

Select Krückeberg Immigrants to the American Midwest and a Brief History of the German Lands

Steven T Krueckeberg – May 2023, updated October 2025

Introduction: Late 2019 was a time of transition. Newly retired, I was content with the past and optimistic for the future. However, the transition to the new year would prove to be anything but ordinary.

During the winter of 2019-2020, a novel and highly-contagious respiratory virus ([SARS-CoV-2](#)) began circulating in Wuhan, China. With astonishing speed, a new and deadly disease ([COVID-19](#)) spread to nearly every corner of the globe. Nothing like this had been seen since the influenza pandemics of the late 1910s.

Public health officials scrambled to limit COVID's impact. Initial measures included prioritizing personal protective equipment for health care workers and temporary "lockdowns" of businesses and schools. As hospitalizations and deaths mounted, additional guidelines such as masking and social distancing were published. These guidelines were poorly-communicated, difficult to understand, and largely ignored.

The crisis deepened during the winter of 2021-2022 when, despite the availability of safe and effective vaccines, large numbers of critically-ill and dying patients stretched our health care system to its breaking point. Tragically, in March of 2022 the number of COVID-19 deaths in the United States surpassed one million.

Many persons who were infected, but survived, would go on to develop [Long COVID](#). Many more experienced [COVID fatigue](#), a condition marked by heightened anxiety, loneliness, boredom and despair. Adam Grant at the New York Times came up with an apt description of our collective distress – we were “[languishing](#)”.

My method of coping was to start a new hobby. With guidance from experienced relatives, I became a genealogy hobbyist. In researching my surname, I identified twelve Krückeberg immigrants of interest. These men – ten with families, two who were single – came from small villages in Germany. They arrived in the United States during the middle third of the 1800s, and eventually settled in what would become the great American Midwest.

From where in Germany did these men come from?

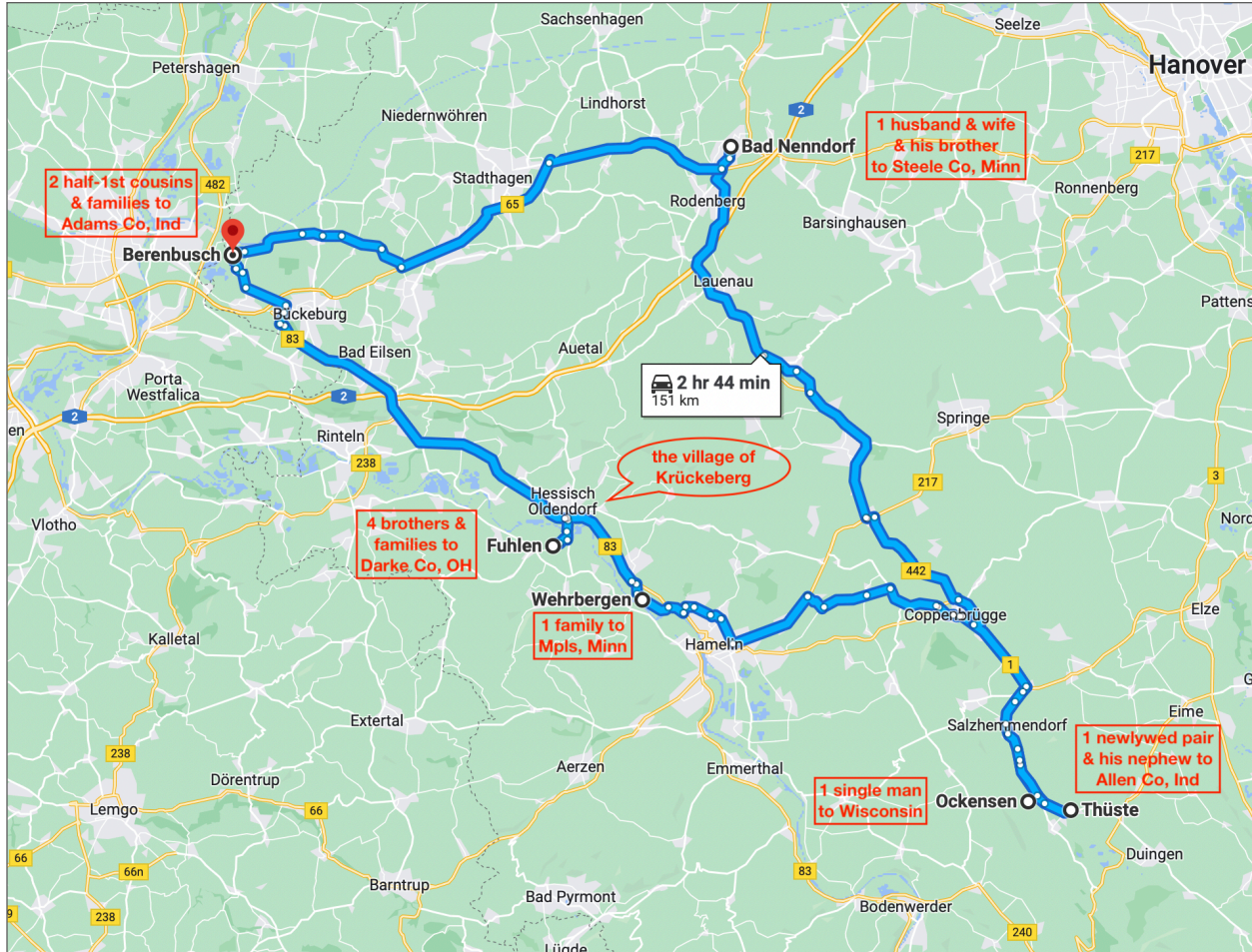
The home villages of these Krückebergs are well established. Vital records confirm their births, baptisms and marriages in Berenbusch, Fuhlen, Wehrbergen, Ockensen, Thüste and Bad Nenndorf. Today these villages are located in the adjacent districts (*Landkreise*) of Schaumburg and Hameln-Pyrmont, in the state (*Land*) of Lower Saxony.

