

Wilhelm Maurer;
from his ancestors in Germany
to his arrival in Oregon

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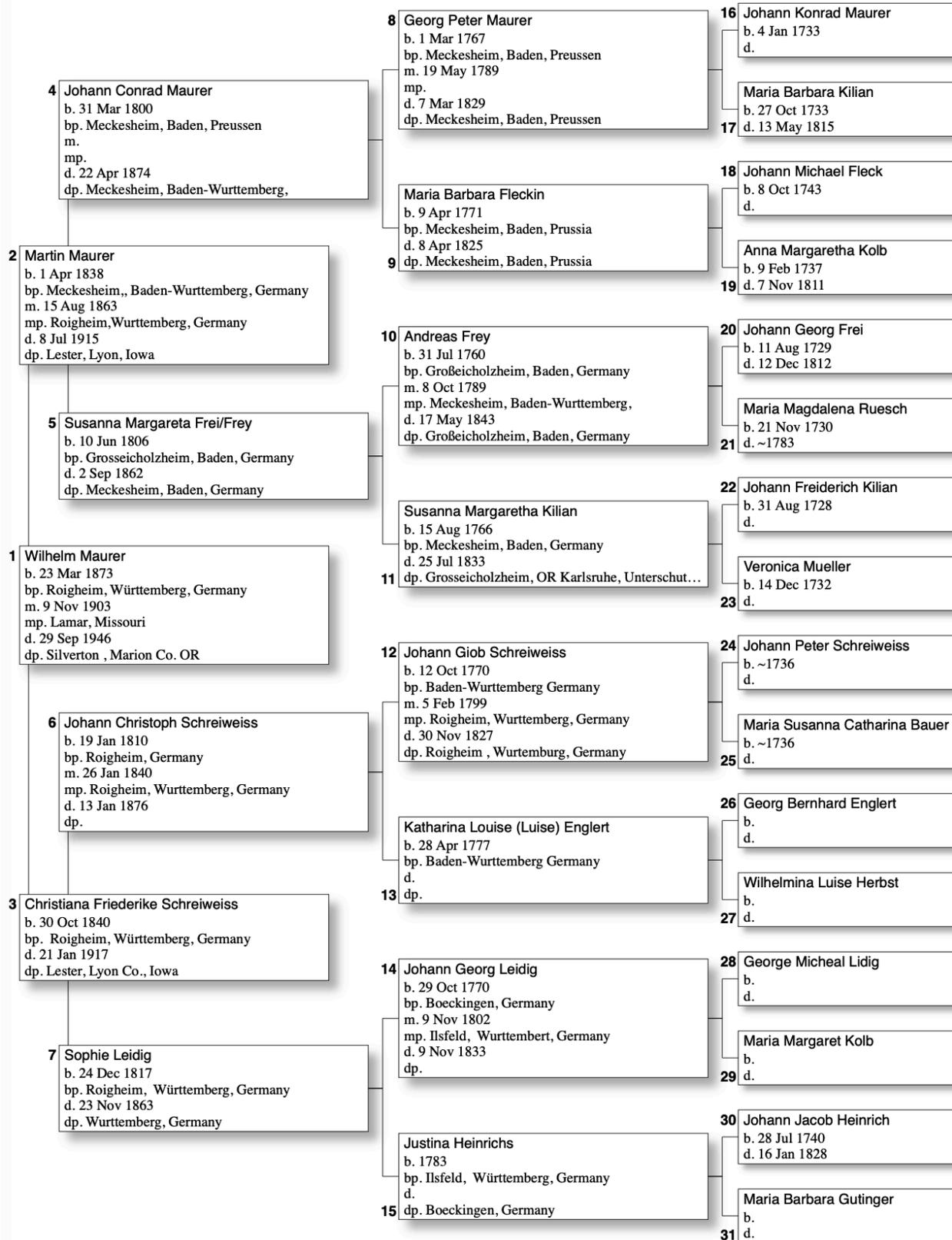


Figure 1. Some of the ancestors of **Wilhelm Maurer**

Wilhelm Maurer was born 23 Mar 1873 born in Roigheim, Wurttemberg, Germany. His parents were Martin Maurer, born 1 Apr 1838 in Meckesheim, Baden- Wurttemberg, Germany, and Christina Friederike Schreiweis, born 30 Oct 1840, Roigheim, Wurttemberg, Germany. Her parents were Johann Christoph Schreiweis, born 19 Jan 1810 in Roigheim, and Sophie Leidig, born 24 Dec 1817 also in Roigheim.

