

Weber-Kuhn Tribune

News and Stories of the family of Harry and Tillie (Kuhn) Weber of Indianapolis, Indiana

*Volume 1
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Welcome to the Weber Reunion

August 27, 2011
Sarah Bolton Park
Beech Grove, Indiana

We are glad to see those of you who were able to attend the Weber Reunion and hope you enjoy the day. Pass along greetings to everyone in your family who couldn't participate.

Weber Reunion Planning Committee

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Family History You've Got the Gene

I enjoy researching and recording family history. But it is so much more fun when others are participating in the process. I'm referring to the discussions of "old-times" or the story-telling and browsing through old photographs. Every member of the family has some tidbit that adds to the story, even if you don't realize it.

Do you know a story that your parents or grandparents shared? Do you have some photos of one of the grandparents or great grandparents, Lawrence Keen? Charles Kuhn? Amelia Weber? We've had some great contributions to our family lore passed down by our, parents, aunts and uncles. Aunt Dolly provided a significant jump-start when she recorded the many genealogical details that she dug up. Uncle Bob took loads of photos and my mom, Rose, saved memories of her travels and school days. I have a lengthy oral history from Aunt Gin that I thoroughly enjoyed recording. Aunt Peg is my go-to historian, always filling in details for me. It seems like every time I'm with Aunts Ruth or Emma, they mention something that's a piece of the puzzle. Think about it. We must all have the family historian genes.

Let's keep the stories circulating. When you find something that you think might be an addition to the family history, I would be glad to record it, scan it or photograph it. Thanks for the help.

**Your Tribune Editor,
Nancy (Niehaus) Hurley**
Daughter of Rose (Weber) Niehaus

The Search for Adam and Amelia's Tombstone

When my husband, Jerry, began introducing me to genealogy research about 12 years ago, traipsing around in cemeteries was one of my initiations. They really are beautiful places, peaceful and open and full of interesting people, sometimes adorned with lovely flowers, with an unending array of background details to absorb. We began with St. Joseph Cemetery on the south side of Indianapolis since we knew already that I would have instant success locating family. But we decided to start by making inquiries at the cemetery office to get exact locations of graves past the two generations I remembered. The staff person took my list and disappeared into the back of the office, gratefully appearing again with burial information that she offered to copy for my records. However, she did mention that she didn't find a record for Adam Weber's grave site. You see, some of the old records were destroyed or lost. How disappointing. But, armed with a map she provided, we had a successful day of locating Webers, Kuhns, etc. and taking family history photos.

Of course, that wouldn't be the last time we thought about Adam and Amelia's grave. Each time we had more to do at St. Joseph's the lost grave would come up in our discussions. One day I decided I'd solve it by looking on the microfilm of the cemetery records at the Indiana State Library. Surely, the cemetery staffer had just overlooked it. No luck. Maybe some records weren't microfilmed. Regardless, we knew the grave had to be there in St. Joseph's with every other member of the family from that time frame. So on one sunny, pleasant day when we were finished early with other hunting and photographing, we decided we would walk the cemetery to try to find the grave of these immigrant ancestors. Where to start? Maybe the sections near their son Harry's burial plot would make sense. We divided the rows and began walking up and down. Well they weren't in the same section as Harry Adam and Mary Anna Weber or Harry L. and Tillie Weber. So we moved over and looked through a few more rows. Weber names kept appearing but the wrong ones. As we reached the back of Section 7, midway

between the north and south boundaries, at the edge of the dividing path, we spied a tall tombstone with the Weber name on the front. But then as we got closer we saw that the Weber name was all we could read. We tried standing at different angles, out of the bright sun, and eventually could read parts of the inscription. Adam and Amelia and Herman and Franz and young Amelia started to appear, just faintly. To get some better digital photos we tried using a file folder we had with us to shade the marker, thinking we could enhance them later on the computer. But there were still big problems reading the disintegrating lettering.

The challenge remained to transcribe the inscriptions correctly. Now, some say not to chalk a tombstone, or rub a tombstone in any way. We chose to use chalk... very carefully. And on another trip to the cemetery we softly outlined the engravings to make the names and dates pop out for a good photo. Finally, we had a readable inscription. Success!

Actually, after a few more years, we inquired again at the office. This time somehow another employee of the cemetery found a partial record under Amelia's name. Although this is only a list of names and burial dates, it did give new information for three more infants in the same plot – not included on the tombstone. By the way, Theodore, the son who died at 32 years of age, is buried next to Adam and Amelia, with separate marker.

It's unfortunate that 138 years of wear almost erased the history on Adam and Amelia's tombstone. Perhaps someday we'll attach a new marker that could stand the test of time. But for now, the rest of their family (you) knows that Adam and Amelia Weber's grave, along with their children Amelia, Herman, Franz and Theodore and three infants is located in Block 7, Lot 2, of St. Joseph's Cemetery. To be exact, the GPS coordinates are 39.73278 N, 86.16169 W).

Stop by the next time you're in the neighborhood.

