

The Fries Legacy 9-14-2025

We have a great legacy and have every right to be very proud. Regardless of what our last name may be now, all of us receiving this email descend from and are therefore part of the history of the great German family of Fries. Two of the 70 + receiving this email who have been very helpful, are German nationals, my generation's 7th and 8th cousins that live in Germany now. There were 14 in my Illinois Fries generation with only 9 of us remaining. We are all in our 80s, so this might be of interest before we must have someone read it to us. HA! Irish wit from my other side.

Our Fries history in America falls into 2 different families, the Illinois Fries family and the Iowa Fries family.

Our Illinois Fries migration history moved first from the village of Strüth, Bavaria to the close by neighboring village of Kützbrunn, Baden then finally emigrating to America in 1848. The reason for the move from one German village to the other was the marriage of our Illinois immigrant Georgius Michael Fries' grandfather to a girl that lived in Kützbrunn. The dowry that came with the bride was farmland. At the time, all dowries were farmland, and the land was in Kützbrunn, Baden, hence the move. Land was the only thing of value at the time. At this point in time, over 95% of the European population were farmers. The two villages of Strüth and Kützbrunn are very close, much like Belleville, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri but even closer.

Just a bit on the Iowa Fries family immigrant that settled in Bellevue, not Belleville but Bellevue, a town in Jackson County, Iowa right on the Mississippi River. This part of the Fries family, our Iowa Fries family also started in Strüth, Bavaria, then moved to the village of Tauberrettersheim, Bavaria then immigrated to the town of Bellevue, Jackson Co, Iowa right on the Mississippi River. Many remaining Fries descendants still live in the Bellevue, Iowa area. Many have the surname of Michel. Our Iowa Fries family's immigrant is below.

1.5.9.7.4.3.1.1. Anna Barbara Michel, nee Fries, 12-11-1818--9-14-1871, the only child of George Adam Fries and Gertrud Späth born in Tauberrettersheim, Bavaria, Germany and died in Bellevue, Iowa. On 5-5-1846, in Tauberrettersheim, Würzburg, Bavaria, Anna Barbara Fries married Johann Leonard Michel, 7-1-1815--9-6-1901, [bad photo at left] born in Tauberrettersheim, Bavaria, Germany and died in Bellevue, Iowa. Anna Barbara Fries and Johann Leonard Michel had nine children. Anna is my Illinois Fries generation's 2nd cousin 3 times removed. The Iowa Michel / Fries family left on the ship *Chas Hill* from the port of Le Havre, France landing in New York City on November 20, 1854, eight years after their marriage and six years after the Illinois Fries family landed. Crossing the very cold North Atlantic and landing in NYC in early winter had to be one very cold, harsh and difficult trip.



Perhaps due to the invasion of the Huns centuries before, a farmer in the German countryside, unlike American farmers, did not live on their farms but rather they all lived in their nearby village which could be easily walled and defended when the Huns came back. You woke up, then walked out to your farm before dawn, which in general was within a 6-mile radius of your village. The farm the German farmer owned was not a large single piece of land, rather it usually was made up of a bunch of small slices spread all over the area.

Each piece of the farm could be as small as a 1/4 acre or even smaller, meaning you had many small, scattered non-contiguous areas to farm, not one large one. This most likely was the result of the many divisions over centuries that used farmland as dowries for marriages. In German society, land was the only thing of value. That famous NYC Broadway musical *Fiddler on the Roof* may have a lot of truth to it.

Throughout Europe, the year 1848 brought both hope and disaster. Historians say that 1848 is the year that created immigrant America. At the beginning of that year all the great powers on the European continent were monarchies, ranging from constitutional Britain to absolutist Russia and Prussia. Still, even as late as the 1890s, 90% of all countries in the world were ruled by Monarchs. In February of 1848, a revolution erupted in Paris. News of the uprising quickly spread through all of Europe's liberal circles. A Bender ancestor died in this 1848 revolution.