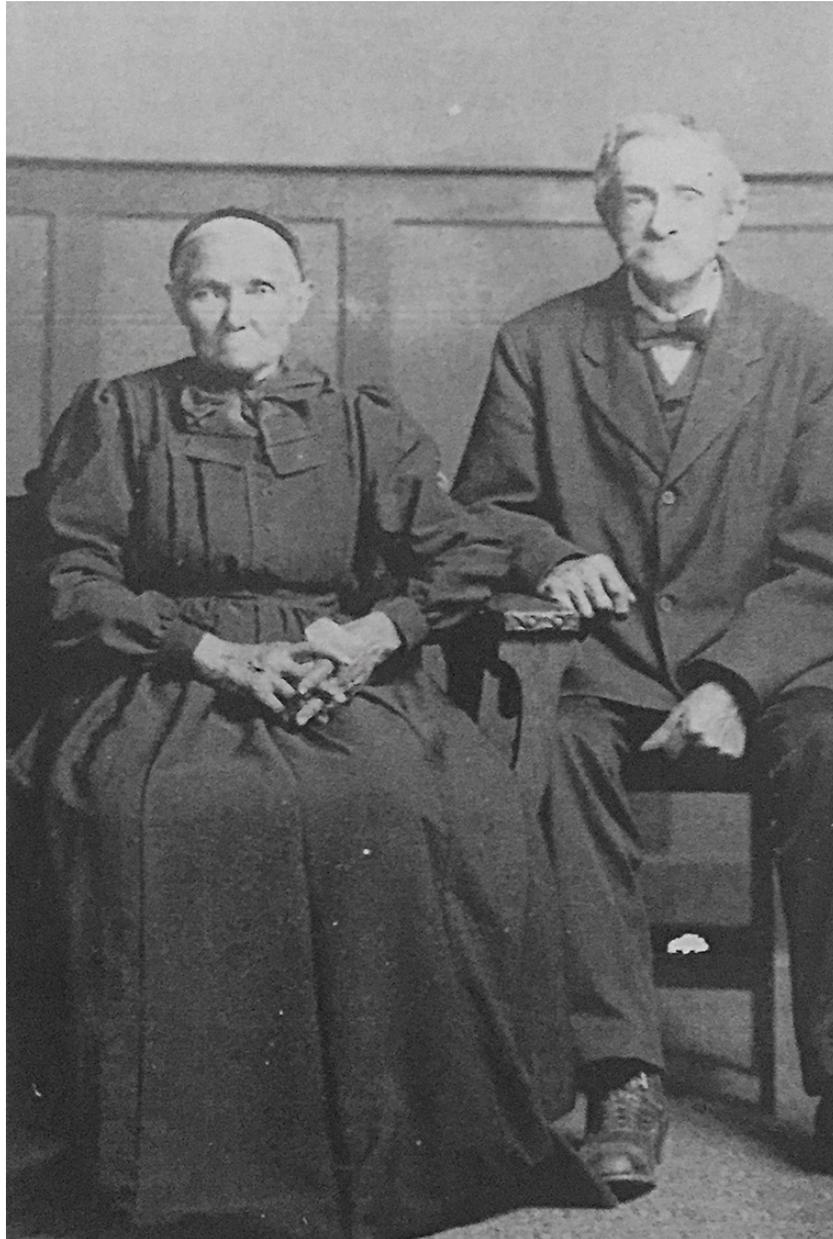


Figure 2. Martin Maurer and Chrisitina Schreiweis probably taken in Germany before they came to the United States in 1892.