These six villages are arranged in what could be described as "a Krückeberg Triangle".

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start at Berenbusch and proceed counter-clockwise



Assigning the correct home state (*Land*) for these men is not straightforward. Due to frequent wars and shifting political boundaries, our ancestors would have had to ask themselves two questions. 1) "To which state or ruler (e.g. elector, prince, king, emperor) do I owe my allegiance?" And, in the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation, 2) "What religion do I need to practice in order to stay out of trouble?"

To help answer these questions, I've summarized the political histories of the districts and states comprising the Krückeberg Triangle. These histories confirm that the people who emigrated from Fuhlen and Bad Nenndorf were "Hessens", and that the people who emigrated from Wehrbergen, Ockensen and Thüste were from the Kingdom (or Province) of Hanover.

It is my hope that the people, events, dates and places presented here will facilitate the investigation and appreciation of your own German heritage.

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Persons	Born / Died	Marriage	Emigration / Immigration	From / To
<u>Carl Friedrich*</u> wife & 6 children	1807 ~ 1852	1834 Petzen, SL	1850 43 yo	Berenbusch, SL Adams Co, Ind
<u>Johann H.*</u> wife & 3 daughters	1806 1879	1833 Petzen, SL	1849 43 yo	Berenbusch, SL Adams Co, Ind
<u>Fried. Ludwig</u> & 3 brothers, all with families	1793 1871	1823 Fuhlen, HesKa	1852 59 yo	Fuhlen, HesKa Darke Co, Ohio
<u>Joh. Heinrich</u> <u>"Friedrich"</u> wife & 7 children	1803 ?	~ 1823	1846 43 yo	Wehrbergen, KHa Chicago to Mpls
<u>"Conrad Henry"</u> a single man	1835 1905	1867 Jefferson, Wis	1859 24 yo	Ockensen, KHa Illinois to Wis
<u>"H. August"</u> & his bride	1822 1890	1851 Thüste, KHa	~ 1851 ~ 29 yo	Thüste, KHa Soest, Allen, Ind
<u>"Christian Jr."</u> a single man nephew of H. Aug.	1850 1938	1873 Allen, Ind	1869 ~ 19 yo	Thüste, PHaPr St Joe, Allen, Ind
<u>Joh. Friedrich</u> & wife	1831 1894	1853, HesKa	~ 1854 ~ 23 yo	Bad Nenndorf, HesKa Steele Co, Minn
<u>Joh. Otto</u> a single man brother to Joh. Fr.	1842 1894	1871 Rice, Minn	~ 1866 ~ 24 yo	Bad Nenndorf, HesKa Steele Co, Minn

All these men can be found at FamilySerch.org – just click on a name and log into your account.

*Carl Friedrich Krückeberg (my 2nd great-grandfather) & Johann Heinrich were half-first cousins.

SL = Schaumburg-Lippe HesKa = Hesse-Kassel Mpls = Minneapolis
KHa = Kingdom of Hanover PHaPr = Province of Hanover in Kingdom of Prussia

Today, Berenbusch & Bad Nenndorf are in the *Schaumburg Kreis* of Lower Saxony.
Fuhlen, Wehrbergen, Ockensen & Thüste are in the *Hameln-Pyrmont Kreis* of Lower Saxony.