Our Civil War Connections --- 150 Years Hence

150 years ago the citizens of the United States took up arms against each other, North against South, sometimes family members fighting against each other, each side determined that their cause was the absolute right one. The losses, sacrifices and turmoil were felt in every part of the country. In Indiana, Governor Oliver P. Morton called for volunteers over and over again. Hoosiers came forward from every county to fight for the Union in the Civil War, or the War of the Rebellion as it was named by the southern states. Over 350,000 lives were lost in the war, 1861 to 1865.

While doing family research I've read many stories about the horrific circumstances the soldiers in the Civil War had to withstand. As I began to uncover the individual stories of members of our family who were there the tragedy became more personal. I've thought at times about how everyone's lives were impacted in various ways during those years, especially the families who saw their fathers, brothers and sons go away.

The soldiers, of course, came from every walk of life and every cultural background. Think of the newlyimmigrated

young men who barely communicated with many other people. And they left behind families that had those same struggles. Many of their spouses probably had very limited resources and experienced great hardships during the war. Of course, this story has already filled volumes. But there's a piece of that story that has yet to be told, ours. As I am unearthing these details they have conjured more conversations with myself about how the folks in our personal pasts dealt with life's twists and turns.

In a few words, you might say that our family's Civil War veterans are a representation of the enlisted man, young and old, short service and long, city dweller and farmer. I know of four soldiers within the Weber-Kuhn line at this point, three were unmarried, between 19 and 21 years old, one was age 44 and married with children at enlistment. We can't know what they were thinking or how they felt about the conflict. We can't know the thought behind their decisions to become soldiers and how their families felt or what role they played in the decision. But we can speculate if we have more of the background. I'll very briefly tell you about the soldiers and their families.

Because he was the senior, I will mention Adam Weber first. At the ripe old age of 44 he joined the 143rd Indiana Infantry, in Feb 1865. He enlisted for one year and left his wife, Amelia, and three children in Indianapolis. Of course, the war ended later that year and he was mustered out in October. A short time after Adam joined Co. E of the 143rd he was promoted to sergeant. He served "on special duty" at

headquarters in Tennessee as Color Sergeant on orders of Commanding General John Grill. It is curious that a man of his age would enlist, especially at this late point in the war. But we know that after hundreds of thousands of casualties from both wounds and disease, the government was offering a bounty to get more recruits. Maybe Adam needed the money, since his military record does indicate that he received a \$100 bounty. Or maybe he felt that it was time to provide his military expertise for his country. Judging from those same records, he may have had military background from his earlier life in Germany. Tragically, eight years after the war Adam was run over by a train in Indianapolis and killed. There is more research and, hopefully, more answers about Adam coming. After all, he was a great grandfather to the children of Harry and Tillie (Kuhn) Weber.

In contrast to our Adam, Joseph Resch was 21 years old and unmarried when he joined the 32nd Indiana Infantry in September of 1861. The 32nd was an infamous regiment comprised totally of German immigrants from Indiana that saw action on many fronts, including the Battles of Stones River and Chickamauga in Tennessee, Kennesaw Mountain in Georgia and the Siege of Atlanta. Joseph returned to the family home in Dearborn County, New Alsace, Indiana after three years of hell. He married in 1868 and eventually came to Indianapolis to work in the C. F. Schmidt Brewery where his sister's husband, Charles Kuhn, also worked.

John Risch, another brother to Mary Anna Risch Kuhn, and a farmer from Defiance, Henry County, Indiana, served in the 36th Indiana Infantry. He was born in 1841 in New Alsace, Dearborn County, Indiana.

John's story is sketchy at this point. We do know that he was an unmarried man of 20 when he first joined his Hoosier regiment. He may have been one of the many who returned later in the war for further service with the same regiment, based on a county registration record yet to be fully explored.

Fortunately, John did make it through the experience and came back to his family in southern Indiana. He eventually married and moved to Hamilton, Ohio, near Cincinnati.

Barney Kuhn, one of Charles Kuhn's brothers, joined the 16th Indiana Infantry in September 1864 at the age of 19. He had only been in the U. S. for about five years, having immigrated with his sister in 1857, to be joined in 1862 by the rest of the family. He was a farm

laborer in Connersville, Fayette County, Indiana. Barney served until late 1865 as a mounted infantry soldier, mostly in the swamps and humidity of Southern Louisiana.

He returned to Connersville, married and had four children. But he had contracted what seems to be malaria during the war and never recovered. In 1880 at the age of 35, Barney Kuhn died. His grave in the Connersville City Cemetery is marked with a Federal grave marker denoting his Civil War service. His wife was forced to put their children in the Indiana Soldiers and Sailors Orphans Home for several years after his death. Thankfully though, it appears the family was reunited later. Barney's wife, Therese, found ways to make it through considerably tough times.