Johann Conrad Maurer (1800-1874) father of Martin was an innkeeper and butcher in Meckesheim as his father had been before him. The inn was the Gasthaus Zum Lamm; in 2021 it still exists as an inn in Meckesheim. His father, George Peter Maurer (1767-1829), was raised in Meckesheim by his uncle's family, and like his uncle became a butcher and innkeeper in the same village. George Peter Maurer's father was Johann Konrad Maurer (1733-) was born in Meckesheim, his father Johan Konrad Maurer (1695-1745) was an innkeeper in Meckesheim and owned the inn "Zum Ochsen".¹



Figure 4. Postcard showing the Gasthaus Zum Lamm in Meckesheim, Germany.

Martin Maurer moved from Meckesheim to Roigheim sometime before 1863, the year he married Christina Schreibeis in Roigheim. The family lived in a farmhouse at the edge of the village.

¹ Private communication with Martin Maurer, born 1973, Germany



Figure 5. The Maurer house in Roigheim with **Wilhelm Maurer**'s two sisters Lina Maurer and Anna Luise Pauline Maurer, taken some time before 1916.



Figure 6. The Maurer house in Roigheim with attached barn; date unknown.



Figure 7. The Maurer house as it appeared in 2008 (located at Hauptstraße 75, Roigheim) when it was featured in a booklet, “Historische Ortsanalyse Roigheim Kreis Heilbronn” (Historical location analysis Roigheim district Heilbronn), published by Regional Council Stuttgart, Department of Monument Preservation May 29, 2008. The caption for the photograph reads (translated):

Two-story, plastered residential building, eaves saddle roof, 19th century.

Large barn door on the street side. Walls made of natural stone, windows and doors from the construction period still partially preserved, open staircase.

In this area of the main street outside the actual town center, the building is one of the few houses whose historical structure has barely been modified in recent times, so that here is an authentically preserved small farmhouse.



Figure 8. The Maurer house as it appears in 2021, renovated and not “authentically preserved.”

Pauline Maurer (daughter of **Wilhelm Maurer** and Wilhelmina Werner) recalled in 1998:

Martin Maurer was my grandfather (father of **Wilhelm Maurer**). He was the treasurer of the little village of Roigheim where they lived. Outside the village they owned some property where there was a vineyard on it. My father used to go to there and work on his vineyard. His sister used to bring his lunch out to him in the middle of the day. He was so hungry, and he did not like carrots. When his sister came with the lunch all she brought him was carrots, but he ate them anyway.

Somehow or the other the money that Martin Maurer was supposed to take care of disappeared. They accused him of stealing the money. He went to prison. I think the prison was in Frankfurt, if I'm not mistaking. When he into the prison he knelt down and prayed so diligently, and he prayed so hard that they said, “Anybody that can pray like that could not be guilty of stealing anything. And they set him free. He was not in prison long.

On his deathbed, the man who had stolen the money admitted had had stolen the money. The German government wrote to my grandfather (Martin Maurer) in the United States and apologized and asked him to come back to Germany. But of course, they would not go back to Germany.

According to Kay L. Knoblock (great-granddaughter) Martin Maurer had run a grocery store in Roigheim "to make money to come to America". Kay owns the original scale that he used in his grocery store. It was given to her by Karl Flemming (grandson) in 1968. Martin Maurer was probably a farmer and grocer.

According to Paul M. Knoblock (grandson of Martin Maurer) and Dorothy Knoblock:²

Martin Maurer was a successful businessman in Roigheim. He was a storekeeper with an apiary for the honey that he sold in his store . . .

Martin and Christiane owned their own home and also some land. The rock fence posts that Martin built around some land in Roigheim were still being used in 1993.