The fact that the overwhelming portion of all 1848 American immigrants went to the northern free states would have no small impact on the outcome of the upcoming Civil War. The North absorbed 90 percent of the new immigrants, adding tremendously to its economic power and military strength in the Civil War era. Approximately 25% of the Union soldiers that served in the Civil War were immigrants.

My Illinois Fries Generation's Great Grandfather, Konradus Fries, before he married Barbara Lucash, served in the Union Army being discharged in Dalton, Georgia. We also had Benders that served in the US Army local Illinois militia. My older Great Grandfather, Mickel Blaies also served in the local militia in the Civil War, guarding a local iron bridge to prevent fire is the humorous Blaies family story. The 1848 immigrants and those who followed did not just help win the Civil War, they began the vibrant multicultural America we now live in today.

How our Illinois Fries immigrants got to London, England to sail to America is not yet known. The railroad did not reach the Kützbrunn area till after 1850. Therefore, in 1848 Georgius Michael Fries and family may have used the closest river as the first step in their travels. A plausible theory would be, take the Main (pronounced "Mine") River to the Rhein River to the Netherlands coast, then cross over to England. Or even if they had to travel to Würzburg first, it would have been just a couple of kms more. Either destination would be about a 7-8 hour walk. With kids, you would assume they used a horse cart or wagon.

There were so many German immigrants that they made up one-third of the (white) American population in the middle of the 19th century. Over 5 million Germans emigrated to America. A few years later, Abe Lincoln bought several downstate Illinois German newspapers as a silent

owner / partner, having them write in German how good he was. Senator Douglas and his political cronies could not read German, but the German American voters did.

Due to some brand-new AI software, Ancestry.com recently forwarded to me two people asking if a Georgius Michael Fries and his wife Christina Deppisch might be related to the ones in our history. A resounding YES was the answer. While I had found the 3 Fries kids in America, I had never found the location or what happened to the parents and their oldest daughter Nanar. I had been looking for them since 1979 with no success. I knew when they all left Germany but had no idea when or where they landed in America and what happened to them. Now we do.

Georgius Michael Fries, 1793-1853 & Christina Deppisch, 1801-1849, were my Illinois Fries generation's Great Great Grandparents, who were thought to have settled in Belleville, Illinois. We know now that after leaving Germany in 1848, they settled first in Hermann, Missouri with the mother Christine Deppisch dying a year later in 1849 and the dad, Georgius Michael Fries dying 5 years later in 1853. They both are buried in the Old St. George Cemetery in Hermann, Missouri. Like most immigrants, they may well have believed that at least they made it for the kids, who now had a much better future than if the family had stayed in Germany. They were farmers and spoke only German when they arrived.

As noted previously, they ended up in the small town of Hermann, Missouri which was also very much like Germany, at the time with five different newspapers all in German. That says that the family had no trouble communicating with the neighbors as it appears all locals spoke and read German. Although I am not sure if our Fries immigrants could read. Georgius was born in 1793 in a farm village named Kützbrunn, Baden and his wife Christina Deppisch was born in Sonderhoffen, Bavaria. All you needed to know was how to plant and harvest crops. Anyway, what could you read with so few books around. I have read that even Belleville, Illinois only had German books in their 15-year-old library till 1900. How exactly the Fries immigrants got from NYC to Hermann, Missouri is not yet known.

So, after 45 days traveling starting in Kützbrunn, Baden, they arrived in New York City on May 20, 1848, 177 years ago last May 20th. In 1849, all immigrants including ours arriving in NYC primarily landed at various wharves in lower Manhattan, New York. There was no centralized immigration processing center before the opening of Castle Garden, NY in 1855 and then Ellis Island, NY in 1892.

