

Ancestors of Wilhelm Spiess

Generation No. 1

1. Wilhelm Spiess, born February 10, 1880 in Rolaf, Romania; died January 08, 1948 in Corona, Ca. He was the son of **2. Conrad Spiess** and **3. Anna Putz**. He married **(1) Mathilda Betskey**. She was born October 02, 1887 in Winnipeg, Canada, and died October 05, 1964 in Corona, CA. She was the daughter of Unknown and Anderson.

Notes for Wilhelm Spiess:

Notes from conversation with Agnes (Spiess) in 1997:

Died of Emphasima before Gary was born.

Built shack in North Dakota, around Turtle Lake. Old mail box was still there 10 years ago.

American Settlement

American settlement of the Northern Plains commenced in earnest after 1861, when Dakota Territory was organized by Congress. Significant immigration commenced when the westbound Northern Pacific Railway built to the Missouri River in 1872 and 1873. Along and near its line, new towns sprang up to serve the settlers, the tracklaying crews, and other, sometimes rowdy frontier citizens. Fargo and Bismarck, for example, both began as rough-and-tumble railroad communities. Spurred by the 1862 Federal Homestead Law, farming settlement developed gradually after the first claim west of the Red River was filed in 1868.

A great settlement "boom" in northern Dakota occurred between 1879 and 1886. During those years, over 100,000 people entered the territory. The majority were homesteaders, but some organized large, highly mechanized, well capitalized bonanza farms. These operations, several of which lasted into the 20th Century, made names such as Dalrymple and Grandin well known throughout the United States and helped publicize the northern frontier.

Ethnic variety characterized the new settlements. Following the first settlement "boom", a second boom after 1905 increased the population from 190,983 in 1890 to 646,872 by 1920. Many were immigrants of Scandinavian or Germanic origin. Norwegians were the largest single ethnic group, and after 1885 many Germans immigrated from enclaves in the Russian Ukraine. A small, but strong community of Scotch-Irish-English background played an especially influential role, contributing many of North Dakota's early business and political leaders. Many other groups, including Asians, Blacks, and Arabs, settled throughout North Dakota. So significant was this foreign immigration that in 1915 over 79% of all North Dakotans were either immigrants or children of immigrants.

The influence of the railroads and their business allies guided northern Dakota from its earliest territorial days. Led by political agent Alexander McKenzie of Bismarck and St. Paul, these groups worked to attract investment capital to the Northern Plains. The 1883 removal of the territorial capitol from Yankton to Bismarck on the main line of the Northern Pacific Railway demonstrated the power of these outside corporate interests in Dakota Territory's affairs.

Notes for Mathilda Betskey:

Mail order bride.

Ancestry.com. California Death Index, 1940-1997. [database online] Provo, UT: Ancestry.com, 2000. Original electronic data: State of California. California Death Index, 1940-1997. Sacramento, CA: State of California

German Russian Timeline

April 21, 1729 Sophia Augusta Frederica of Anhalt-Zerbst was born in Germany. She later ruled Russia under the name Catherine II. (Catherine the Great)

1756-1763 Seven Years' War. Important factor in bringing Germans to Lower Volga to establish colonies.

June 28, 1762 Catherine II ascends the throne of Russia

December 4, 1762 First Manifesto issued by Catherine II, inviting foreigners to come to Russia. It brought few results.

July 22, 1763 Catherine II issued second manifesto. It spelled out the conditions under which they could immigrate and granted special rights and privileges. Large numbers of German peasants accepted the invitation.

1764-1767 Founding of German colonies along the Lower Volga River.

1771-1774 Kirghiz Raids and Pugachev's rebellion, called the Pugachevshchina, ravished the Volga colonies.

1786 Mennonites from West Prussia began immigrating to Russia due to 1772 Partition of Poland, which threatened their military service exemption as conscientious objectors. Settlements were established primarily in the Taurida region of South Russia.

1793 Second Partition of Poland grants area of Volhynia to Russia. Polish landowners invite German peasants to lease land for cultivation.

November 6, 1796 Death of Catherine II at age sixty-seven.

1796-1801 Reign of Czar Paul I, son of Catherine II

1801-1825 Reign of Tsar Alexander I, the well beloved, grandson of Catherine II.

February 20, 1804 Alexander I modifies and reissues manifesto of Catherine II, inviting foreigners to settle in New Russia.

1825-185 Reign of Tsar Nicholas I, Grandson of Catherine II, and brother of Alexander I.

1830 Polish Insurrection brings about immigration of many Polish Germans to the Bessarabia and Volga Region.

1855-1881 Reign of Tsar Alexander II, great-grandson of Catherine II, son of Nicholas I.