Martin was the mayor of Roigheim; one of his duties was to keep the town money. This was custom for the small towns as banks were only in the large cities. Bars were put on the windows of the Maurer home to secure the money; these bars are still there today. ALAS!! The walls came tumbling down around the family when Martin was to appear before the court on June 23, 1890, being charged with embezzlement: a crime that he was a victim of since he kept the town books and money. He was not guilty of this. Another man did the embezzling, and Martin got the bad ledgers. As we would say today, "He was framed!" Martin was given a sentence of one year and three months. Karl Flemming tells the story how the guards in the prison at Mosbach felt so sorry for Martin because he prayed and cried often that he was not guilty.

We can only imagine how sad and troubled the times were for the family when their lives changed so quickly. (Emma always said that the family was very poor at that time. She was 9 years old when the family lost their home, and 11 years old when she came to America.) Martin sold his home and assets, so the Maurer home was out of the family for a short time. The family moved to Mannheim for a few months before they emigrated. Karl, the fifth child, worked as a salesman here.

It was after the Maurer family had emigrated to America that a man came forward and confessed to the crime. Later, the Roigheim "Burgemeister" (mayor) came to see Martin and ask him to return to Germany, per Karl Flemming. When emigrating, Martin had not asked for a formal release and wanted an option left open so he could return. Of course, we know that he didn't want to go back anymore, but remained an alien in America.

Wilhelm Maurer and his sister Anna Maurer came to the United States on the S. S. Gellert of the Hamburg America Line from Hamburg, arriving 14 Apr 1890, a few months before their father went to prison. They proceeded to Lester, IA, because their uncle, Louis Messner (b 1857), was in Lester, having arrived in the US in in 1854 with a G. George Leidig, b ~1832.

Pauline Maurer describer **Wilhelm Maurer's** trip to New York;

When he was sixteen years old, he would have to have gone into the military and he paid the German government some money before he could leave Germany, because he was supposed to go

² "From Maurers--Knoblocks; tying our past together" by Paul M. Knoblock and Dorothy Knoblock, document prepared for family, ~1990

into the military. He talked his sister into going with him. Her name was Anna. They left from Hamburg, Germany. They must have taken the train from Roigheim, near the Swiss border. He said the name of the boat was the Frankfurt. (It was actually the Gellert.) They were on the water two whole weeks. He was on the cheapest way, which was steerage. All he had to lay on was just a board, and one blanket to cover up with. His life preserver was his pillow. There was no room for his sister; she went second class; she did a little better. His birthday was the twenty third of March; he would have been seventeen; He left before then, so he left in March. It was very stormy. There was an old sea captain, 75 years old, who had been sea captain for many, many years, and he said it was the worst storm he had ever seen. As they got close to New York harbor the boat lost the rudder in the storm, and they came out from the New York harbor and towed them in.

They landed at the Emigrant Landing Depot at Castle Garden (two years before Ellis Island opened for emigrants) four days before the Depot at Castle Garden was closed forever.

