

COLFAX, FILLMORE, HALL, and SHERIDAN COUNTIES

Philatelic Genealogy in Nebraska: Immigrant Origins

by James R. Miller

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Old envelopes and postcards from postal history collections are a source of genealogical information.[1] This paper presents four old envelopes from Nebraska that were sent to/from Germany, Switzerland, and England, with key genealogical data on the sender and recipient (when available) to introduce the Philatelic Genealogy website and database (<http://philgen.org>). The website was launched in March 2009 to begin building a digital archive of envelope and postcard images with genealogical value and to promote an exchange between postal history collectors and genealogists. The site has grown to more than 1,200 envelopes and postcards. Every item includes a photo (used with the owner's permission) and U.S. census or similar details on the sender and/or recipient. The website currently has 22 letters and postcards sent to/from Nebraska.

Finding a European immigrant's birthplace can be difficult. An address or a postmark can provide a clue. Reverend M. Kossick of Ohioa, Nebraska sent an envelope to Witwe (widow) Maria Kossick-Rychow in "Werben im Spreewald," Germany in 1900.[Figure 1] A Mathias Kossick, a "preacher," from Germany, is in Franklin (the township which

surrounds Ohioa[2]) in the 1900 U.S. census.[3] A Matheus Kossick, a resident of Werben, "Brdbg" (Brandenburg, where Spreewald is located[4]), Germany appears on an 1887 Hamburg departing passenger list[5] and on an 1887 New York City arriving passenger list, where he is shown as a pastor.[6] The envelope appears to involve a family connection as the sender and recipient share a family name and the envelope was sent to the location where the sender lived before coming to the U.S. The envelope, by itself, could be a starting point to search for

Mathias Kossick's European home. As with any source of genealogical information, an old envelope must be used in combination with other sources before reaching any conclusion. The envelope was found for sale for \$10 at a postal history website that has given permission to

Philgen.org to use more than 1,500 pictures of envelopes and postcards sent from/within Nebraska.[7]

J. Sandoz of Sandoz, Nebraska sent an envelope to Monsieur (Mr.) A.F. Sandoz, veterinarian, in Neuchatel, Switzerland in 1895.[Figure 2] A Jules A. Sandoz, from Switzerland, is in Running Water (where Sandoz is located[8]), Nebraska in the 1900 U.S. census.[9] After the envelope was placed on *Philgen.org*, a genealogist descended from Jules A. Sandoz's brother sent an email stating that Jules A.



Figure 1. 1900 envelope from Ohioa, Nebraska to Werben im Spreewald, Germany (Photo courtesy of Jim Forte Postal History)

Sandoz was born in Neuchatel and was the son of Ami Frederic Sandoz.[10] An online family tree shows that Ami Frederic Sandoz was a veterinarian and that he died in Neuchatel in 1895.[11] The envelope appears to have been sent by a son to his father. Jules

A. Sandoz was the father of the writer Mari Sandoz.[12] The envelope was found in an archived 2009 philatelic auction catalog on a web site from which *Philgen.org* has permission to use more than 17,000 photos.[13]

Two other envelopes (viewable on *Philgen.org*, search on family name or city) could serve as starting points to search for the sender/recipient's European home. Ferdinand Lechleitner of Ewing, Nebraska sent an envelope to Wattenscheid, Germany in 1907. A Ferdinand Lechleitner, from Germany, a Catholic clergyman, is in Lincoln Precinct, Colfax County, Nebraska in the 1910 U.S. census.[14] A Ferdinand Lechleitner, a Catholic clergyman, applied for a U.S. passport in Hall County, Nebraska in 1905 and stated that he was born in Wattenscheid, Germany.[15] Mrs. Robert Marwood of Clearwater, Nebraska received an envelope from Darlington, England in 1906. A Jane A. (Mrs. Robert) Marwood, from England, is in Ord (the township adjacent to Clearwater) in the 1910 U.S. census.[16] An online family tree shows a Jane Ann Harwood married Robert Marwood in Whorlton, England (about 12 miles southeast of Darlington) in 1858.[17] Both of these envelopes were found at the same website as Figure 1.

Additional envelopes and postcards involving Nebraska residents that were sent to/from the person's (or the person's parents') home country (viewable on *Philgen.org* by searching on the

person's last name or city) include Daniel Baehr (from France) of Stuart, Esther Gaberel (from Switzerland) of Sandoz (who wrote to a Gaberel in Switzerland), Anna K. Hansen (from Denmark) of Omaha, Elisabeth Humphreys (from England) of

Scotia, Samuel Hunziker (from Switzerland) of Sutton, Henry A. Koenig (from Germany) of Grand Island, Hermann Leerkamp (from Germany) of West Point, Fred Müller

(with a German father) of Bennet, Christof Parkenig (from Germany) of Plattsmouth, Emil Pittet (from Switzerland) of Randolph (who wrote to a Pittet in Switzerland), and Charles Vogt (from Germany) of Lincoln. Additional research is needed for each item to determine if the European address is the immigrant's family home.

I hope this article has helped you see a type of genealogical information available from postal history. In addition to place of origin, other envelopes and postcards show our ancestors' political and social interests, military service, work, recreation, and family correspondence within the U.S.[18] Many more envelope and postcard photos involving Nebraska residents are available and most have not yet been placed on *Philgen.org*. Postal history being sold on the Internet, at stamps shows, and in auction catalogs is classified by its stamps and postmarks. The purpose of *Philgen.org* is to make postal history accessible to genealogists by linking genealogical details to each envelope and postcard photo. Anyone interested in helping to add Nebraska envelopes and postcards to the website is invited to contact the author. Photos and data posted for each item will be credited to the person and/or their genealogical association.

