

Gottfried and Gertrude Schwartze ¹

Gottfried Schwartze (October 12, 1806 – 1843)

Maria Gertrude Kramer² (March 9, 1807 – December 30, 1899)

Gottfried and Gertrude Schwartze with their four children arrived at the Westphalia Settlement along the Maries River in Osage County, Missouri in late October or early November 1836. They had traveled from their Prussian home of Oelde across the Atlantic by ship to Baltimore, overland by wagon and canal boat to Pittsburgh, down the Ohio River to St. Louis by steamer, up the Missouri River to Jefferson City or Osage City by steamer, and up the Osage River to the mouth of the Maries River or to Shipley's Ferry, a few miles further up the Osage.

They left their home in Oelde in May or June 1836 and departed Bremerhaven on July 6.³ They must have seen many strange sights during their trip from Bremerhaven to the Westphalia Settlement in Missouri, but they left no written record. Perhaps the most amazing sight was the appearance of the earlier German settlers who welcomed them on their arrival. If their reaction was anything like that of Henrietta Bruns, they must have been shocked. Henrietta Bruns, who traveled with them from Bremerhaven to St. Louis, expressed shock at the appearance of the men on horseback, dressed like backwoodsmen who greeted her when the Bruns family arrived at the Osage River.⁴

Oelde, the Prussian home of the Schwartze's and the Bruns, is a small town between Beckum and Rheda in what is now the German State of Nordrhein-Westfalen. Gottfried was born on October 12, 1805 to Johann Henri Schwartze and Ann Gertrude Buren. Gertrude was born on March 9, 1807 to Bernard Cramer and Elizabeth Telleman. Gottfried and Gertrude were married in St Johannes Church in Oelde.⁵

Gottfried applied for a Prussian passport for himself, Gertrude and their four children on April 12, 1836. The passport provided for travel from Oelde through Bremen to North America.⁶ The family planned to travel to America with the Bruns family, Ferdinand Holterman from Wadersloh, and others who intended to settle in the Westphalia Settlement. Dr. Bernard Bruns had traveled from Prussia to Missouri by way of Baltimore and the Ohio River in 1835 to select a suitable place to settle his family. While in St. Louis, by chance he met Nicholas Hesse, who in 1835 had moved his family from Germany to a place along the Maries River south of the Missouri River and between the Osage and Gasconade Rivers.⁷ Dr. Bruns visited Hesse's home on the Maries River and decided that was the place for his family.⁸ He purchased land and a cabin and returned to Prussia to make the final preparations for the move to America.

After spending some time in Bremen, the Schwartze family of Gottfried, Gertrude and their four children (Bernard Joseph, born September 4, 1829; Johanna Gertrude, born January 6, 1831;

Elizabeth Catherine born 6 July 1833 and Maria Gertrude born 4 April 1836)⁹ traveled by riverboat up the Weser River with the other members of the party to Bremerhaven. There they boarded the Ulysses and set sail on July 6, 1836. After a voyage of 66 days, they arrived at Baltimore.¹⁰ Henrietta Bruns kept a diary of the voyage, but unfortunately she lost it when they arrived in Baltimore.¹¹ From Baltimore the Schwartzes, Bruns and others traveled partly by wagon and partly by canal boat to Pittsburgh. They then traveled down the Ohio to St. Louis by steamer. They apparently had to change steamers at Cincinnati where the first steamer ran onto a stump.¹² The party seems to have split up at St. Louis, traveling to the Westphalia Settlement as smaller parties or individual families.¹³ Some may have stopped at Osage City at the mouth of the Osage River, but the Bruns first traveled to Jefferson City and then returned to Osage City.¹⁴ Henrietta says they traveled up the Osage by flatboat to the mouth of the Maries.¹⁵ But, she also says that a Mr. John Shipley hauled them and their baggage to his parents' farm on the Osage River and they crossed the Osage by ferry the next day.¹⁶ Whatever the details of their travels from the mouth of the Osage to the Westphalia Settlement, the Bruns arrived at their new home on November 2, 1836.