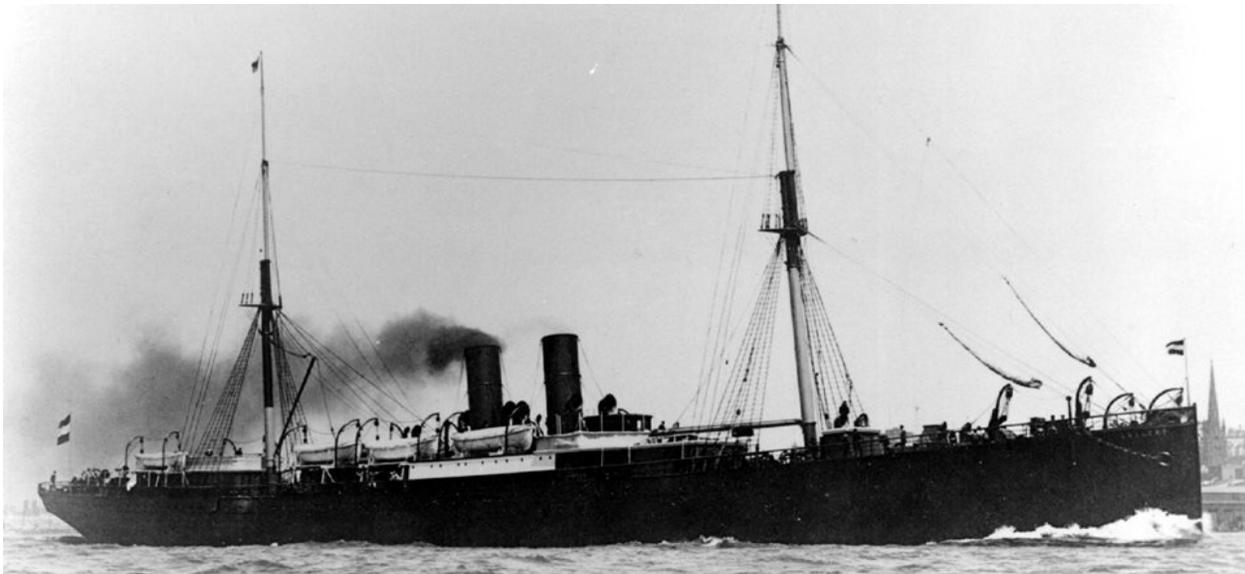


Figure 9. The S. S. Gellert of the Hamburg American Line



Figure 10. Typical steerage cabin on Hamburg American Line ships of this era; from their literature.

The mother of Christiana Schreiweis, Sophie Leidig, born 24 Dec 1817 in Roigheim, was the sister of Katherine Leidig, born 1820. Katherine married John Charles Messner, born 30 Mar 1815 in Heilbronn, Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany. Johannes Messner and Katherine Leidig arrived in the United States 24 Jul 1854. They had a son, Louis Messner, born 4 Jan 1857 in Baraboo, Sauk Co., WI. Anna Maurer married her uncle Louis Messner on 13 Jul 1891 in 1891 in Lester, Iowa. Other Messners were also in Lester, IA building an Apostolic Christian Church at about this time.

