

# Great Grandma's Wicker Basket

Saturday, 19 May 2012

## The Ellenberger Family

(Information on Jakob Ellenberger is from a family tree done by one of his descendants Amelia Mueller in America called "The Ellenberger Genealogy")

"The earliest records that are available about our Ellenberger forefathers indicate that the family apparently came from Switzerland. According to Ernst Muller in his *History of the Bernischen Täufer* (Anabaptists in Berne), as well as old documents in the Karlsruhe Archives about the Anabaptists, the name Ellenberger is mentioned among the emigrants enumerated from there. There is no further information available about the settling or branching out of the family in the Palatinate electorate in Germany.

The first accurate historical information comes from two documents which have been placed in the Mennonite Historical Library, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. Written by the same author, whose name is not given, they are based on Jakob Ellenberger's autobiography *Mitteilungen aus meinem Leben* (Communications about my Life), hand-written by Jakob about 1868.

1. *Jakob Ellenberger, lehrer und Prediger der Mennoniten-Gemeinde Friedelsheim, Ein Lebensbild* (Jakob Ellenberger, Teacher and Minister of the Mennonite

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Church of Friedelsheim, a biography).

2. *Aus dem Leben des Jakob Ellenberger, weiland Schullehrer und Prediger in Friedelsheim* (Out of the Life of Jakob Ellenberger, Former Teacher and Minister at Friedelsheim)."

Jakob Ellenberger (18-10-1800 - 28-02-1879)

"Jakob Ellenberger was born in 1800 in Gönheim, Germany. Jakob's parents were Abraham Ellenberger and Katharina, also an Ellenberger. Jakob describes them as pious and God fearing, and highly respected by the other villagers for their honesty and sincerity. They lived quietly and simply, keeping themselves aloof from everything that was worldly and ungodly. Their Christianity was earnest and sincere: the Bible was their guide; and their faith and love were expressed not only in words, but even more in deeds. The children "imitated their parents with delight and love."

There were five children. Barbara, the oldest, married Christian Ellenberger of Ibersheim, and lived in Gönheim. Both died young, in 1832, when their son was a year old. This boy, later referred to in Mennonite writings as Jakob Ellenberger II, grew up in the home of his uncle, Jakob Ellenberger I. Jakob I's younger sisters, Elisabeth and Katharina, neither of whom married, also made their home with Jakob I, one of them taking the place of a mother for Jakob II. Since Jakob I's only brother died in infancy, and Jakob II had no children, only Jakob I carried on the family line.



Jakob Ellenberger better copy

Jakob was a schoolboy during the turbulent time of the Napoleonic Wars. He was saved from military conscription by his weak eyes. His desire to become a minister was encouraged by his uncle, Heinrich Ellenberger, who was minister at Eppstein and Friesenheim until 1850, when at an advanced age, he migrated to America and in 1851 organised the Zion Mennonite Church, Donnellson, Iowa, the first Mennonite Church west of the Mississippi River. Through the help of an Englishman named Angas, Jakob was able to

► 2020 (8)

► 2018 (1)

► 2017 (2)

► 2016 (7)

► 2015 (7)

► 2014 (28)

► 2013 (30)

▼ 2012 (46)

► December (1)

► November (2)

► October (2)

► August (3)

► July (7)

► June (2)

▼ May (29)

Karl Meng's Great Uncle and Cousin

Karl Meng's Siblings

The Meng Houses and Land in Hohen-Sülzen

Karl Philipp Meng's Ancestors

Karl Meng's Friend Peter Schneider

The Meng Children's Stepmother

Karl and Elise Meng's Children

"Willowgrove" Ohoka

A Sad Inquest

study at the Beugen Christian Institute near Basel, Switzerland. In 1827, when his course there ended, he was asked to become the teacher of the newly organised Mennonite school in Friedelsheim, Palatinate, Germany. In order that the school could receive government approval, he took and passed the teachers' examination at Kaiserslautern and received State certification.

In 1832 he was also called to be the minister of the Friedelsheim Mennonite Congregation, and he remained the well loved, highly respected teacher and minister in Friedelsheim the rest of his life. In addition to his own congregation, he also served the churches at Erpolsheim and Kohlhof, and for a time the congregation at Branchweilerhof near Neustadt. His work in serving all of these places in addition to his teaching duties was physically and emotionally exhausting. However, the number of poems he wrote is evidence that he still made time for creative interests. About the poems he writes, *"They helped me through many difficult times and often brought comfort and relief to my burdened heart."*

Through his own interest in missions, he was instrumental in arousing an interest in missions in the Mennonite congregations in the Palatinate. Christian literature was important to him, and he was a strong supporter of the first Mennonite publications when they began to appear. He helped with the writing of the catechism, the ministers' manual, and the hymnbook, for which he composed several hymns. He also composed a tunebook for the hymnal, in which the chorales were written in four parts. He especially enjoyed teaching music. His older students, and those who had just left school, formed a mixed chorus under his direction, which was in demand at all important meetings in the area. He also stimulated the formation of the Men's Chorus Society, which was well known throughout South Germany.