There is no record of where the Schwartz family stayed immediately on their arrival or whether they had help in finding a place to live. They settled between the Westphalia Settlement and the Osage River along what is now County Road 502. Their decision to settle there may have been influenced by its proximity to Shipley's ferry which crossed the Osage on an old road that may have run between Jefferson City and the lead ore deposits at Potosi.¹⁷ The Bruns family had crossed the Osage at Shipley's ferry on the last day of their journey to their home at the Westphalia Settlement. The Bruns also bought a farm at Shipley's ferry in 1851, and Henrietta writes that Shipley's Ferry was the best ferry across the Osage.¹⁸

Gottfried Schwartz purchased government land near Shipley's Ferry in 1837¹⁹ and Gertrude in 1838.²⁰ The family is listed in a census compiled by Rev. Helias in 1838 or 1839.²¹ Later both Gottfried and Gertrude purchased additional government land. On October 1, 1840 Gottfried purchased 120 acres. On December 10, 1841, he purchased 40 more acres. On April 10, 1843, Gertrude purchased 40 acres.²² By 1845, two years after Gottfried's death, Gertrude Schwartz owned 320 acres.²³

Since the Schwartzes purchased government land, the first order of business must have been to build a log house. The settlers of necessity built their log houses near a spring or small stream to have a reliable source of water. Often the first buildings built was a protective hut over the spring or stream to keep animals from the milk, butter, meat and other foodstuffs that were stored there.²⁴

Gottfried Duden wrote that a log cabin could be built in two or three weeks. While the family lived in tents or out of a wagon, they cut trees, usually not more than a foot in diameter, for the construction of the log house. Once the logs had been dragged to the building site with horses or oxen, neighbors would be invited to help in the actual construction. While it might take only

four or five men to do the building,²⁵ construction of a log house was often a social affair as well as a necessity, with the entire families of the neighborhood joining together. The house might be built of round logs, or if time allowed, of hewn logs. While the men built the house, the women cooked meals and the children helped as they could or played with their friends.²⁶ Windows were often cut after the building was completed and boards sawed or split for doors and windows.

The hearth, together with the chimney, is built very simply of wood, lined below with a stone wall and covered at the top with clay. If a chimney is six inches higher than the top of the roof smoke [in the house] will not be a bother. The danger of fire depends on the construction of the stone wall and the clay covering.²⁷

Once the log house was completed, the settlers could begin clearing more land for planting crops. The Mallinckrodt brothers, one of whom also made the trip from Bremerhaven to Missouri with the Bruns and Schwartze families, set a goal of clearing 21 acres for planting corn.²⁸ They had decided to settle nearer St. Louis, about 50 miles upstream from the mouth of the Missouri River. First, they cut the smaller trees, those of about a foot in diameter. They were cut close to the ground to leave a low stump that would not get caught on the single or doubletree when plowing with horses. The larger trees were girdled to remove the bark from around the trees allowing them to die. Since the dead trees made little shade, they did not interfere with the growth of the crops. Once the larger trees died, they would eventually fall and the settlers dragged them away or split them into rails or firewood. The trees that were not used for rails or firewood were cut into manageable lengths by building small fires at intervals along the length of the trunk and allowing the fires to burn through the trunk.²⁹ Then the shorter logs were dragged to a gentle slope and, using brush and small pieces of wood that would form coals, a fire was started along the lower side of the length of the log. As the log burned on the lower side, it slowly rolled into the fire, and eventually all that was left was a long pile of ashes. After the land was cleared of the trees and larger brush the roots had to be at least partially cleared so the land could be plowed. Nicholas Hesse described the clearing of roots with a 20-pound grubbing hoe as the most arduous part of clearing the land.³⁰ Clearing land was hard and slow work, and the settlers often hired men to help or it would have taken a prohibitively long time to clear enough land to raise enough of a crop to support a family.