1860s Another wave of Germans immigrate to Volhynia prompted by 1861 abolishment of serfdom, leaving significant drain on work force. Second Polish Insurrection of 1863 brought more Polish Germans to Volhynia and other areas of Russia.

1871 Germany unified as a nation for first time. Created unease among European nations and Russia. Time of increased animosity towards foreigners in Russia due to Slavophile movement and growing nationalism.

June 4, 1871 Imperial Russian Government issues decree repealing the Manifestos of Catherine II and Alexander I, terminating the special privileges of the German colonists.

January 13, 1874 Imperial Russian Government issues second decree amending the previous one. This decree instituted compulsory military conscription for the German colonists. These decrees impelled thousands of German Russians to immigrate to North and South America

1881-1917 Reign of Tsar Nicholas II, descendent of Catherine II. He abdicated during World War I. On July 16, 1918, the Bolsheviks executed him and his family. Nicholas II was the last monarch to rule Russia.

Generation No. 2

2. Conrad Spiess, born 1841 in Germany or Austria; died Bef. 1910. He was the son of **4. Johann Spiess** and **5. Katharina**. He married **3. Anna Putz**.

3. Anna Putz, born 1847 in Radautz, Bukowina, Austria; died 1923 in Martin, ND.

Notes for Conrad Spiess:

Posted by: Jeanne Date: December 11, 2001 at 12:13:49
of 2200

My great-great grandfather Conrad Spiess married Anna Putz. Conrad may have had a sister named Katherine, I believe their father was Johann. Anna Putz was born in Radatz, Austria (now Radauti, Romania) in 1847.

Katherine married Jacob Helm, and they came to American about 1885. Katherine's death certificate states both she Johann were born in Austria, and she was christened in Katloui, Romania.

Conrad and Anna's children: Frederick, my great-grandfather possibly was born in Cahul, in 1868 (now Cahul Moldova). Frederick married Ecaterina Trolenberg, whose father was Apollon, they were from Galati. Conrad's

other children were Lydia, born Romania 1878, William, born Rolaf, Romania 1880, Emil born Galati, Romania, 1884 and possibly a Chris.

Frederick and Ecaterina's children are: my grandfather, Wilhelm, born 1896 Tulcea Romania, Joseph, born 1899 Mangalia, Romania; Lydia, Conrad, Walter, Freeda and Erna, all born in North Dakota.

Frederick and Ecaterina came to America in 1901. Their last residence was Galati.

Anna came to America with Lydia (Neubauer) in 1910. The ship manifest states that Anna was a widow, so I can assume that Conrad died in Romania prior to 1910. Her last residence was Sulina, Romania.

Notes for Anna Putz:

From my cousin Jeanne Spiess Web Site.

Anna Putz Spiess died on February 7, 1923 in Martin, and is buried there. According to census', she lived her last years with Lydia and Joseph.

I also have quite a bit of information about the Putzes, and eventually I'll get it added here.

FAMILY GROUP RECORD FOR CONRAD SPIESS/ANNA PUTZ

HUSBAND Conrad SPIESS

BIRTH: <1841> PLACE: Germany Or Austria

MAR.: PLACE:

DEATH: DECEASED PLACE:

BURIAL: PLACE:

FATHER: Johann SPIESS MOTHER: Katharina

WIFE Anna PUTZ

BIRTH: 6 Jan 1847 PLACE: Radautz,Bukovina,Austria

DEATH: 7 Feb 1923 PLACE: Martin,North Dakota

BURIAL: 11 Feb 1923 PLACE: Martin,North Dakota

FATHER: Philipp PUTZ MOTHER: Anna Maria HOLLERBAUM

CHILDREN

1. NAME: Frederich SPIESS

BIRTH: 12 Apr 1868 PLACE: Cahul,Austria

MAR.: 6 Jun 1896 PLACE: Tulcea,Romania

DEATH: 22 Oct 1945 PLACE: St. Paul,Minnesota

BURIAL: 24 Oct 1945 PLACE: Oakland Cemetery St.Paul,Minnesota

SPOUSE: Ecaterina (Kate) TROLLENBERG

2. NAME: Lydia SPIESS

BIRTH: 1878 PLACE: Romania

MAR.: PLACE:

DEATH: DECEASED PLACE: St. Paul,Minnesota

BURIAL: PLACE:

SPOUSE: Joseph NEUBAUER

3. NAME: William SPIESS

BIRTH: 10 Feb 1880 PLACE: Rolaf,Romania

MAR.: PLACE:

DEATH: 1948 PLACE: Corona,CA

BURIAL: PLACE: Corona,CA

SPOUSE: Mathilda BECTKEY

4. NAME: Emil SPIESS

BIRTH: 15 Sep 1883 PLACE: Galatz,Romania
MAR.: <1905> PLACE: Martin,North Dakota
DEATH: 24 Jun 1946 PLACE: Harvey,North Dakota
BURIAL: Jun 1946 PLACE: Baptist Cemetery,Martin,North Dakota
SPOUSE: Johanna KOST

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More About Anna Putz:

Immigration: 1910, From Sulian, Romania

Children of Conrad Spiess and Anna Putz are:

- i. Sister Lydia Spiess, born 1878 in Romania; married Joseph Neubauer.
- ii. Frederick Spiess, born April 12, 1868 in Cahul, Austria; died 1945; married Ecaterina Trolenberg; born 1875 in Galatz, Romania; died 1953.