Fried. Ludwig (Darke Co, Ohio) was the oldest of four brothers and the last to leave the family's farm in Fuhlen. Johann Heinrich "Friedrich" (Mpls) was a cabinet maker & carpenter. Two of his grandsons moved to Los Angeles and started a printing business – the *Krueckeberg Press*. Another grandson (a pharmacist) owned the *Krueckeberg Drug Store* in the Seward neighborhood of Mpls. Johann Friedrich & his wife (Steele Co) are presumed to have married in Germany; they recorded their status in a registry at The German Evangelical Church in Crete, Illinois.

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A Brief History of the German Lands – Wikipedia

800-1806 Holy Roman Empire (HRE) – was romanticized by Nazis as the *1st Reich*
1517 Martin Luther & the Protestant Reformation 1545 Counter Reformation
1542-1648 the European Wars of Religion & Great Powers Struggles
1555 the Augsburg Settlement did not sustain peace – Christianity was split into Catholic & Lutheran confessions but Calvinists, Anabaptists & others were still considered heretics
1648 Peace of Westphalia 1756-63 Seven Years' War & Treaty of Paris
1789-99 French Revolution 1803-1815 Napoleonic Wars & end of the HRE
1802-14 German Mediatisation 1815 Battle of Waterloo & Congress of Vienna

Schaumburg-Lippe (SL) – 1647 to 1977

1647-1807 SL was a small county in the HRE – my ancestors came from Berenbusch, SL
1807-71 SL became a Principality, first in the Confederation of the Rhine, and then in the German & North German Confederations – its capital was Bückeburg
1871-1918 the Principality of SL was a state in the German Empire
1918-46 the Free State of Schaumburg-Lippe in Germany
1946 SL became a district in Lower Saxony
1977 SL merged w. Graftshaft Schaumburg to form the *Landkreis Schaumburg*

Hesse-Kassel (HeK)

1567 HeK created from northern half of the *Landgraviate Hesse* – its capital was Kassel
1567-1803 HeK became a state in the Holy Roman Empire, directly subject to the Emperor
1648 HeK was awarded territory from county of Schaumburg, including **Bad Nenndorf**
1803-07 Electorate of Hesse = *Kurhessen* 1807-14 occupied by French troops
1814-66 Electorate of Hesse = *Kurhessen* 1866-1944 Hesse-Nassau in Prussia
Today, Bad Nenndorf is in the *Landkreis Schaumburg* of Lower Saxony

Hessisch-Oldendorf (HeK) vs. Kingdom/Province of Hanover

1640-1932 **Hessisch-Oldendorf, Krückeberg & Fuhlen** belonged to Hesse-Kassel (HeK)
1692-1814 the Electorate of Hanover (officially the Electorate of Brunswick-Lüneburg)
1807-14 Electorate of Hanover merged into the Napoleonic Kingdom of Westphalia
1814-66 the Kingdom of Hanover included **Fuhlen, Wehrbergen, Ockensen & Thüste**
1866-1918 the Province of Hanover in the Kingdom of Prussia
today these six villages are located in the *Landkreis Hameln-Pyrmont* of Lower Saxony

Prussia, the German Confederations and the German Empire

1701-1918 was marked by an expanding Kingdom of Prussia (Berlin, in Brandenburg)
Prussia became the driving force of German unification
1815-48 & 1850-66 the existence of a German Confederation (*Deutscher Bund*)
1848-50 a prototypical German empire 1866-71 North German Confederation
1866 Prusso-Austrian War 1870 Franco-Prussian War
1871-1918 German Empire (*2nd Reich*) 1918-33 Weimar Republic 1933-45 Nazi *3rd Reich*

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Westphalia & North Rhein-Westphalia (NR-W)

1102-1803 Duchy of Westphalia in the Holy Roman Empire
Westphalia was held by the Archbishop & Electors of Cologne
1803-07 Westphalia was secularized & expanded by the French Emperor Napoleon
1807-13 the Napoleonic Kingdom of Westphalia
1815-1946 Province of Westphalia in Kingdom of Prussia – its capital was Münster
Westphalia merged with north Rhein (1946) & Lippe (1947) – Düsseldorf is capital of NR-W