The German and earlier settlers mostly cleared the uplands first leaving the clearing of the tangled mess of the more fertile bottom lands for later. Anyone who visits the bottom lands today can see the large sycamore and other trees growing in a tangled array of vines and braches along the edges of the fields. One can only imagine the labyrinth of living and dead trees, underbrush, and vines interlaced with piles of driftwood accumulated over the centuries to understand why the early settlers would put off clearing the bottom lands until after they had established themselves on the uplands.³¹ Nicholas Hesse, who travelled extensively throughout central Missouri before deciding to settle along the Maries River, was surprised at the size of the trees growing in the river valleys. "I found sycamores which had a circumference of over 30

feet. The white oak often has a diameter of 6 to 7 feet and a height up to 50 feet without branches.”³²

Corn was a staple crop for the early settlers, but an unexpected problem for the early German settlers in the raising of corn was combating the squirrels that could ruin a crop as it came up in the spring and again before it could be harvested in the fall.³³

Henrietta Bruns visited the Schwartze’s in August 1837 and was impressed with Gottfried’s ability to build. She “...had to laugh aloud at his ability to build; a very pretty fireplace, a kitchen, and a strange outhouse have been finished. Really these people became extremely skilled here.”³⁴ She was also impressed with the Schwartze’s corn crop and the way their daughter Elizabeth helped her mother.³⁵ Henrietta Bruns also writes that on May 8, 1838 the Schwartze’s had a daughter who they named Johanna Henriette Georgia.³⁶ (Henrietta has the name correct, but Johanna is referred to as Maria Johanna in some sources.) Henrietta Bruns gives us some further small insights into the Schwartze’s life when she describes her concern over the loss of pigs during the hard winter of 1839-1840³⁷ and Gottfried’s role as substitute godfather for a son born to the Bruns on September 20, 1842.³⁸

In 1843 Gottfried died within a few hours of falling or being thrown from his horse while riding home from Lisletown.³⁹ In her autobiography, Henrietta Bruns described

...the horrible death of Mr. Gottfried Schwarze. He and young Schroder were madly riding home from Lisletown one night. Suddenly Schroder was alone and his companion lay on the ground with a broken head. He was taken home, but he never regained consciousness, and died after a few hours.⁴⁰

There is no record of his burial. There was no cemetery at the time of this death, and he may have simply been buried on the farm. In his seven years on the farm, he had managed to clear 30 acres.⁴¹

We know little of the details of Gertrude’s life after the death of her husband except that she stayed on the farm with her children for some time. Two years after the death of her husband, her oldest son, Bernard, died in 1845.⁴² He was just 16 years old, and his death must have been a great loss to his mother. The 1850 census shows Gertrude at age 43 living with her daughters, Elizabeth, Johanna (Misspelled as Johan), and son, William, who had been born in July 23, 1841.⁴³ The 1870 census shows her living with daughter, Maria and son-in-law Bernard Heitman.⁴⁴ By 1880, she is living with her son, William and his family on William’s farm on the Maries River, listed as a grandmother.⁴⁵ She must have been a good farmer and manager in her own right because she was able to contribute one of the bells for St. Joseph Church in Westphalia in 1883.⁴⁶ Gertrude died in 1899. Several dates for her death appear in the available records and documents; however, the date of her death on her tombstone in St. Boniface Cemetery in Koeltztown is 7 August, 1899.⁴⁷

Gertrude's daughter, Johanna Gertrude is not listed on the 1850 census form, and she may have died earlier.⁴⁸ However, a Gertrude Schwarze married Christopher Bartman at St. Joseph's church on March 29, 1853.⁴⁹ Neither the parents of the bride nor of the groom are listed in the marriage record making it impossible to determine whether this Gertrude Schwarze is the daughter of Gottfried and Gertrude Schwartz or is the daughter of another Schwartz family that had settled in the Westphalia community.