Jakob married his wife, Lisette Blickensdorfer, on 24-04-1831 and had thirteen children, eleven of whom lived to maturity. The concerns for the physical existence of this large family pressed heavily of Jakob. In addition to his small annual salary of several hundred guilders, he received some aid from the Mennonites in Holland, and had a small acreage and a vineyard. After school hours, he often worked at his

St Michael and All Angels,  
Christchurch, New Zealand

The Meng Family

The Ellenberger Family

The Luff Family

A Cobbler and a Cabinet Maker

William and Jane Pearce's  
Children

William Pearce's Ancestors

The Fogden Family Part Two

The Fogden Family Part One

The Pearce Family

Ohoka Photos from our family  
photo collection

The Ohoka Lords

The Coggin Family

The Spencer Family

Jabez Lord's Siblings Who Came  
to NZ

Jabez Lord's Ancestors

Jabez and Mary Ann Lord's  
Descendants

The Lord Family Portrait c 1900

The Lord Family

Great Grandma's Wicker Basket

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carpenter bench, making pieces of furniture for his home, to save the cost of buying them.

Although he continued his position as a minister until the end of his life, he retired from his teaching in 1869 because of poor vision. As a state certified teacher, he now received an annual pension of 400 Guilders, and was able to pay off all of his accumulated debts.

After Lisette's death in 1875, Jakob's health began to fail noticeably. On 18-11-1878 he preached his last sermon at the Kohlhof. On 08-02-1879 he quietly "went to sleep". Jakob Ellenberger and his wife were buried in Friedelsheim but the headstone has now been removed to make way for the next generation of Germans to be buried in the cemetery.

Every grave in Germany allows for two or more people depending of the size of the grave. If a grave is "full" it takes 30 years to be allowed to put the next dead in. So sometimes a husband and wife may be in different graves if they died many years apart. A grave is expensive in Germany as there is not much room. Germans often try to save money by putting their dead in a grave, which is not full yet so sometimes different family members are in the same grave."

**Lisette Blickensdorfer (20-08-1810 - 01-04-1875)**

Lisette Blickensdorfer was born in Kohlhof in 1810. She married Jakob Ellenberger and together they had 13 children, 12 of whom survived to maturity. More information on the Blickensdorfer family is in another chapter.

Maria Christina Ellenberger (09-10-1832 - 18-09-1905) Never married

Phillip Heinrich Ellenberger (05-08-1833 - 24-10-1854) Never married

David Emanuel Ellenberger (27-04-1835 - 29-08-1920) 2 sons, 4 daughters, Galveston, Texas.

(Karl) Christian Ellenberger (18-01-1837 - 13-06-1913) No children, Lived in America

Jakob Nathanael Ellenberger (09-05-1838 - 15-10-1910) New Zealand Branch I

**Tracing a Gold Chaser - The elusive William Henry Luff**

It is hard when one comes to a genealogical road block such as the one I have with my great great great grandfather, William Henry Luff. I...

**Camp Bay Cemetery Records, Banks Peninsula**

For those of you who don't know, Camp Bay is near Purau Bay in Lyttelton Harbour and was used as a quarantine camp for ships for many ye...

**Jabez and Mary Ann Lord's Descendants**

Ira Spencer Lord (15-02-1861 – 06-03-1943) Ira Lord was the eldest of the ten children. He was a first day pupil at the newly open...

**The Griebel Family of Ohoka**

The Griebel family were in-laws to my ancestors the Meng family. I don't know much about them so have tried to research them a bit o...

**The Lord Family**

The Lord Surname Lord is a term of civil dignity, a master, ruler, the proprietor of a manor, derived from the Anglo-Saxon word, which...

**The Fogden Family Part Two**

The Fogden Surname This name is of English locational origin from one of an estimated seven to ten thousand villages and hamlets tha...