Notes for Frederick Spiess:

From my cousin Jeanne Spiess Web Site...

We can only imagine why Fred and Kate made the decision to move their family from Romania to America, but in reading the history of Romania, I'm sure times were difficult at best. Fred's brother, William is shown as immigrating the year before, so can we assume because William was single, they sent him ahead to determine if it was a feasible move.

The journey to America must have been quite trying with two small boys. From Dobrudscha, they must have taken a train to Antwerpen Belguim, where they embarked on the ship, The SS Southwark on April 27, 1901. They arrived in New York on May 8, 1901 and then took another train 1600 miles to Cathay. I often envision them getting off that train and I wonder what they thought. Who was there to meet them? Where did they live?

Fred's uncle, Philipp Putz was one of the first German pioneers to leave Romania for Canada. His immigration path is well documented in two sources, Between Imperial Hinterlands: Canada's Bukovina German Immigrants 1885-1914, by Richard Carruthers-Zurowski, and also in Growing with Pride, The Harvey, ND Area History. Philipp emigrated to Edenwold, Saskatchewan in 1885. In 1896, the Putzes had had enough of the early falls freezing out their crops, so they made the move south to Casselman, North Dakota, now Martin; Philipp is listed as one of the first residents of this town. Philipp wrote many letters to his relatives still in Romania urging them to come to America, as there was still a lot of land to be homesteaded. Did he write a letter to our Fred? In the Martin homestead records, 160 acres were being sold by the government for as little as \$10!

I did not find Fred in any of the first homestead records, but one thing is certain, they did move around a lot. In 1901 they came first to Cathay, North Dakota, where their third child, Lydia was born in 1902. Then in 1903 I find them living in Wiprud, North Dakota where Fred was a farmer. Wiprud is also where Walter was born in 1903, and Conrad was born in 1906. It appears they moved to Martin sometime between 1907 and 1915, when the state census shows them in living there. The 1920 census shows Fred, Kate, Conrad and Erna living at 670 Canada Street in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Fred's mother Anna (Putz) came to North Dakota from Sulina, Romania in 1910 with her daughter Lydia, Lydia's husband Joseph Neubauer, and their 8 children. Two of Joseph's children, Karl and Christ were already in Martin. This ship manifest lists Anna as a widow, so I can only assume that her husband, Conrad, died in Sulina. I have not found any records about his life, but I am still looking!

FAMILY GROUP RECORD FOR FREDERICH SPIESS/ECATERINA (KATE) TROLLENBERG

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HUSBAND Frederich SPIESS

BIRTH: 12 Apr 1868 PLACE: Cahul,Bessarabia
MAR.: 6 Jun 1896 PLACE: Tulcea,Romania

DEATH: 22 Oct 1945 PLACE: St. Paul,Minnesota
BURIAL: 24 Oct 1945 PLACE: Oakland Cemetery St.Paul,Minnesota
FATHER: Conrad SPIESS MOTHER: Anna PUTZ

WIFE Ecaterina (Kate) TROLLENBERG

BIRTH: 28 Feb 1875 PLACE: Galatz,Romania
DEATH: 12 Jan 1953 PLACE: St. Paul,Minnesota
BURIAL: 15 Jan 1953 PLACE: Oakland Cemetery
FATHER: Apolitian TROLLENBERG MOTHER: Elisabeth HAAS

CHILDREN

1. NAME: William F SPIESS

BIRTH: 28 Mar 1898 PLACE: Tulcea,Romania
MAR.: 23 Dec 1925 PLACE: Martin,North Dakota
DEATH: 23 Mar 1960 PLACE: St. Paul,Minnesota
BURIAL: PLACE: Fort Snelling National Cemetary
SPOUSE: Mayme Emma Hannah FLAMME

2. NAME: Joseph SPIESS

BIRTH: 28 Nov 1899 PLACE: Romania
MAR.: PLACE:
DEATH: 1962 PLACE: St. Paul,Minnesota
BURIAL: PLACE: Elmhurst Cemetery,St. Paul,Minnesota
SPOUSE1: Ethel HOEPFER
SPOUSE2: Anna NEUBAUER