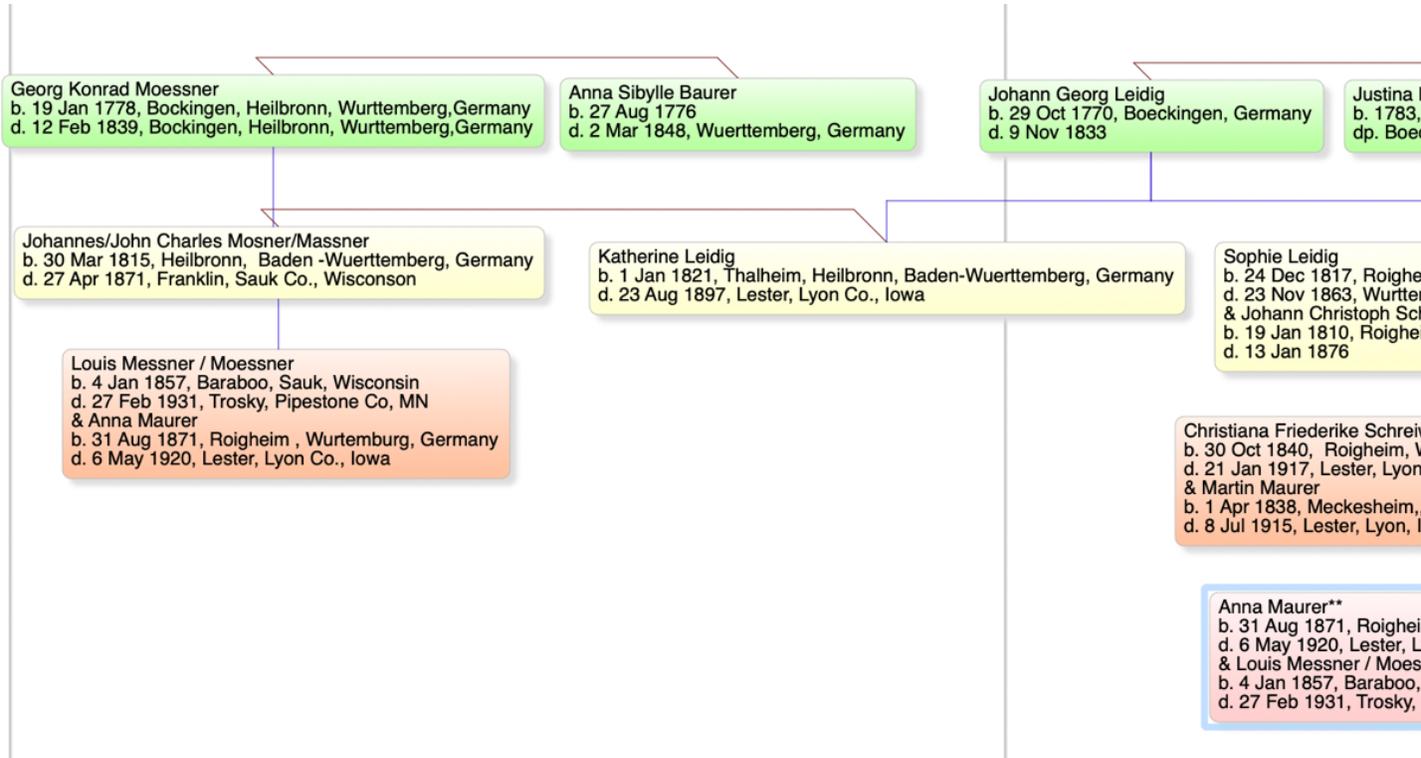


Figure 11. Blood relation of Anna Maurer to her husband Louis Messner

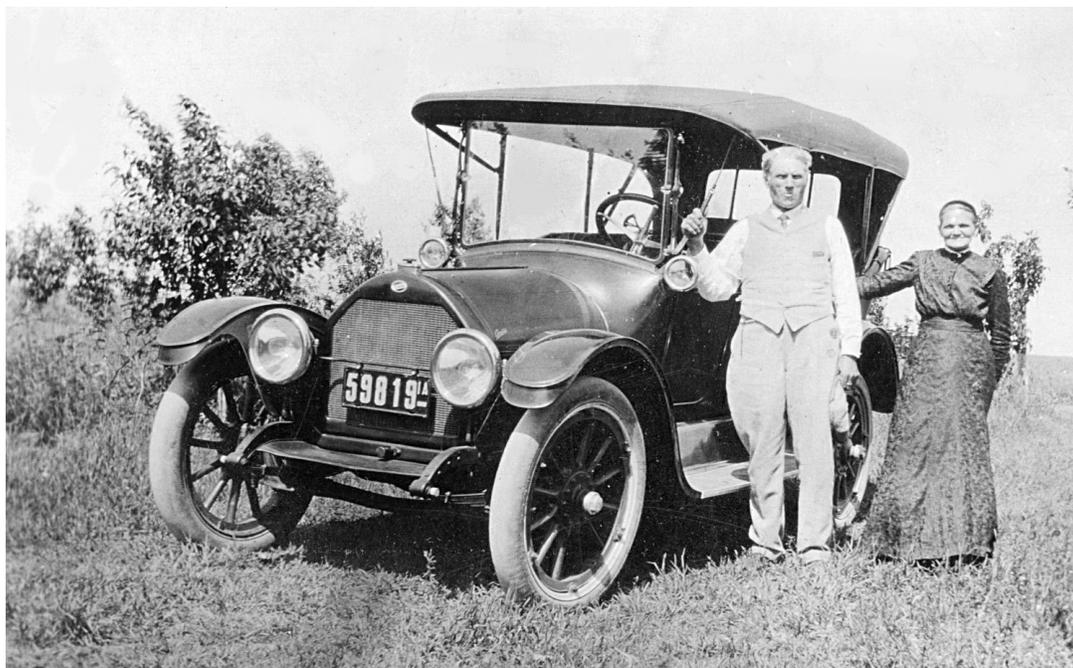


Figure 12. Louis Messner and Anna Maurer in 1914 with their Overland automobile.