**Elise Katharina Ellenberger (19-11-1839 - 29-03-1879) New Zealand Branch****II**

Peter Daniel Ellenberger (12-02-1841 - 12-03-1923) No children

Johannes Abraham Ellenberger (24-06-1842 - 30-09-1915) Friedelsheim Branch I

Abraham Wilhelm Ellenberger (28-11-1844 - 11-03-1888) Friedelsheim Branch II

(Daniel) Adolf Ellenberger (27-03-1846 - 13-08-1889) Monsheim Branch

Anna Ellenberger (04-10-1848 - 20-01-1851) Died in infancy

Anna Babette Ellenberger (31-03-1851 - ?) At least one daughter

Magdalena Ellenberger (30-12-1852 - 04-03-1929) Never married

Only seven of Jakob and Lisette's 13 children had children of their own. Four of their children immigrated to different countries. (Karl) Christian Ellenberger and Daniel Emanuel Ellenberger immigrated to America, and Jakob Nathanael Ellenberger and Elise Katharina Ellenberger immigrated to New Zealand. The reason for their emigration from Germany is unknown but it may have been due to poverty and wanting to seek out a better life. There was a mention in Jakob Ellenberger's autobiography that his son Jakob Nathaniel was trying to avoid compulsory military service as he didn't believe in it. The family lived in a tiny house in Friedelsheim next to the church and there would have been very little room for such a large family. Mennonites tended to be more accepted in the colonies so this may have encouraged them to emigrate. An Ellenberger family tree has been compiled for four branches of the family including one branch in New Zealand, two branches in Friedelsheim and one in Monsheim. David Emanuel Ellenberger wasn't heard from after the 1900 Galveston hurricane, but he did survive the storm and went on to have six children that were discovered only recently through the Internet. The tree for Jakob Nathanael Ellenberger's family in New Zealand has been compiled but contact was lost with Elise Katharina Ellenberger's family until the mid 1990s.



Jakob and Lisette Ellenberger maybe a better copy

*New Zealand Branch I*

## Jakob Nathanael Ellenberger (09-05-1838 - 15-10-1910)

Jakob Nathanael Ellenberger was born in 1838 in Friedelsheim, Palatinate, Germany and was a baker. He emigrated to New Zealand on 16-12-1862 on the *Sebastopol* with his sister Elise Katharina Ellenberger. He married Marie Griebel (born 04-08-1848 in Kindenheim, Palatinate, Germany), on 15-01-1874 at St Andrew's Presbyterian, The Manse, Christchurch. They had nine children.

Adolph Wilhelm Ellenberger (23-11-1874 - 22-10-1955) 1 daughter  
 Marie Christina Ellenberger (03-02-1876 - 16-08-1962) 2 sons, 1 daughter  
 Magdalena Anna Ellenberger (28-01-1877 - 01-10-1958) 1 daughter  
 Katharina Elizabeth Ellenberger (28-01-1878 - 12-10-1968) 3 sons, 3 daughters  
 Charles Christian Ellenberger (21-03-1879 - 25-11-1918) 1 son, 1 daughter  
 Frederick Jacob Ellenberger (05-07-1881 - 18-08-1932) did not marry  
 Henry Phillip Ellenberger (01-04-1884 - 18-11-1918) no children  
 David Emmanuel Ellenberger (01-03-1887 - 12-07-1949) did not marry  
 Emma Elise Ellenberger (26-07-1889 - 26-09-1956) 4 sons, 1 daughter

Although Jakob had five sons, the name of Ellenberger died out in this branch. Adolph had only one daughter, Charles had a son, but he was killed in World War II as a young unmarried man, Frederick and David did not marry, and Henry had no children.

When Adolph was born in 1874, Jakob and Marie were living and farming in the Maori Reserve at Woodend. Jakob's sister Elise and her husband Karl Meng were living at the Maori Reserve also, until about 1871. Later on in life Jakob and Marie lived in Sneyd St in Kaiapoi.

This photo of the Ellenberger family (NZ Branch I) was taken around 1900 in Canterbury, NZ. Top Row from left: Charles Christian, Katherine Elizabeth, Frederick Jakob, Magdalina Anna. Sitting from left: Mary Christina, Jakob Nathanael (father), Emma Elise, Marie (mother), Adolph Wilhelm. Reclining from left: Henry Philip and David Emmanuel





## *New Zealand Branch //*

Elise Katharina Ellenberger (19-11-1839 - 29-03-1879)