In 1848, German immigrants traveling from New York City to Missouri most likely took a multi-stage journey, involving river travel over to the Ohio River then down the Ohio and then up the Mississippi River to reach St. Louis, Missouri which is 80 miles east of Hermann, Missouri. Then a horse wagon or cart to get to Hermann. Remember the family who had never been too far away from their German village of Kützbrunn or the surrounding area now was on a steamboat going up the Mississippi River about the same time period depicted in the famous Mark Twain novel *Huckleberry Finn*.

All the Illinois Fries family descend from these two immigrant ancestors, Georgius Michael Fries & Christina Deppisch. All the Iowa Fries' descendants come from Anna Barbara Michel, nee Fries, 12-11-1818--9-14-1871, the only child of George Adam Fries and Gertrud Späth born in Tauberrettersheim, Bavaria, Germany located on the river [Tauber](#).

Who we are and what we are today may be due in large part to these Fries ancestors. Imagine the fear, being a German farmer with 4 kids, 55 years old explaining to your kids that that the family were going to leave everything they had and everything they knew and go to a place called America sailing over the ocean to get there. Justine Becker, nee Fries at 8 years old, being the youngest sibling at the time, may have been scared and cried a bit.

It took only 45 days from leaving Kützbrunn to land in NYC. Their ship's name was The *SS London* sailing out of the port of London, England. The *SS London* was a ship of 239 registered tons. The passenger list is at <http://mctiernan.com/Fimmig.jpg> As an example of sailing travel time, a sailing ship made the journey from Liverpool to New York between 1848 and 1852 on average in 33.3 days. A few years later, getting to America became shorter and less dangerous when steamships took over. Steerage conditions were still harsh, but steamships ran on regular schedules, and the crossing time was reduced to 7-10 days.

Originally, our immigrant ancestors, Georgius Michael Fries and Christina Deppisch had eleven children, but only two parents and four kids left for America as displayed in the chart below. The other 7 children had died at birth or in early childhood.

Since 1979, I had been looking for the answer to what happened to Georgius Michael Fries, his wife Christina Deppisch and the oldest of the four immigrant children, Maria Anna Fries called Nana. I had found three of their four children but not the parents until now. The fourth child Maria Anna Fries (Nana), 1829→1860, is in the 1860 Belleville, Illinois census showing they all were living at John Wittmeier and wife, Margaret Fries' home. So, the final destination of three of their four kids have been found, leaving Maria Anna Fries' (Nana) final destination to be solved. When Konradus died in 1897, it was Margaret that claimed his body and got him a proper Catholic burial in the Catholic Section of Walnut Hill Cemetery that runs along Freeburg Ave

The immigrant Illinois Fries parents were my generation's Great Great Grandparents. Now my generation has grandkids, so the immigrants Georgius Fries and Christina Deppisch would be the grandkid's Great Great Great Great Grandparents.

The motivation that caused our Fries family to emigrate may have been due to several factors prevalent in the 1840s in Germany.

In the 1840s, many Germans, especially farmers and workers, faced severe economic hardship, including unemployment, land shortages, and crop failures. Some German farmers were forced to leave their land due to land seizures, further contributing to economic hardship.

The failed German revolution of 1848, which aimed to establish a unified and democratic Germany, led to political repression and disillusionment, pushing many to seek political freedom elsewhere. In many German states, political rights were limited, and many Germans were dissatisfied with the lack of opportunity and the denial of civil liberties.

Then there was the promise of America. Germans were drawn to the United States by the promise of freedom, opportunity, and a chance to build a better life. The availability of good farmland in the United States, particularly in the West, [Missouri was the west at that time] was a major draw for farmers and those seeking to start anew. Letters and stories from Germans who had already emigrated to the United States, as well as advertisements from sailing companies, encouraged emigration.

Looking around as we older folks all do, Mom & Dad might have concluded that it would be better and safer for the kids over in this new place called America. Starting with 11 children, they only had four left. So, into the unknown night it was, praying for a better future. The face in the Kützbrunn church wall in the photo below could be one of our Friers' ancestors looking for the return of a Fries' descendent. This Kützbrunn Church of the Holy Trinity graveyard is where our Illinois Fries ancestors are buried.



