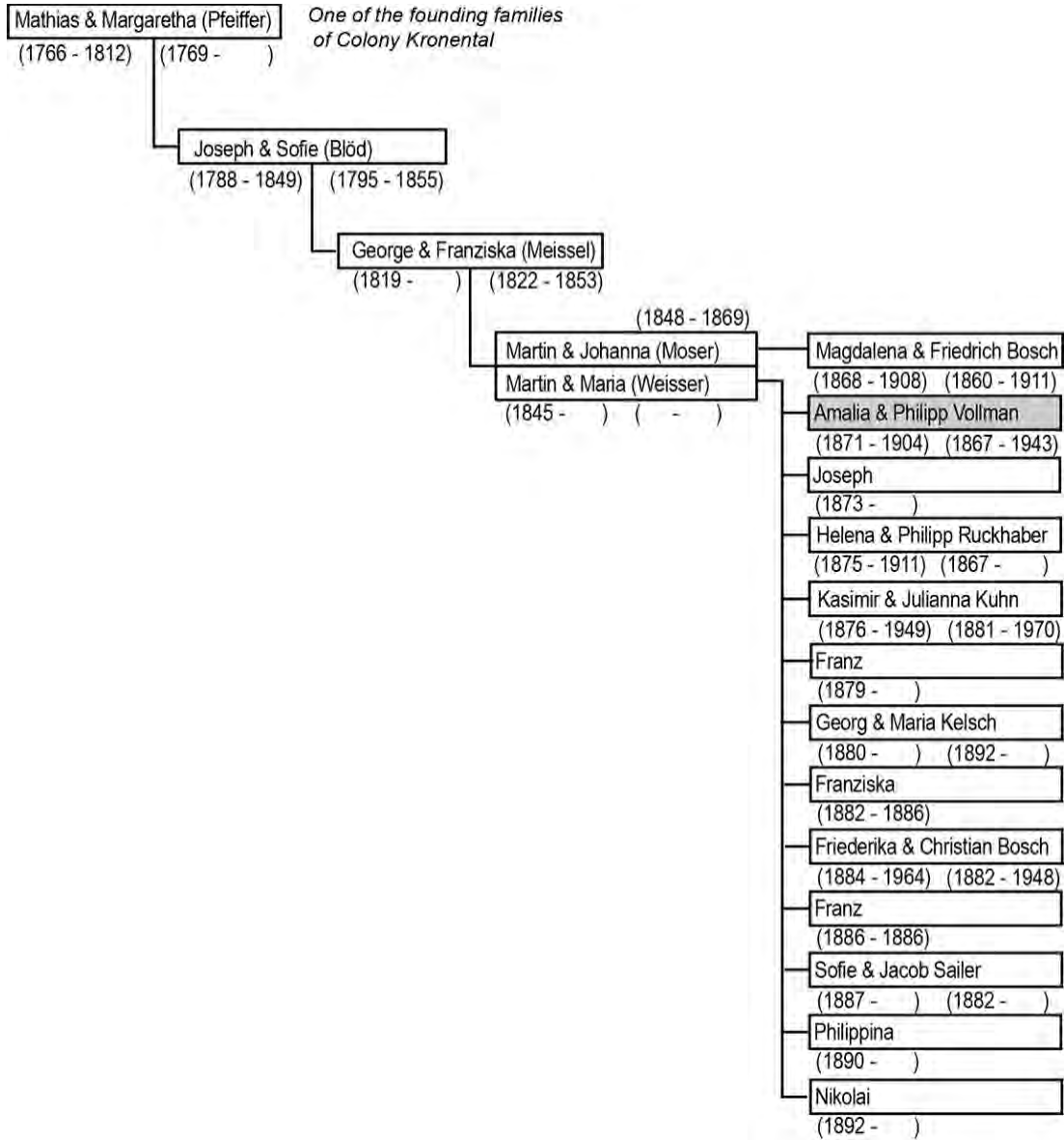




## Appendix 11: Partial Ruckhaber Crimean Family Tree



## Appendix 12: Partial Neigum Crimean Family Tree



## Appendix 13: More on Vollmann Roots

When our family discusses ancestry, we often wonder what region our ancient ancestors called home. The most commonly held view is that we are of Bavarian descent. The Vollmanns tend to be short, stocky, powerful, and have dark hair, which would be consistent with Bavarian descent. The average height of the Vollman male coming to North America was in the range of 5 feet 5 inches to 5 feet 7 inches.

While I was searching for Matheus' home village in the Rhineland, I marked on a map the location of all communities where the name Vollmann appeared in the local parish register. The results are shown in the following figure.

It turns out that the name Vollmann was quite widespread throughout the Germanic states in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Observations were also made north of the map, all the way to the Baltic Coast. This widespread distribution likely tells us little about our original ancestry. However, the clusters in the Palatinate and along the Danube could be used to support the family belief that we are of Bavarian descent. On the other hand, there are just as many sightings in Westfalia and Prussia. The Vollmanns residing north of this map tend to be of Protestant faith, mainly Lutheran, while those represented by the green dots are predominately Catholic.

There is certainly nothing conclusive about the map, but it should help inform and stimulate family debate!

(Incidentally, there is an excellent report available on the Vollmanns from Lonngig.<sup>47</sup> Descendants of Leonard Vollmann from Lonngig immigrated to the United States in the last half of the 1800s and settled in Illinois. It is likely that most Vollmanns in the Midwest are descendants of his.)

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<sup>47</sup> Peifer