Pauline Maurer describes **Wilhelm Maurer** in Lester, IA:

They (Wilhelm and Anna Maurer) had relatives in Illinois. They must have been his aunt and uncle. Anna married Louis Messner in Lester IA. Wilhelm went to Lester, IA and took up farming, according to my mother. There was not any Lutheran Church there at the time; there was another group of people there that came from Lutheran Churches and Mennonite Churches, and they made their own church. They called themselves Apostolic Christians. They did not have a church there and they were building this little church.

My father thought that was real nice, and he went in and helped build the church. They told him, "In the church the members sit up front and the non-members sit in the back."

So my father thought, "Well, I'll fix that, I'll join the Apostolic Church. " That's how he happened to join the Apostolic Church."

According to *Marching to Zion: A History of the Apostolic Christian Church in America, 1847-1982*³, the Apostolic Christian Church in Lester was built in 1893.

As the small church began to grow, a church building became a necessity. Accordingly, on land donated by Will Messner⁴ a church was completed in the spring of 1893 in Cleveland Township⁵. Jacob Moser built all the tables and benches for the new church.

In 1892 **Wilhelm Maurer**'s parents, Martin Maurer and Christine Schreiweis, arrive in Lester, IA with their children August Maurer, born 20 Nov 1876, Roigheim, Emma Maurer, born 25 Dec 1880 Roigheim, and Pauline Maurer, born 14 May 1882, Roigheim. According to Paul and Dorothy Knoblock:⁶

We do not know at this time from what port city they emigrated. (Editors' note: [Side notes by Dorothy] The Maurer family embarked from Hamburg (in Northern Germany) to sail to America on the boat named Frankfurt.) Martin's brother, a baker, paid for the family's voyage fees. Emma was the only one on the voyage that was not seasick; the voyage lasted approximately 12 days. Emma told how she sang to keep the family spirits up and brought food to them.

Because a Lutheran minister met the Maurer family in New York City, the family was not required to go through Ellis Island.

The family went to Philadelphia where they resided until the spring of 1893. Karl stayed in Philadelphia, while his brother August went on to Iowa ahead of the family. Karl, the oldest son of the Maurer family, worked in Rohner Department Store in Philadelphia and eventually purchased the store. When the Delaware River bridge was built, he was forced to close his store. The Maurer family moved to various states before settling in Iowa.

³ by Perry A. Klopfenstein, P. A. Klopfenstein Co, Pontiac, IL 1984

⁴ Will Messner was the brother of Louis Messner.

⁵ Lester, IA is at the NW corner of Cleveland Township, Lyon Co., IA

⁶ "From Maurers--Knoblocks; tying our past together" by Paul M. Knoblock and Dorothy Knoblock, document prepared for family, ~1990

August Maurer and Wilhelm Maurer farmed together. According to Pauline Maurer:

My father, his brother August, and another fellow by the name of Robert Fisher went farming. They rented a farm. Evidently there was not any house on it; there was just a barn. They lived in the barn. They must have had some place where they had put a stove to keep warm. They said once a week they washed their dishes in the watering trough.

When we (Claire and Pauline Maurer Hartley) were back to Iowa (1960) my cousin Martin Maurer (son of August Maurer) took us someplace and showed us a piece of ground that my father and his father had broke prairie. That means the land had never been worked before and they plowed it up.

There was virgin land in Missouri being opened up real cheap. He and his brother August were farming together. He (**Wilhelm Maurer**) went down there to Missouri and bought some land in Lamar, Missouri. August was going to go down there too, but Bertha's⁷ parents talked her out of it; that's what I've heard. (August and Bertha were married in 1903.)

He went down there to farm. There was a little house on the land, and when he came to Oregon, he built a little house exactly like that little house. I understood he famed with mules; he did not have any horses.