In 1848, James K. Polk was the 11th President of the United States when the Fries family arrived in America. The population was about twenty-two million. President Polk had just finished a war with Mexico. The result was that Texas and California were brought into the Union.

Zachary Taylor became the next president in 1849. Here comes Lincoln and our Civil War.

As stated earlier, the Illinois Fries family members left Kützbrunn, Baden on Thursday, April 6, 1848, arriving 45 days later in NYC on Saturday, May 20, 1848. That must have been quite an adventure, not speaking anything but German, having a little money but not much and never seeing the ocean before. Never having seen the ocean much less never being on an ocean-going ship before. On your first sail, when you lose sight of land, could be a little intimidating.

One of the unknown factors would be how they got from NYC to Hermann, Missouri speaking only German. Perhaps someone back in Germany had to suggest to them that a place called Hermann, Missouri was a German town with good available farmland. Can you picture them landing in NYC and the look on Georgius' face when he asked the question how far away Missouri was and how do you get there? Germans and Irish remained the most overwhelming majority of Missouri's immigrants until the end of the 19th century. The 1880 Census reported 48,898 Missourians born in Ireland and more than 106,000 from the German states.

The total amount of cash that the Fries family took with them when they left Germany was 1,178 florins. In 1848, 1,178 florins would have been a substantial sum, equivalent to approximately \$33,000 in today's purchasing power. Georgius Michael had paid off the mortgage back on January 19, 1848. One obvious question, since there were no international banks at that time, is how they carried their money safely with them.

The Day of Reckoning, which was a legally required German procedure when emigrating, was set for Monday, February 28, 1848. On that day, Georgius Michael Fries and his wife Christina Deppisch stood on the steps of either the Kützbrunn Town Hall or the Catholic church for several hours waiting for any creditors to arrive. Their date of their leaving was announced at Mass for several weeks. No creditor arrived so it was assumed that Georgius Michael Fries was free from debt and therefore could emigrate, which they did a few months later, on April 6th of that year.

The below Illinois Fries family came to America, parents and the remaining 4 of 11 kids

Fries Immigrant		Family Relationship	Age at Departure (Emigration)	YOB-YOD	Spouse	Age At Dad's Death
1.5.9.7.4.5.6. Georgius Michael Fries		Father	55	1793-1853	---	
Christina Fries, nee Deppisch		Mother	47	1801-1849	---	
1.5.9.7.4.5.6.2.	Maria Anna Fries aka Nana	Daughter	19	1829->1860	---	24
1.5.9.7.4.5.6.6.	Konradus Fries	Son	14	1834-1897	Barbara Lucash	19
1.5.9.7.4.5.6.8.	Maria Anna (Margaret) Wittmeier, nee Fries	Daughter	12	1836-1915	John Wittmeier	17
1.5.9.7.4.5.6.10.	Justina Becker, nee Fries	Daughter	8	1840-1914	August Becker	13

The German emigration papers for the Fries family state that they had sold all their furniture on October 28, 1847, several months before they left in the Spring of 1848. Sitting on a cold floor through a German winter might have motivated the kids to want to leave. Talk about burning bridges behind you and showing commitment! Other goods they sold right before they left were:

- 80 pounds of dried meat, worth 24 florin.
- 2 pecks of milled barley, worth 2 florin.
- 1 peck of dried beans, worth 30 florin.
- 70 lbs. of white flour, worth 5 florin.
- 30 lbs. of lard, worth 10 florin. [used in place of butter which would not keep]
- 150 eggs, worth 1.40 florin.
- 3 rusted beds with a new double size coverlet, 75 florins.
- 3 trunks, worth 16 florin.
- Men's clothing, worth 10 florin.

Note the unusual amount of lard in the above list. In the old days people used lard in cooking rather than butter which would spoil. Bread, cakes, pies, and such foods were prepared using lard. I'm told the best bakers today still use it.

