

Kraft (Kracht)

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Heinrich Friederich Kracht (born 1839) and Sophia M. Schröder (1842-1930)

Friederich Ludwig Kraft (1865-1943) and Wilhelmine (Minnie) Friederike Dorothea Kubbernuss (1872-1950)

Gertrude Minnie Kraft (1894-1992) and Ernest Julius Karl Dumroese (1893-1972)

Ronald Alfred Dumroese (1925-1999) and Janet Lee Kasten (1925-2007)

R Kasten Dumroese (1961-)

Our Kraft family first appears (so far) on the 6-7 December 1867 census of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. Mecklenburg-Schwerin was a duchy formed in 1701 through a division of the Duchy of Mecklenburg. In 1815, it became the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg, and is now part of the northeastern state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern^[1] in the Federal Republic of Germany. Listed in the census for Walkendorf, Ritteramt Gnoien, Mecklenburg-Schwerin is the family of **HEINRICH KRACHT** (born 1839), his frau, **SOPHIA M. SCHRÖDER** (born 1842), and son Fritz (Friederich Ludwig; born 1865).^[1] *[Note: Also listed is Friedericke Schröder (born 1835 [age 32]), her son Johann (1856 [11]), daughter Sophia (1862 [5]), and Helmuth Gade (1778 [89]). It could be that Friedericke is the widowed sister-in-law of Sophia (with her children), but Helmuth is a mystery. He does, however, show up in the 1819 census as well, being born in Castroff, living in Walkendorf. Below him is a Sophie Gaede, born 1783.]* Sophia's father was Johann.^[17] Heinrich and Sophia went on to parent five more children: Wilhelmine (1868), Sophie ("Anna" 1973), Hermann (31 Oct 1875)^[6], Johann F. (24 Jul 1876), and Heinrich (5 Mar 1879). Sometime before 1882, the elder Heinrich died.^[2]

In early spring 1882, the widow Sophia and her children left Poggelow, Mecklenburg, traveling to the port of Hamburg. There, they boarded the SS India.^[2] The SS India was a 1,551 gross ton ship of iron construction, 261 feet long x 34 feet wide, with two masts, one funnel, and a single screw that generated a maximum speed of 10 knots. Built by C. Mitchell & Co, Walker-on-Tyne (engines by Blair & Co, Stockton), the SS India was launched for the Carr Line on 12 October 1881. Established in Hamburg in 1879-1880 as a tramp ship company, the Carr Line expanded into the emigrant business in 1881 with a fleet of cargo liners. By offering cheaper fares, Carr Line entered into cut-throat competition with other Atlantic passenger companies. The SS India packed 500 third-class passengers.^[9,10] Speed was not a consideration and most westbound passages to New York took 17 to 19 days.^[10] The Krachts were on the maiden voyage of the SS India with Captain Haberland, which started 5 March 1882 in Hamburg^[2], through Plymouth, England, and on to New York.^[2,9] The Krachts arrived in New York City on 24 March 1882,^[11] where they were processed through Castle Garden on the tip of Manhattan.^[12] Castle Garden was the precursor to Ellis Island. Castle Garden documents list Sophia (age 39), Fritz (17), Mina (14), Sophie (8.5), Hermann (7), Johann (5), Heinrich (3) and Mecklenburg as their point of departure.^[12]

Sophia next appears in the 1900 US Census^[13] in Three Oaks Township, Berrien County, Michigan, but by 1905, she is recorded in Kalamazoo, Michigan.^[16] She lived in Kalamazoo another 25 years in a home with her son John. According to the 1910^[14] and 1920^[15] US Census, he was a "laborer" and a "presser" at the Kalamazoo Corset Company. The other son, Henry, also worked there as a "cutter" and a "pattern maker" until he was 69 years old.^[6] The Kalamazoo Corset Company played a pivotal role in changing the employee-employer

relationship in the United States. According to the Kalamazoo Valley Community College website^[7]: *"More than 800 of the company's workers were women. Some women worked for a few years before they married, while others supported themselves or their families. Poor working conditions and wages eventually led the women to organize a union, and when contract talks failed in 1912, to call a strike that drew national attention.*

"Edward K. Warren started the Featherbone Corset Company in 1883 in Three Oaks. Warren used splints of turkey feathers to give corsets their stiffness, rather than the traditional whalebone that broke easily and, when warm, actually smelled like old fish. Warren's change to "featherbone" stays was a successful innovation, and his company grew rapidly. In 1893, under new management, the company moved to Kalamazoo and changed its name to the Kalamazoo Corset Company. By 1912, the Kalamazoo Corset Company was one of the largest factories in the United States.

