

Adam and Amelia Weber Annals: A Story of Happiness and Tragedy

Adam and Amelia Weber, great great grandparents of mine and my Weber cousins, have an intriguing yet often tragic family history. As the research turns up more of the details, their story becomes very compelling and my curiosity grows. So, I am gradually embellishing their time line, recording what we know as I learn.

- Birth of Adam: 1821 in Mainz, Prussia (Germany). His birthplace is confirmed in his marriage record in 1856, before his emigration to America and in his civil war enlistment records in 1865.
- Birth of Amelia: 1833 or 1834 in Vilbel, a small town on the outskirts of Frankfurt, in southern Germany. In the 1870 census she was enumerated twice and reported two different ages, even though her birthday had not passed yet. Her birthplace is recorded as Prussia.
- Marriage: Adam and Amelia married on May 12, 1856, in Vilbel, Germany. We have a copy of the record of their marriage from the Catholic Church. In the record it states that they received a dispensation from the church as well as legal permission to marry, since they were second cousins. Amelia's mother's maiden name was Juliana Weber.
- Immigration to the United States: Their census records indicate that they emigrated from Germany in 1857. But I am still trying to confirm their voyage across the ocean. This has been one of my "Tuffies" in that I repeatedly search and cannot find any passenger list that I believe includes either one of them with any certainty.
- Children: Adam and Amelia's first child, Henry Adam, was born in Indianapolis in 1859 and baptized in St. Mary's Catholic Church. Christina Micol, presumed to be Amelia's sister, was a baptismal sponsor, along with Henry Nobbe (her future husband). Amelia gave birth to three more sons and one daughter by 1872. The family continued to be members of St. Mary's, making additional church records.
- Amelia's Siblings: The church records for Amelia's family in Germany are a "to-do" item. My Micol siblings are as yet unconfirmed. However, the baptismal sponsor, Christina Micol, can be assumed to be a sister. The records of Christina Micol arriving in America are also elusive. Someday perhaps, as the research develops, these Micol/Weber family members' entry into the U.S and arrival in Indianapolis will clear up.
- Adam in the Civil War: Adam enlisted in the U. S. Army in 1865, late in the Civil War. He served with the 143rd Regiment, Indiana Infantry. He

was promoted from private to sergeant about a week after he was inducted, per his Civil War Service Records attained from the National Archives. It is interesting that he was promoted in such a swift fashion. His age of 44 may be a hint to a possible history of former service, perhaps in the German army. His military service record also indicates he spent time in the army hospital in Tennessee during his enlistment. This is yet another mystery to be solved.

- **Family Deaths:** Franz, the fourth child of Adam and Amelia, died in 1871 at one year old. Then two children became victims of a diphtheria epidemic in 1876, daughter Amelia at age 14, and son, Herman, at age 4. The sadness in the Weber family during this five-year time period must have been tremendous.
- **Adam's Death:** During that same five-year period, Adam met with a horrible accidental death in the railroad yard near their home. On March 4, 1873 he was run over and killed by a Central Railroad engine at Noble Street in Indianapolis on his way home from his night watchman's job. There was a coroner's inquest stating the death occurred when he was crushed on the tracks by an engine. We have a news account of the accident from The Indianapolis Star. However, according to the news article he may have frozen to death before he was run over by the train. Now that I have a copy of the coroner's inquest, I am comparing the report and the news article to see if any more details could be pieced together and analyzed. However, the end result is still the same, a horrendous death for this 52-year-old Civil War veteran, husband and father of four.
- **Marriage of Henry Adam:** Ten years after his father's untimely death in the railroad yards in Indianapolis, Harry Adam Weber, Adam and Amelia's eldest child, married Mary Anna Keen in St. Mary's Catholic Church. Finally, some happy news for the Weber family.
- **Amelia's Widow's Pension:** In 1890, after the U. S. pension laws were amended, Amelia applied for and received a civil war widow's pension. She had been surviving as a dressmaker until this time according to city directory records. The new laws allowed widows to obtain a pension without the veteran having been disabled during the war.

However, the widow's pension records tell a story of some difficulties. In Amelia's first attempt to obtain the pension, the first application was turned down due to a mistake in reporting Adam's Civil War Company. After more affidavits and additional legal work, the records were located correctly and she was granted a pension.

- **Theodore's Good and Bad Fortune:** In 1893, Adam and Amelia's son, Theodore, married Amelia "Maggie" Kuhn. They became parents of a son, Theodore in 1895. But this marriage was cut short by more sorrow. The elder Theodore died of tuberculosis in 1896 at the age of 32.

- Amelia with Harry: At the time of the 1900 and 1910 U. S. census, Amelia is living with her only surviving child's family. The Harry Adam Weber family home at 537 South Alabama housed his family of twelve, yet they still had room for his mother. I am assuming that having this group of grandchildren in the home brought her some joy after surviving many struggles in her life.
- Amelia's death: Amelia died in Indianapolis in 1913 at the age of 79. She received her military widow's pension until her death. Amelia passed only two months after her eldest grandson, Harry Lawrence married Otillia Kuhn. She is buried with her husband and children in St. Joseph's Cemetery in Indianapolis.

In her last will and testament she makes a final statement that may shed some light on where she may have drawn her strength during troubling times:

"It is my will and I hereby direct that all the rest and residue of my estate, remaining after the payment of the matters in item I hereof, be used in payment of the expenses of saying masses for the repose of the soul of my deceased husband, Adam Weber, and for the repose of my own soul."

There were sorrows in the lives of Adam and Amelia Weber that we might presume far exceeded those of most people. Although, that could be termed a modern analysis of the situation. In 19th century reality these tragedies, especially the early deaths of children, occurred more often. Perhaps the burdens they dealt with were more "normal" than we would first presume. Regardless, I give them credit for being strong and determined individuals. So far, it appears that during the last ten to fifteen years of her life, Amelia came to have some relief and enjoyment. I am still moved to find more about their lives, to let us know more of who they were. Perhaps a cousin or two as yet unknown will enlighten me.

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