Our immigrant Bender family did the same Day of Reckoning when they left, but they also had to take an oath swearing that they would never return. Unlike America, in Germany all land was owned for centuries. You even needed passports to go from one part of Germany to another. Society was highly structured. There was no open land, much less free land.

Therefore, in a highly structured agrarian society like Germany, land was the only thing of value. If you did not own land and farm, you were a day laborer and were living from hand to mouth with no chance of marrying and having a family. Unlike today, your kids then were your Social Security for your old age when you could no longer work or farm. Under the European tradition of Primogeniture, the oldest son got everything with his younger brothers left looking for brides with family land, especially since the 13 Crusades did not work out for the 2nd sons.

The [Turner Thesis](#) also may have come indirectly into play for our ancestors and that is if an American immigrant settled in the eastern part of America and screwed up all he had to do was jump on a horse and go west for a second chance. European and German society gave no second chances. That second chance concept made us different than any other country in the history of the known world. Georgius and Christina appear to have taken the long-shot second chance.

Right before they left, Georgius Michael Fries also had to pay the court cost and pay a War Tax that went to pay for the German revolution of 1848.

Georgius' wife, Christina Deppisch, mother to the Illinois Fries family died in 1849 in Hermann, Missouri, a year after arrival in America. In 1849, there was a severe Cholera epidemic in Belleville, Illinois and throughout most of the Midwest. All the cemeteries in St. Louis, Missouri were closed due to the vast number of deaths. As a guess, that could be the reason for Christina Deppisch's death, but usually if one family member got Cholera all the family did.



As written previously, the Illinois Fries family left Kützbrunn on April 6, 1848, and arrived 45 days later in New York City on May 20, 1848, taking the *SS London* [photo on left] from London, England. That is truly not a lot of time. In history, most sailing trips took well over a month. An ancestor of ours from the German Bender family branch, Elisabeth Fellhauer, nee Förderer held our family's known travel record taking 96 days to cross the Atlantic by sailing ship to America in 1846.



The 1860 St. Clair Co. Census list Maria Anna Fries (Nana), Konradus Fries, Justina Fries, and Margaret Wittmeier, nee Fries (photo at left) living with John Wittmeier in Belleville, Illinois. Justina at 20 years old, was a servant, Margaret Wittmeier, nee Fries at 24 was a housewife and Konradus at 26 was a bricklayer. Maria Anna (Nana) was 31.

So, my conclusion / guess would be that since mom died in 1848 and dad died in 1853 and his daughter Margaret Wittmeier, nee Fries was married in Belleville, Illinois in 1854, that soon after their dad died, the remaining family had an estate sale. Afterwards, they all packed up and moved to Belleville, Illinois in the fall of 1853.

In Hermann, Missouri they were living at 39 East Front St. now 504 E. 1st Street. Georgius had bought the home in 1848 for \$100. After Georgius' death in 1853, it sold for \$75. The Fries Estate sale shortly thereafter list a Peter John Michel, 1828-1902, buying a rake for a nickel. Perhaps a cousin from the Bellevue, Iowa Fries family?

The chart below lists all the Fries immigrants arriving in 1848. The obvious question is: Why did the 4 kids move to Belleville, Illinois after their parents died and how did they get there.

It looks like they were staying with John Wittmeier and his wife Margaret Fries in Belleville, Illinois. All the Fries family had survived the ocean crossing, so a 100-mile trip east to Belleville, Illinois by wagon in late 1854 might not have been that big a deal.

The below links may explain how our German ancestors traveled.in more detail.