Gertrude Schwartz's daughter, Maria Gertrude, married Stephen Borgmeyer on November 11, 1856.⁵⁰ They lived on the original Schwartz family farm because the farm passed to her Borgmeyer descendants and then to her Brendel descendants who remain on the farm.⁵¹ Stephen Borgmeyer was the captain of Company G of the 28th Enrolled Missouri Militia formed in 1862. Many of the young men of the Westphalia community, including Herman Plassmeyer, Gerhard Winkelman, Stephan Winkelman, Henry Adrian and H. Dickneite served under his command or in other companies of the 28th.⁵² He died of typhoid on November 18, 1866.⁵³ Four years later on August 23, 1870, Maria Gertrude married Bernard Heitman.⁵⁴ The records of deaths of St. Joseph Parish show that Bernard Heitman was killed by an animal in 1883.⁵⁵ No other details are given.

Gertrude's sole surviving son, William, married Anna Holterman in 1865. Anna was a daughter of the Ferdinand Holterman who had travelled from Bremerhaven to Baltimore on the Ulysses with the Schwartz and Bruns families and settled in the Westphalia Settlement. William and Anna Schwartz had a farm along the Maries River between Koeltztown and Freeburg on what is now State Highway P. On the death of one of the incumbents, William was appointed to the County Court in 1884 or 1885. He then served as a member of the County Court for at least two more terms. The members of the County Court were titled as judges, and he became known as Judge Schwartz.⁵⁶ The County Court is now known as the County Commission and the members are no longer titled as judges. One of William's sons, Bernard F. Schwartz, continued in his father's footsteps. He was also elected to the County Court and also became known as Judge Schwartz. In 1898 Bernard married Clara Plassmeyer, the daughter of Joseph Plassmeyer and bought a farm from the Luebbert family directly across the Maries River from that of his father-in-law. He must have gotten along well with his father-in-law because the descendants of both families remain on the farms to this day.

Bernard H. Melies married two of Gertrude Schwartz's daughters. He married her daughter, Elizabeth Catherine, at St. Joseph's Church in Westphalia on September 27, 1853.⁵⁷ They had three children. Marie Gertrude was born on 19 December 1854 and died just six months later on 29 July 1855.⁵⁸ Gertrude, born in 1855, lived to maturity and married Henry Lehman. Casper, born in 1857, died at age nine. About a year after Elizabeth Catherine died in 1857⁵⁹, Bernard married her sister, Johanna, also at St. Joseph's Church, on November 16, 1858.⁶⁰ They had ten children.

Martin L. Plassmeyer

January 3, 2012

Colorado Springs, CO

¹ This spelling of the family name is used because it was used by Gottfried in his signature on the passport issued by the Prussian authorities even though the official completing the form spelled it “Schwarze.” Gottfried also used the spelling “Schwartz” on at least some of the land patents for land purchased in the United States. Henrietta Bruns spells the name “Schwarze” in her letters published in Hold Dear as always; Jette, a German immigrant life in letters, Schroeder, Adolf E and Carla Schultz-Geisberg, eds. The Curators of the University of Missouri, The University of Missouri Press, Columbia, MO 1988.

Other spellings such as “Swartza,” “Swartz,” “Schwarz,” and “Schwartz” appear on transcribed US census forms later. In the Osage County Centennial Booklet, sponsored by the Linn Chamber of Commerce and published by the Unterrified Democrat in 1941, the last name is spelled “Schwartz.” At least some of the descendants of Gottfried and Gertrude remaining in the Westphalia community now (2011) spell the name “Schwartz.”

² The correct spelling of Gertrud’s last name is “Cramer.” According to records of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Munster Germany, her brother was Bishop Franz Wilhelm Cramer. Notes re: Gottfried Schwartz from Fr. John Howren, in email dated January 28, 2010.