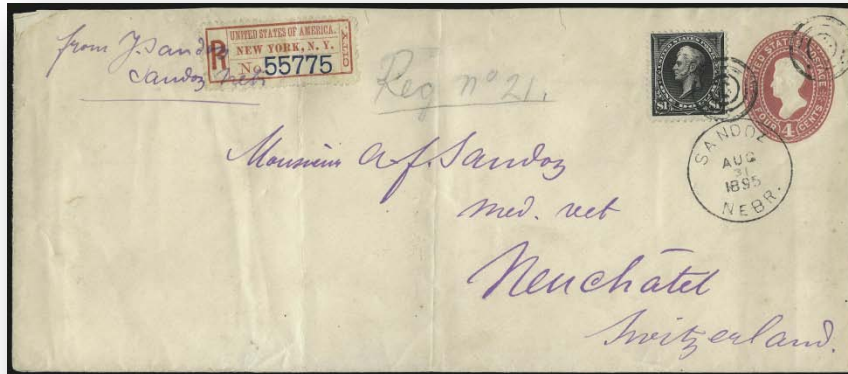


Figure 2. 1895 envelope from Sandoz, Nebraska to Neuchatel, Switzerland (Photo courtesy of Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Sale 977, Lot 546)

Notes

- 1 James R. Miller, "Philatelic Genealogy: Old Envelopes, Postcards, and Immigrant Origins," *New England Ancestors* 10:2 (2009): 37–38 and "Philatelic Genealogy Update: An Initial Assessment of the Genealogical Value of Old Envelopes and Postcards," *American Ancestors* 11:1 (2010): 45 [both viewable at <http://philgen.org>, click on NEA and American Ancestors in the Main Menu].
- 2 Wikipedia, "Franklin Township, Fillmore County, Nebraska" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franklin_Township,_Fillmore_County,_Nebraska, accessed 21 March 2010).
- 3 1900 U.S. census, Franklin Township, Fillmore County, Nebraska, ED 23, p. 8B (written), NARA series T623, roll 926. Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.
- 4 Wikipedia, "Brandenburg" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brandenburg>, accessed 21 March 2010).
- 5 Staatsarchiv Hamburg. Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1850-1934, departure date 9 February 1887, ship name Amalfi, volume 373-7 I, VIII A 1 Band 058 A, p. 59, (Mikrofilm Nr. K_1735). Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.
- 6 Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820-1897, arrival date 26 February 1887, ship name Amalfi, NARA series M237, roll 503. Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.
- 7 Jim Forte Postal History (<http://postalhistory.com>, go to "U.S. by State," click on Nebraska; accessed 21 March 2010).
- 8 Nebraska State Historical Society, "Mari Sandoz, 1896-1966" (<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/lib-arch/research/manuscripts/family/mari-sandoz.htm>, accessed 21 March 2010).
- 9 1900 U.S. census, Running Water Precinct, Sheridan County, Nebraska, ED 180, p. 3A (written), NARA series T623, roll 940. Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.
- 10 Ohlsen/Sandoz Family Tree, published online at *Ancestry.com*, owner LoriDenton524, primary source citation not shown for birth in Neuchatel.
- 11 J. Wulf Family Tree, published online at *Ancestry.com*, owner jen24201, primary source citation not shown for occupation and year of death for Ami Frederic Sandoz.
- 12 Nebraska State Historical Society, "Mari Sandoz, 1896-1966." See Note 8 (above) for more details.
- 13 Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Sale 977 auction catalog, Lot 546 (http://www.siegelauctions.com/lot_lkp.php, enter Sale and Lot numbers to see item and its description, accessed 21 March 2010).
- 14 1910 U.S. census, Lincoln Precinct, Colfax County, Nebraska, ED 49, p. 10A (written), NARA series T624, roll 841. Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.
- 15 U.S. passport application of Ferdinand Lechleitner, number 99562, Hall County, Nebraska, issued 16 March 1905, NARA series M1372, roll 670. Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.
- 16 1910 U.S. census, Ord, Antelope County, Nebraska, ED 8, p. 6A (written), NARA series T624, roll 838. Viewed on *Ancestry.com*.
- 17 Harwood 1209 Family Tree, published online at *Ancestry.com*, owner jeremyharwood, primary source citation not shown for marriage in Whorlton.
- 18 For examples of other types of information available from postal history, see James R. Miller, "Philatelic Genealogy in Iowa: An Introduction," *Hawkeye Heritage*, Vol. 44 (Number 1, 2010): cover, 7-14 and James R. Miller, "Philatelic Genealogy in Ohio: An Introduction," Vol. 41 (Spring 2010): cover, 6-9 [both viewable at <http://philgen.org>, click on Iowa and Ohio in the Main Menu].

The West Nebraska Family Research & History Center in Scottsbluff is ready to help you with your Scotts Bluff, Sioux, Banner and surrounding county research needs. Please contact us at (308) 635-2400 or online at www.wnfrhc.org for details and research rate information



Looking for information on Martin & Mary "Marie" Veleba. It is understood they arrived at Appleton, NE in about 1876 with a group of about 10 families to build the Blessed Mary Church. Their children are Mary, Francis, Anna and Frank. Frank is my g-grandfather. I've heard that Anna lived to be 100yrs old. Specifically, I am looking for the village or any details of where in the Czech Republic they immigrated from. I would be happy to share and compare information with other researchers. Please contact me at suemichos@sbcglobal.net. Thank you. Sue Veleba-Michos