While in Lamar, MO **Wilhelm Maurer** met at the Apostolic Christian Church, and then married Wilhelmina Werner, born 4 May 1876, Faribault, Rice Co., MN. They were married 9 Nov 1903 in Lamar, MO. Wilhelmina Werner and sister Lydia Werner had gone to visit their aunt Lydia (Oehler) Marti⁸ in Lamar, Missouri.

According to Pauline Maurer:

The minister in Lamar, Missouri had to write to Oregon, home of Minnie Werner, and tell the minister that Wilhelm Maurer wanted to marry Minnie Werner. She went out (returned) to Lamar and they got married there, and they lived on his farm a whole year . . .

After one crop the nutrients were out of the ground, and if you did not put nutrients back in you had a crop failure. They had a crop failure, so that is how he decided to come to Oregon (by train).

Wilhelm Maurer and Minnie Maurer bought 40 acres from Minnie's father Johann Phillip Werner at Howell Prairie, Marion Co., OR, about 10 miles from Salem, OR. They built "a little house and a little barn" on the property.

According to Pauline Maurer:

⁷ Bertha Marie Scholerman, born 12, Jan 1878 in Kronprinzenkoog, Schleswig-holstein, Gemany, wife of August Maurer.

⁸ Lydia Oehler was married to Niklaus Marti. "In 1902 Nicholas and Lydia purchased and moved to a 320 acre farm near Lamar, Barton Co., MO. The farm is located one mile south and one mile west of Oakton."

It had a living room, a small kitchen, a small bedroom downstairs, and a little pantry added on. It had a nice stairway going up. It was sealed in but it was kind of two little bedrooms underneath the roof. We had three beds up there. We slept up there. The whole family did.



Figure 13. **Wilhelm Maurer** and Wilhelmina Werner in 1938

Wilhelm Maurer and Wilhelmina Werner had four children in Silverton, OR

- Gertrude Amelia Maurer, born 26 Feb 1909, died 4 Jun 1930 of tuberculosis
- Martin Werner Maurer, born 5 Nov 1910, died 1 Oct 1996
- Pauline May Mauer, born 10 Feb 1913, died 28 Feb 1999
- Ruth Madalene Maurer, born 15 Jan 1918, died 16 April 2011

In about 1919 they moved from their farm on Howell Prairie, to a farm on Brush Creek about a mile and a half from Silverton on the Silverton Road, that they purchased from Martin Tinglestad. They stayed the rest of their lives.

Wilhelm Maurer died 29 Sep 1946 in Silverton, OR and Wilhelmina Werner died 2 Jun 1952 in Silverton, OR.

Martin Mauer, father of **Wilhelm Maurer**, died 8 Jul 1915 in Lester, Iowa. His obituary reads:⁹

The death of Martin Maurer occurred his home in this city last Thursday noon after an illness of several months of a complication of diseases. On Wednesday evening he was much better and friends were hopeful for his recovery when heart failure suddenly seized him and he went to his final rest. Martin Maurer was born in Baden, Germany, April 1st, 1835, was married in 1863 to Christina Schreiweis the now mourning widow. Eight children were born to this union, five girls and three boys. They are Anna Messner, Polly Moser, Emma Knoblock and William Maurer of Silverton, Oregon, Louisa Flemming and Lena Feher, who still reside in Germany. In the spring of 1891 he with family came to this country stopping at Philadelphia, Pa., where they resided till the spring of 1893, when they moved to Lester locating on a farm about two miles west of town. They resided in and then near Lester ever since. The funeral services were held Sunday conducted by Rev. August Mogier of the Apostolic church southeast of Lester. After which the remains followed by friends and neighbors of the family were laid to rest. This closes the lives chapter of another who has gone on that mysterious journey from when no man returneth. He was a good man, a kind and loving husband and father. We extend to the family our sympathy.

Christina Friederike Schreiweis, mother of **Wilhelm Maurer**, died 21 Jan 1917 in Lester, IA.

⁹ From a Lester, IA newspaper.