³ Schroeder, Adolf E and Carla Schultz-Geisberg, eds., Hold Dear as always; Jette, a German immigrant life in letters, The Curators of the University of Missouri, The University of Missouri Press, Columbia, MO 1988. p, 67. Hereinafter cited as Hold Dear as always.

⁴ Hold Dear as always, p. 69.

⁵ Notes re: Gottfried Schwartz from Fr. John Howren, in email dated January 28, 2010.

⁶ Prussian Passport for Gottfried Schwartz and family dated April 12, 1836.

⁷ Hold Dear as always, pp. 8 and 9.

⁸ Hold Dear as always, p. 9.

Nicholas Hesse and his family spent two years at the Westphalia Settlement from 1835 to 1837. They returned to Prussia in 1837. On his return to Prussia, he published a book describing to some extent his experiences in Missouri and giving advice to would-be emigrants. It was translated by William G. Bek and most of it was published in the Missouri Historical Review between 1946 and 1948.

⁹ Gentges, Margaret H., Immigrants to Osage County Missouri and their Immigrant Ships, 2nd. Ed., 1995. p. 99.

Ancestry.com Ahnentafel File for Alphonse Schwartz downloaded and printed by author, October 12, 2008. Copy in possession of author. The two documents give the same birth dates for the four children with some minor variation in the day of the month.

-
- ¹⁰ Hold Dear as always, p. 9.
- ¹¹ Hold Dear as always, p. 67.
- ¹² Hold Dear as always, p. 69.
- ¹³ Hold Dear as always, p. 69.
- ¹⁴ Hold Dear as always, p. 69.
- ¹⁵ Hold Dear as always, p. 69.
- ¹⁶ Hold Dear as always, pp. 69-70.
- ¹⁷ Goodspeed's Osage County History of 1889 as reproduced by Osage County EBooks, Hearthstone Legacy Publications, 2004 and 2008. See 1851 map. Hereinafter cited as Goodspeed's.
- ¹⁸ Hold Dear as always, p. 149.
- ¹⁹ Goodspeed's, p. 637.
- ²⁰ Goodspeed's, p. 637.
- ²¹ Schmidt, Rev. Joseph H., "Recollections of the First Mission Work in Central Missouri," Missouri Historical Review, vol. 5, no. 2 (January 1911) p. 85.
- ²² Land Patents (Land purchase documents). Copies in possession of author. On October 1, 1840 Gottfried purchased 40 acres in Section 35 of Township 42 North, Range 10 West and 80 acres in Section 21 of Township 43 North, Range 10 West. On December 10, 1841, he purchased 40 more acres in Section 21, Township 43 North, Range 10 West. On April 10, 1843, Gertrude purchased 40 acres in Section 21, Township 43, and Range 10 West.
- ²³ "1845 Osage County Property Tax List," KLEINE VOLKSBLATT Westphalia Historical Society Newsletter, vol. XIV, Issue 2 (Summer 2009), Connie Reichart, ed., p. 4.
- ²⁴ Duden, Gottfried. Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America – and a Stay of Several Years along the Missouri (During the Years 1824, 25, 26, and 1827). Trans. James W. Goodrich, general editor, *et al.* Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1980. P. 63.
- ²⁵ Duden, pp.63-64.
- ²⁶ Britton, Wiley "Pioneer Life in Southwest Missouri," Missouri Historical Review, vol. 16, no 2 (January 1922), pp. 285-287.
- ²⁷ Duden, p. 64.
- ²⁸ Mallinckrodt, Anita M. From Knights to Pioneers One German Family in Westphalia and Missouri, Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994, p. 129.
- ²⁹ Duden, p. 71.
- ³⁰ Bek, William G., trans., "Nicholas Hesse, German Visitor to Missouri, 1835-1837," Missouri Historical Review between 1946 and 19 48, p. 37
- ³¹ History of the Founding of the Parish and Town of Westphalia Missouri from Aug 6, 1835 to Aug 6, 1935, Melies, Rev. J. C., ed., p. 9.