Elise Katharina Ellenberger was the daughter of Jakob and Lisette Ellenberger (nee Blickensderfer) of Friedelsheim, Germany. She came to New Zealand with her brother Jakob Ellenberger (a baker) on the ship *Sebastopol* arriving 1863. She is named in the passenger list as Maria Ellenberger but we know it to be her as according to her father's biography she travelled with her brother Jakob. She was recruited along with her brother by Philipp Tisch who had lived in NZ for many years but had come back to visit Kindenheim after the death of his father. Kindenheim was a village at least 26 km away from Friedelsheim where they lived, so not very close at all. Did they know Philipp Tisch? It seems they did as Jakob and Elise's aunt was Babette Vogt (nee Blickensderfer) who married Gerhard Vogt (sometimes spelt Voght) in Kindenheim on 14 November 1847. Philipp Tisch was married to Christina Vogt. It is likely that the two Vogts were related. The Vogt family was Mennonite and would have known Jakob Ellenberger senior from his sermons. Also one of the Daniel Adolf Ellenberger lived in Monsheim, so would have gone to the same church as the Vogt family.

According to the Ellenberger family history written by Amelia Mueller, Elise left to emigrate on 26 December 1862. On 24 November 1862 there must have been a large party or church gathering to say farewell and Elise got many autographs on notecards from all her friends and relations. There was one notecard however from her aunt Babette Vogt of Kindenheim dated 24 December 1862 (which was Christmas Day in Germany in those days), which gave her good wishes for her trip *"let Jesus hand lead you.... that will be useful for you"* and other words such as *"Ist die trennung unser Loos auf des Lebens ödem Wege"* (if separation is our fate on the barren path of life, god, hope and saviour help you.... this written

*for the memory Aunt Babette Vogt"*

One can only imagine the sadness Elise would have felt at never seeing her family again, her aunt and siblings and her parents. She never went back to Germany, so this was the final farewell.

When Elise arrived in New Zealand she was working in the house of a Christian official, according to Jakob Ellenberger's biography. She married Karl Philipp Meng on 05-07-1866 at St Peter's Church in Riccarton, Christchurch with witnesses Peter Schneider (taylor), Jakob N Ellenberger (baker) and Lucy Patterson Soper, (spinster). The couple lived at Rangiora, the Maori Reserve at Woodend and then Ohoka. Elise died young at the age of 39 leaving four daughters, Elizabeth, Mary, Katherina and Emma. Her death entry states she died of "Ignorant Neglect—Post Partum Haemorrhage". She had a stillbirth and bled to death. There is no record of a live child being born and Kate Fraser nee Meng wrote "Stillborn child" 29-03-1879 in her family Bible. Maybe Karl, Elise's husband, didn't realise how ill Elise was and instead of sending for the doctor, went out to do the farm work that day. Or maybe she gave birth alone in the house after a quick and unexpected labour? Elise is buried in Flaxton Cemetery.


There are many different spellings of Elise's name, many of which are anglicised versions. Her death entry names her as Elizabeth Katherine Meng. On her first daughter Helene's birth entry she is named as Elizabeth Catherine Meng. We presume however that the correct spelling of her name is Elise Katharina as this is how her ancestors' names are spelt. Elise Katherina Meng is written on her gravestone but the true German version of the name is more likely to be Katharina with an 'a' as all her ancestor's names were spelt this way. See the section on the Meng family for more information on Elise and her family.



Elise Katherina Meng (nee Ellenberger) with Elizabeth & Mary Meng 1873



Elise Katharina Meng (nee Ellenberger) with her daughters Elise Mary Meng and Mary Meng

 Elisabeth Katharina Meng signature

Signature of Elise Katharina Meng

 Wedding of Marie Christina Ellenberger and Robert Fisher 1902

Wedding of Marie Christina Ellenberger and Robert Fisher 1902

Posted by Bel at 18:17

## 4 comments:



**Unknown** 19 August 2017 at 02:51

My second great-grandmother's maiden surname was Meng and her family where from the mid-west and originally from Switzerland I believe Trimmis?.. her name was Lena Meng her father was Leonard Meng.

Reply



**Bel** 19 August 2017 at 18:42

Hi Tanner. My Meng family came from Hohen-Sulzen and were there from at least the late 1600s. Before that, we are not sure where they came from but suspect a neighbouring village called Obrigheim. Before that, maybe it was Switzerland, but we don't know! It is very interesting!

Reply



**Pamela** 24 May 2018 at 19:35

Hi Tanner, Jakob Ellenberger is my 2nd great grandfather. Adolph Ellenberger was my grandfather Adele Mueller Ellenberger was my grandmother. I have found little about her life. Any suggestions?

Reply



**Wolfgang** 27 October 2025 at 21:39

hello, thit is a grand-grandson of Jakob Ellenberger I have found all t he way of the Ellenberger line back to 1445 in Switzerland and many more insights. Write me to wolfgang@ellenberger.me please

Reply Delete



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