"Employees typically worked a 6-day, 60-hour week. Men made \$10 to \$12 per week and women made about half that. Women working on sewing machines were required to pay for their own thread from their wages. The Kalamazoo corset workers organized Local 82 of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. In March 1912, the union presented a list of demands for improved wages (\$9 per week after a year of employment) and a shorter workweek (only 54 hours). When the company president, James Hatfield, refused to discuss their demands and fired the leaders of the union, the workers went on strike, drawing national attention. The national headquarters of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union sent experienced organizers to lead the strike. Management threatened to close its Kalamazoo facility and move its operations to another factory in Iowa if the workers did not end their strike. Despite determined efforts the union was unable to rally public support for the strikers. The weeks took a toll on the workers. With no money coming in, workers found it difficult to keep going. Finally, in mid-April, the union called off the strike. The workers went back to the factory with no improvement in their wages or working conditions. The International Ladies Garment Union and other labor unions organized a national boycott of Kalamazoo Corset Company products. Within three years, the Company was forced to file for bankruptcy and begin operations under a new name. The International Ladies Garment Union claimed that the boycott was the reason for this failure. However, women's fashions were also changing and corsets were going out of style. This, too, may have contributed to the failure of the company."

Sophia passed away on 19 May 1930.^[17] She was buried in Section GG of Riverside Cemetery in Kalamazoo. It appears that when she died, John (or other family members) placed a "mother" stone to mark her place, and then, when he died in 1957, a headstone with both their names and dates was placed. The "mother" stone lies between two rows of stones.^[8]

Sophia and Heinrich's son **FRIEDRICH LUDWIG** (Fritz, Fred) was born on 25 January 1865^[18] in Wardow, Mecklenburg-Schwerin.^[3] After landing in New York, Fred next appears in Cook County, Illinois, where he was naturalized on 16 January 1889.^[5] Three years later, on 30 April 1892, Fred married **WILHELMINE FRIEDRIKE DOROTHEA (MINNIE) KUBBERNUSS** at Immanuel Lutheran Church on the corner of Ashland and Roosevelt Streets in Chicago. Their marriage certificate indicates Fred was from Wardow, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and Wilhelmine was from Levin-Werder, Mecklenburg-Schwerin.^[3,4] I cannot find Fred and Minnie in the 1900 US Census, but in 1910 they were living at 2721 West 23rd Street in Chicago's Ward 12 with six children.^[13] Fred was an engineer at the "wagon factory" and daughter Martha (6 Mar 1893-22 Oct 1923)^[22] was a stenographer

at the “lumber company.” The other five children were Arthur Louis, **GERTRUDE MINNIE**, Lillie Johanna, Edna Louse Elizabeth Henrietta, and Emma.^[13] By 1920, the family was still at 2721 West 23rd Street but Martha and Gertrude had married and left home, and their seventh child, Doris, had been born.^[14] Lillie was working as a stenographer and Edna as a typist. Martha had married William Albert Troike on 13 May 1916^[24] and Gertrude Minnie married **ERNEST JULIUS KARL DUMROESE** on 15 Jun 1918 (*see Dumroese history*). By 1930, the family had moved to 1824 Wenonah Avenue in Berwyn, Cook County, Illinois in a home valued at \$10,500.^[15] Fred was still working at the wagon factory as an engineer and daughter Lillian was the mimeograph operator at the local Young Woman’s Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.). Arthur was an inspector in the auto industry, and was living with his parents and his wife, Florence, and their 6-year-old son, Arthur Jr.^[15] In the 1940 US Census, Fred and Minnie were still in their home on Wenonah Avenue. Lilly was a switchboard operator at a dairy products firm, and Doris was doing housework.^[21]

Fred died on 1 Nov 1943.^[23] Although he was in his late 70s, he was still working on the premises of the Peter Schuttler Wagon Company, where he had been employed for 53 years. The plant had been sold five years earlier, but Fred was still working for the business that owned the plant. He had been inspecting roof repairs and while climbing down a ladder, it tipped and he fell 12 feet to the ground, suffering a skull fracture and internal injuries.^[23] Sometime after Fred’s death, Gertrude and Ernest Dumroese moved from Berwyn to Freeport, Stephenson County, Illinois, and (it’s not clear how or when), Minnie was living with them when she died on 23 March 1950.^[19] Fred and Minnie are buried side by side in Concordia Cemetery in Forest Park, Cook County, Illinois, next to Minnie’s parents, Louise (nee Koch) and Joachim Kubbernuss^[8,20] (*see Kubbernuss history*).

Sources:

- [1] Mecklenburg-Schwerin Census, 1867. URL: <http://Ancestry.com>. Original data: Mecklenburg-Schwerin (Großherzogtum). Volkszählungsamt. *Volkszählung am 3. Dezember 1867*. Landeshauptarchiv Schwerin. 5.12-3/20 Statistisches Landesamt (1851-1945). Viewed at <http://Ancestry.com> (accessed 15 Jan 2012).
- [2] Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1850-1934. Original data: Staatsarchiv Hamburg, Bestand: 373-7 I, VIII (Auswanderungsamt I). Mikrofilmrollen K 1701 - K 2008, S 17363 - S 17383, 13116 - 13183. URL: <http://Ancestry.com>, Staatsarchive Hamburg, 373-7 I, VIII A 1 Band 043 B, Seite 274 (Mikrofilm Nr. K_1727. Search = "Fritz Kracht" (accessed 22 Oct 2010).
- [3] Church Marriage Certificate, Trauschein. Friedrich Kraft aus Wardow, Meckle=Schwerin und Wilhelmine Kubbernuss aus Levin-Werder, Meckle=Schwerin sind aus 30th April 1892 durch Unterzeichneten in Gegenwart der Zeugen: Hermann Kraft, Wilhelm Schulz, Emma Kubbernuss und Martha Messenbrink.
- [4] Illinois Cook County Marriages, 1871-1920. Kraft, Fred and Minnie Kubbernuss. Married 30 Apr 1892, Cook County, Illinois. URL: <http://familysearch.org> (accessed 28 Aug 2011). Film 1030212, Digital Film 4227483, Image 1171, Reference: item 1.
- [5] Fred Kraft Naturalization Papers. In possession of Kas Dumroese.
- [6] Kraft, Henry obituary. The Benton Harbor (Michigan) News-Palladium (newspaper), Tuesday, 1 May 1973, p 16.
- [7] Kalamazoo Valley Community College. URL: <http://kvm.kvcc.edu/content/exhibits/moredetails/oth-kalamazoocorsetcompany.htm> (accessed 18 Mar 2009).
- [8] Personal observation by Kas Dumroese. Aug 2012. Riverside Cemetery, Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo County, Michigan.

- [9] The Ships List. India 1881. URL: <http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/descriptions/ShipsI-J.html> (accessed 22 Mar 2013).
- [10] The Ships List. Carr Line. URL: <http://www.theshipslist.com/ships/lines/carr.htm> (accessed 22 Mar 2013).
- [11] New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957. Original data: Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, National Archives, Washington DC: Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820-1897, Microfilm Publication M237, 675 rolls; Records of the US Customs Service, Record Group 36; Passenger and Crew Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1897-1957, Microfilm Publication T715, 8892 rolls. URL: <http://Ancestry.com>, Year: 1882; Arrival: New York , United States; Microfilm Serial: M237; Microfilm Roll: M237_448; Line: 40; List Number: 342. Search = "Fritz Kracht". Register lines 469-475.
- [12] CastleGarden.org. Search for "Fritz Kracht" at <http://www.castlegarden.org> (accessed 22 Mar 2013).
- [13] 1910 US Census. Kraft, Frederick L. Family. 2721 West 23rd Street, Chicago Ward 12, Cook, Illinois; Roll: T624_254; Page: 16B; Lines: 18-25; Enumeration District: 0610; Enumerated: 22 Apr; FHL microfilm: 1374267.
- [14] 1920 US Census. Kraft, Fred L. Family. 2721 West 23rd Street, Chicago Ward 12, Cook (Chicago), Illinois; Roll: T625_321; Page: 6A; Lines: 25-31; Enumeration District: 713; Enumerated: 2 Jan; Image: 453.
- [15] 1930 US Census. Kraft, Fred Family. 1824 Wenonah Avenue, Berwyn, Cook County, Illinois; Roll: 414; Page: 6A; Lines: 4-10; Enumeration District: 2005; Image: 399.0; FHL microfilm: 2340149.
- [16] Kalamazoo City Directory. URL: <http://kalamazooancestry.org>, (accessed 11 Jan 2012). 1905 Kalamazoo City Directory. Page 339. Kraft John, opr Kal Corset Co, bds 420 Eleanor. Kraft Sophia (wid Henry), res 420 Eleanor.
- [17] Michigan Deaths and Burials, 1800-1995. Kraft, Sophia. URL: <http://familysearch.org>, (accessed 23 Jan 2011). Indexing project (batch) number: I10271-1; System origin: Michigan-EASy; Source film number: 2075001.
- [18] Illinois Deaths and Stillbirths, 1916-1947. Kraft, Fred L. URL: <http://familysearch.org> (accessed 28 Aug 2011). Digital Folder 4152270, Image 1037, Film 1953890, Certificate? cn 30985.
- [19] Stephenson County, Illinois, Death Certificate, Kraft, Minnie. No. 28-33.
- [20] Concordia Cemetery Records. Fred and Minnie are buried in Section 6, Plot 175.
- [21] 1940 US Census. Kraft, Fred L. Family. 1824 Wenonah Avenue, Berwyn, Cook County, Illinois; Roll: T627_773; Page: 3B; Lines: 64-67; Enumerated: 5 Apr; Enumeration District: 16-35.
- [22] Illinois Deaths and Stillbirths, 1916-1947. Troike, Martha. URL: <http://www.familysearch.org>, (accessed 4 Feb 2011). Digital Folder Number: 4153185; Certificate: 27309.
- [23] Kraft, Fred L. obituary. Unknown source.
- [24] Illinois Cook County Marriages, 1871-1920. URL: <http://familysearch.org>, Troike, William Albert and Martha E. Kraft. 13 May 1916, Cook County, Illinois. FHL Film Number: 1030618.