Minden Town & Minden-Lübbecke Kreis in NR-W

1648 Peace of Westphalia secularized Minden from a Prince-Bishopric to a Principality
1719-1807 Minden was capital of the Minden-Ravensberg territory in Kingdom of Prussia
1807 Napoleon created the Kingdom of Westphalia, a part of his French Empire
1813 Minden (city & district), Province of Westphalia, Kingdom of Prussia
1843 emigration was legalized – my Bleeke ancestors came from Leteln, near Minden
since 1973, Minden is capital of the *Minden-Lübbecke Kreis* (district) in NR-W

Detmold in NR-W

Detmold city was capital of the Principality of Lippe & the Free State of Lippe
Detmold city is now capital of *Lippe Kreis* in NR-W
Detmold is also the name of an "administrative region" in North Rhein-Westphalia
which includes the *Kreise* (districts) of Minden-Lübbecke, Herford, Lippe, Gütersloh,
Paderborn, Höxter, and the city of Bielefeld
the four other administrative regions in NR-W are Münster, Arnsberg, Düsseldorf & Cologne

Lippe & Lippe Kreis in NR-W

1528-1789 county of Lippe in the Holy Roman Empire
1789-1806 Principality of Lippe in the Holy Roman Empire
1815-1918 Principality of Lippe in the German Confederations & German Empire
1918-47 the Free State of Lippe in Germany
1947 was merged into the the new state of North Rhein-Westphalia
1973 creation of the *Lippe Kreis* (district) in NR-W – its capital is Detmold

Soest & Soest Kreis in NR-W

a 13th century Norwegian saga identified Soest as capital of Attila's Hunnic Empire
in medieval times, Soest was the largest town in Westphalia
1444-49 the "Soest Feud" – the city liberated itself from the Bishop of Cologne
1449-1609 Soest was an Imperial Hanseatic city in the Holy Roman Empire
1816 now a part of Prussia, Soest city was named capital of the *Soest Kreis* (district)
today, the *Soest Kreis* is in North Rhein-Westphalia

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Pfalz, Rheinland-Pfalz & Rhineland-Palatinate

1214-1805 Electoral Palatinate (*Kurpfalz*) & 44 other territories, in the Holy Roman Empire
1794-1814 the left bank of the Rhine was occupied by France
1803-1814 other areas of the Palatinate were taken by Baden, Hesse & Prussia
1816-1918 a "new Palatinate" on the left bank, controlled by the Kingdom of Bavaria,
became to be known as Rhenish Palatinate (*Rheinpfalz*) or Rhenish Bavaria (*Rheinbayern*)
after WW2, the state (*Land*) of Rhineland-Palatinate was created

Baden

1112-1535 Margraviate of Baden, HRE 1535-1771 Baden-Durlach & Baden-Baden, HRE
1771-1803 Margraviate of Baden in the HRE – its capital was Karlsruhe
1803-06 Electorate of Baden in the HRE
1806-1918 Grand Duchy of Baden in the German Confederations & German Empire
1918-1945 Republic of Baden in the Weimar Republic, followed by Nazi Germany
1945-1952 occupied South Baden (France) & Württemberg-Baden (USA)
in 1952 So. Baden, Wür-Baden & Wür-Hohenzollern became the *Land Baden-Württemberg*

Württemberg & Baden-Württemberg

1495-1803 Duchy of Württemberg in HRE 1803-06 Electorate of Württemberg in HRE
1806-1918 Kingdom of Württemberg, which eventually became a part
of the Kingdom of Prussia and German Empire
1918-1945 Free Peoples' State of Württemberg in Weimar Republic, then Nazi Germany
1945-1952 occupied Württemberg-Baden (USA) & Württemberg-Hohenzollern (France)
1952 final integration into the (state) *Land Baden-Württemberg* – its capital is Stuttgart

Saarland

for centuries, Saarland was a part of contested territories along the Franco-German border
1792 armies of the French Revolution conquered the region (rich with coal)
1815 most of the region became part the Rhine Province in the Kingdom of Prussia
1920 the "Territory of the Saar Basin" was governed by France
1935 "Saar status referendum" – 90% of voters returned Saarland to Nazi Germany
1947 the occupied Saarland Protectorate (France)
1957 became a state (*Land*) in the Federal Republic of Germany – capital is Saarbrücken

Imperial Territory of Alsace-Lorraine – 1871 to 1918

for more than 300 years, the political status of Alsace & Lorraine was heavily contested
by France and the various German states
1871 Alsace & the Moselle Department of Lorraine became part of the German Empire
the annexed areas were designated the "*Emperor's Land*" or the "*Imperial Territory*"
1918-20 ceded back to France. 1940 occupied by Nazi Germany
post WW2 - the Allies returned the area to France