3. NAME: Lydia SPIESS

BIRTH: 1902 PLACE: Cathay,North Dakota
MAR.: PLACE:
DEATH: Bef 1960 PLACE:
BURIAL: PLACE:
SPOUSE: Christ BORGAN

4. NAME: Walter SPIESS

BIRTH: 18 Jul 1903 PLACE: North Dakota
MAR.: PLACE:
DEATH: 14 Jul 1936 PLACE: Grand Forks County,North Dakota
BURIAL: PLACE:
SPOUSE: Hertha JAROSH

5. NAME: Conrad SPIESS

BIRTH: 12 Aug 1906 PLACE: Wiprud,North Dakota
MAR.: PLACE:
DEATH: 11 Apr 1974 PLACE: Little Falls,Minnesota
BURIAL: 15 Apr 1974 PLACE: Randall Presbyterian Cemetery
SPOUSE1: Hilda HOUSER
SPOUSE2: Gladys CAMERON

6. NAME: Freeda SPIESS

BIRTH: 1908 PLACE: North Dakota
MAR.: 1926 PLACE:
DEATH: DECEASED PLACE:
BURIAL: PLACE:
SPOUSE: Harvey MCMAHON

7. NAME: Erna SPIESS

BIRTH: 1914 PLACE: North Dakota
MAR.: PLACE:
DEATH: DECEASED PLACE:
BURIAL: PLACE:
SPOUSE: Earl COLVIN

More About Frederick Spiess:
Immigration: 1901, From Galanti

- 1 iii. Wilhelm Spiess, born February 10, 1880 in Rolaf, Romania; died January 08, 1948 in Corona, Ca; married Mathilda Betckey.
- iv. Emil Spiess, born 1883 in Galatz, Romania; died 1946; married Johanna Kost; born 1883 in South Russia; died 1950.

Generation No. 3

- 4. Johann Spiess** He married **5. Katharina.**
- 5. Katharina**

Notes for Johann Spiess:
From the web site of my cousin, Jeanne Spiess.
Jeanne Spiess
Forest Lake, MN
j.spiess@att.net

Spiess is clearly a German name, but it is not apparent to me what part of Germany our line originates from. The earliest Spiesses I have found were from Romania, although at the time our ancestors lived there, Romania was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and wasn't granted independence until 1918.

According to Freeda Spiess McMahon's bible, Frederick Spiess and Ecaterina (Kate) Trollenberg were married in Tulcea, Dobrudscha, Romania, and my grandfather, Wilhelmus (William) was also born there, as stated in his service records. Fred's mother, Anna Putz Spiess was born in Bukowina, Austria; now split between Romania, Ukraine and Moldova. So you see, research is difficult because many of the towns and place names are either changed, or no longer exist!

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw a lot of Germanic emigration into Eastern Europe. Germans came from three distinct areas: Swabians and Palatines, from what is now Baden-Württemberg and Rheinland-Pfalz, in southwest Germany; German Bohemians, from the Bohemian Forest (Böhmerwald), now in the Czech Republic; and Zipsers, from the Zips mountains, now Spis county, Slovakia. Part of this emigration was to Hungary where the 150-year Turkish occupation was gradually ended around 1700 and the Austrian emperors encouraged settlers of many nationalities to make empty villages productive again. The other part of the German expansion into Russia and outlying areas of Romania was at the end of the 1700s as a result of a general increase in European population.

After its defeat by Prussia in 1867, the Austrian Empire was reorganized as the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary and Transylvania was incorporated into Hungary, against the will of the Romanians, who formed over seventy percent of the population. Until 1918, the history of Transylvania was marked by the Romanian struggle for unification with the Romanian Kingdom. During this period, as a result of ethnic and economic repression, Romanians began to emigrate to the United States and Canada in search of economic opportunity and political liberty.

I have found references to Spiesses in Liebling; a small village that was a part of the former Banat of the Hungarian Empire, but I have not been able to tie these Spiesses with our known ancestors. Since the end of World War I and the resulting border changes, Liebling has been within the nation of Romania. It is located about 20 kilometers south of the Romania city of Temosara.

There are also references to Spiesses in other German settlement areas in Romania; the Bukowina (in the Northeast), Dobrudscha (Romanian Dobrogea), on the Black Sea, and in Bessarabia, the easternmost strip of Romania, part of which is now in Ukraine.

Access to Romanian records remains rather difficult, however I believe (hope!) this is slowly changing.

Children of Johann Spiess and Katharina are:

- 2 i. Conrad Spiess, born 1841 in Germany or Austria; died Bef. 1910; married Anna Putz.
- ii. Katharina Spiess, born 1839 in Austria; died 1918; married Jacob Helm; born 1838 in Tereblesti, Bukovina.

More About Katharina Spiess:

Baptism: Cataloi, Romania