³² Bek, William G., trans., “Nicholas Hesse, German Visitor to Missouri, 1835-1837,” Missouri Historical Review between 1946 and 19 48, p. 181

³³ Bek, William G. “The Followers of Duden,” Missouri Historical Review, Vol. XVI, No 3, (July 1922) pp. 546-550.

³⁴ Hold Dear as always, p. 79.

³⁵ Hold Dear as always, p. 79.

³⁶ Hold Dear as always, p. 87.

³⁷ Hold Dear as always, p. 104.

³⁸ Hold Dear as always, p. 118.

³⁹ Hold Dear as always, pp. 12 and 131.

⁴⁰ Bruns, Henrietta Geisberg, My Life Story, Adolf E. Schroeder, trans., University of Missouri Western History Manuscript Collection German Heritage Archive – Columbia MO in cooperation with The Westphalia Historical Society, Westphalia, Missouri, 2008. p. 30.

⁴¹ Hold Dear as always, p. 12.

⁴² Hold Dear as always, p. 131.

⁴³ 1850 Census Form, Linn Township, Osage County, Missouri.

⁴⁴ 1870 Census Form, Linn Township, Osage County, Missouri.

⁴⁵ 1880 Census Form, Washington Township, Osage County, Missouri.

⁴⁶ History of the Founding of the Parish and Town of Westphalia Missouri from Aug 6, 1835 to Aug 6, 1935, Melies, Rev. J. C., ed., p. 31.

“Godfrey and Gertrude Schwartze,” 175th Anniversary of the St. Joseph Parish, 1835 – 2010 Westphalia, Missouri, Walsworth Publishing Company, Marceline, Missouri, 2010, p. 124.

⁴⁷ “Godfrey and Gertrude Schwartze,” 175th Anniversary of the St. Joseph Parish, 1835 – 2010 Westphalia, Missouri, Walsworth Publishing Company, Marceline, Missouri, 2010, p. 124.

Transcribed Records of deaths, St Boniface Parish, Koeltztown, MO show her death in 1899. Others believe she died in 1897.

⁴⁸ 175th Anniversary of the St. Joseph Parish, 1835 – 2010 Westphalia, Missouri, Walsworth Publishing Company, Marceline, Missouri, 2010, p. 124.

⁴⁹ Marriage Records of March 29, 1853, St. Joseph Parish, Westphalia, MO.

⁵⁰ Marriage Records of November 11, 1856, St. Joseph Parish, Westphalia, MO.

⁵¹ “Godfrey and Gertrude Schwartze,” 175th Anniversary of the St. Joseph Parish, 1835 – 2010 Westphalia, Missouri, Walsworth Publishing Company, Marceline, Missouri, 2010, p. 124.

“Godfrey and Gertrude Schwartz,” St. Joseph Sesquicentennial 1835 – 1985, Mary Ann Crede Klebba, ed. pp. 124-125.

⁵² Records of 28th Missouri Enrolled Militia.

⁵³ Records of deaths, St Joseph Parish, 1866.

⁵⁴ Marriage Records of August 23, 1870, St. Joseph Parish, Westphalia, MO.

⁵⁵ Records of deaths, St Joseph Parish, 1883.

⁵⁶ Osage County Centennial Booklet, sponsored by the Linn Chamber of Commerce, Unterrified Democrat Print, Linn, MO, 1941, p. 3.

⁵⁷ Marriage Records of September 27, 1853, St. Joseph Parish, Westphalia, MO.

⁵⁸ Records of Deaths, St. Joseph Parish, 1855.

⁵⁹ Records of deaths, St Joseph Parish, 1857.

⁶⁰ Marriage Records of November 16, 1858, St. Joseph Parish, Westphalia, MO.