The Fries immigrants first settled in Hermann, Missouri. Why did the four surviving kids move to the Belleville, Illinois area in late 1853 after their dad died?						
Fries Immigrants	DOB	DOD	Age at Immigration	Age at Death	Age at Christina's Death	Age at Georgius' Death
Georgius Michael Fries, Dad	9-29-1793	7-1853	55	60	56	60
Christina Deppisch, Mom	2-1-1801	8-25-1849	47	48		
Maria Anna Fries (Nana)	4-12-1829	> 1860	19	>31	20	24
Konradus Fries	8-25-1834	2-18-1897	14	63	15	19
Maria Anna (Margaret) Wittmeier, nee Fries	4-7-1836	12-29-1915	11	79	13	17
Justina Becker, nee Fries	6-13-1840	4-5-1914	8	74	9	13

[Departure and Arrival | Europeana](#)

Their son Konradus Fries is my generation's Great Grandfather and before he married Barbara Lucash, he served as a Private in the Union Army in the Civil War. As noted previously, he was discharged in Dalton, Georgia, dying in 1897 at the Soldier & Sailors Home in Quincy, Illinois. Konradus' mother was Christina Deppisch, whose family line via the Scheckenbach branch goes back 19 generations to c.1390. Konradus' son, Adolf Fries was my generation's grandfather.

A letter from a German immigrant in 1853 describes his trip and arrival in NYC.

<https://germanologyunlocked.com/from-germany-to-america-an-1853-journey/>

The other 3 branches of our family connected to the Illinois Fries line are:

Our Bohemian **Lucash** family immigrant ancestors landed in New Orleans in 1854 and came up the Mississippi River on a steamboat landing in St. Louis, Missouri. Lucash family married into the Illinois Fries family. <http://mctiernan.com/luchis1.htm>

Our French **Blaies** family immigrant ancestors from Lorraine landed c. 1857 and settled first in Arnold, Missouri then Mascoutah, Illinois. Blaies family married into the Illinois Fries family. <http://mctiernan.com/bhis1.htm>

Our German **Bender** family immigrant ancestors came over in stages c1854 almost one at a time and settled in Rock Township in Jefferson Co., Missouri (most likely Arnold, MO), then to Mascoutah, Illinois and O'Fallon, Illinois. <http://mctiernan.com/benhis.htm> Our 600+ Bender ancestors killed in the many German wars including 12 in Napoleon's invasion of Russia is at <http://mctiernan.com/bwardead.htm>

Just to be clear on the Illinois Fries family relationship on how we got here

Lucash family married into the Fries family

Bender family married into the Blaies family...then

Adolph Fries married Anna Blaies in 1901...my generation's grandparents

Kützbrunn photos <http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/kutzbrunn.html?sortBy=relevant>

Tauberrettersheim photos below:

<https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/Tauberrettersheim.html?sortBy=relevant>

Strüth photos: <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/struth.html?sortBy=relevant>

The larger more detailed Fries history is at <http://mctiernan.com/frihis.htm> The Fries war dead, including Fries ancestors dying with Napoleon in his Peninsula war in Spain is listed at <https://www.mctiernan.com/frieswardead.htm>

The 40' wide chart of the Fries family is at <https://www.mctiernan.com/friesfam.htm>

Move cursor to middle to see early lines

The descendant chain [Illinois line] of my generation's Great Grandparents, Konrad Fries & Barbara Lucash is below

9 in my parent's known generation which is the 10th known Fries generation,

There are 24 in the overall 10th Fries generation

14 in my 11th known Fries generation with 9 remaining, over the country the 11th generation Fries family has 43 (RIP-Jackie, Bonnie, Vivian, Harriette & Jeanne in our Illinois' line)

41 in our 12th known generation with 38 remaining in our line, (RIP-Cathy, Scott & Jeremy) over the country the 12th Fries generation has 115

61 in our 13th generation in our line, overall the 13th Fries generation has 179

2 in our 14th known Fries generation in our family (Liam & Lillian Charleville), overall 14th Fries generation has 21

Remaining mystery is what happened to Nana Fries, one of the 4 Illinois immigrants. Maria Anna Fries, [Nana} 4-12-1829-->1850 born in Kutzbrunn, Baden, Germany

Regardless of who we are or what we do or what we have, we are all a product of these very brave Fries ancestors.