Now do you see how a person's mind could start wondering when these soldiers and their families become clearly a part of you? Adam and Amelia and Barney and Therese and John and Mary and Joseph and Mary shaped us in various ways and degrees. Of course, each person who played a role in the Civil War had an impact on our lives. But I'm speaking here of our direct connections. If Joseph Risch hadn't returned to become a father and move to Indianapolis to live for many years on High Street, working with our great grandfather, Charles Kuhn, maybe some part of our lives would be an iota different. Maybe he's the brother who brought his sister, Mary Anna Risch, to Indianapolis on the train from Dearborn County and introduced her to her future husband, Charles. There are so many maybes or scenarios that could have changed our lives.

Family Research

I want to give credit here to Mary Cathryn Zimmer Hoffman, for her book *Louis M. Risch Family and Ancestors*, self-published in 1994. This book aided me tremendously in locating records. I also have her work on *The Leppert Family*, mainly about Juliana Leppert Risch, one of my second great grandmothers. I will share these books if family members are interested. Mary Cathryn writes so well and gives background beyond the dates.

Leaving Hugstetten, Baden for Dearborn County, Indiana

The earliest arrivals in the United States among the Weber and Kuhn family were the Risch immigrants who left their home in Hugstetten, Baden in June 1828. This event was recorded in the Hugstetten Catholic Church Family Book that was microfilmed by the Church of the Latter Day Saints. Anyone can view these records through Family History Centers around the country.

Why would Mathias and Maria Risch leave Hugstetten with their young family, making a dangerous threemonth

trip on a cramped ship to America? The answer is probably as logical as it seems. They became desperate to find a way to improve the outlook for their family's future. The area they chose to settle, Dearborn County, Indiana, offered farm land and other types of resources, such as, timber from the rolling forests in southern Indiana.

But, what and where is Hugstetten and what else might have been going on there? Hugstetten is a village in Baden, Germany, northwest of Freiburg. Baden is a historical state on the east bank of the Rhine River in the southwest of Germany, now the western part of the Baden-Wuerttemberg (state) of Germany. It is in a lowland area near the Black Forest.

The family records in the local Catholic church indicate that the Risch family and others connected to them by marriage had lived in this area of Baden for generations. Leaving the traditional family home must have been a decision made as a result of major upheaval. There were long periods of unrest and societal change preceding the time that Mathias and Maria brought their family to America. The political strife fed by a population crisis, over-crowding of the skilled trades and food shortages led to a great deal of uncertainty in the 1820s and 30s. You can see how Mathias Risch, a carpenter with a young family, and his wife Maria, made the decision to pursue a new life thousands of miles away.

Other Germans from Baden most likely sent word home of Dearborn County's attractions. Information was sometimes passed back over the ocean from immigrants to other family or friends about the opportunities to purchase land and make a better future for their families.

The Atlas of Dearborn County, Indiana describes the area this way: "this plain has been worn by the waters of many ages into a beautifully diversified region of hill and valley, the lower valleys having an elevation of about 500 feet above sea level." The climate, pastures and other features of the Ohio river valley, including the overall similarity of appearance to southern Germany were probably very attractive to the Risches. However, with the limits of travel in the early 19th century, they would have known that this move would most likely keep them away from their homeland permanently.

The long trip in a sailing ship with five young sons had to be very unpleasant. Then the family would most likely have taken a horse-drawn wagon from the east coast to a navigable point on the Ohio River, and then a boat to Indiana.

Although, they had a brief stop for some business in Cincinnati. Deed records show that while in Cincinnati, on 31 Oct 1828, Mathias purchased 76.28 acres in Dearborn County for \$100. The family appears in the 1830 census in Dearborn County, Indiana. As far as we know, to this day there are still descendants in that area. Of course, our own story of Risches leads to Marion County (Indianapolis) when Mary Anna Risch married Charles A. Kuhn.

Learning the background of this immigrant family points to their determination and their independent nature. Maybe this explains certain characteristics of the Risch-Kuhn descendants. The next time I'm ready to give up in a difficult situation, I've decided that recalling Mathias and Maria's story could give me inspiration.

Nancy's Notes

The Weber-Kuhn Tribune is intended to share family stories and news. My plan is to make this newsletter an annual publication, at least. The Weber-Kuhn Reunion can be the primary means of distribution. But, I am willing to start an email publication list as well. Please share with me any email addresses of family members that you want to receive a copy. Also, this publication will improve with input from more family members. I wholeheartedly encourage you to contribute your own news items. Many thanks go to Becky (Holzer) Smith, Marti (Niehaus) Fleetwood, Janet (Weber) Jenkins and Jerry Hurley who helped edit this first volume of the Weber-Kuhn Gazette. Your suggestions are welcome. Contact me by email, phone or snail mail. Or fill out the form below and leave it with me in person.

Nancy Hurley
nancyhurley1@gmail.com
317-473-8696
Mailing address:
111 Rainbow Drive, #1152
Livingston, Texas 77399

Need your input. I'm taking a vote.

Which name do you think is best for our new Weber-Kuhn publication?

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Weber-Kuhn Tribune

August, 2011

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