

Franz Robrecht

1777-1844

Spouse:

Anna Maria Lenz 1778-1846

Children:

Clara 1804-61
Johann 1807-36
Carolina 1810-73
Ignatius 1813-88
Anton 1816-1905
Joseph 1819-26
Elisabeth 1823-73

Parents:

Franz Leopold Robrecht 1746-1823
Catharina Margaretha Hengst 1738-1816

Siblings:

Christian 1772-77
Maria Sophia 1775-1823
Eva Maria Elisabeth 1780-81

Half-siblings:

Clara Catharina Liliendahl 1762
Henricus Godfried Liliendahl 1766-66

Occupation:

Tailor

Johannes Franciscus Robrecht was born 6 November 1777 in Bühne, Germany, and baptized two days later at St. Vitus Catholic Church. Franz was the third of four children born to Franciscus Leopold Robrecht and Catharina Margaretha Hengst, who were married in Bühne on 2 January 1772.

At Franz's birth his sister, Sophia, was two years old. Three years later sister Elisabeth was born but only lived five weeks. Four months before Franz was born, his five year-old brother, Christian, died. Franz also had a half sister, Clara Catharina Liliendahl, who was 15 years old at Franz's birth, and half brother, Godfried Liliendahl, who died at birth in 1766.

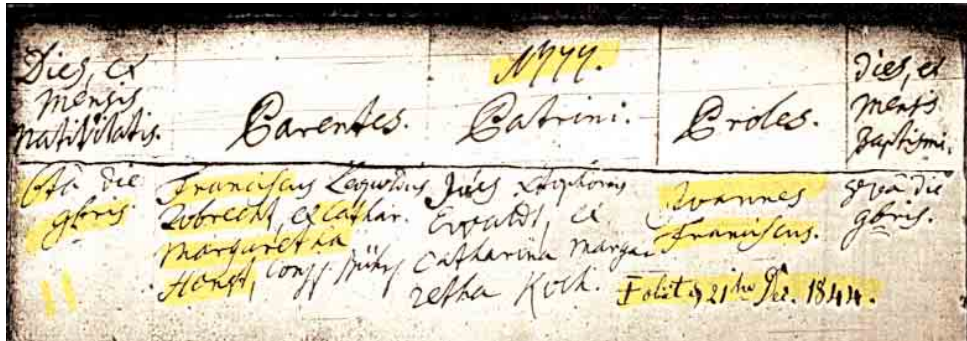
Franz's mother's first marriage ended with the death of her husband, Fridericus Adolphus Liliendahl, of Bühne.

Leopold supported his family as a tailor, a trade passed to his son and grandsons as a profession, and many more generations as an avocation.



St. Vitus Catholic Church in Bühne, Germany, where Franz was baptized.

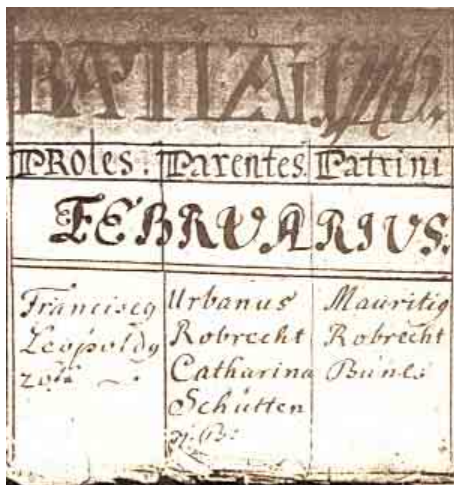
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Franz Robrecht's 1777 Baptism record, which also notes his date of death. When a person died in the same German village where he was born, the church scribe often wrote the death date on the birth record.

Franz's baptism record is found in the Bühne, Germany, church parish book. Franz's great-grandfather, Mauritius, was the first Robrecht whose baptism record appeared in the Bühne parish book. Mauritius's father, Henricus Robrecht, was born before births were recorded in Bühne.

Three of Franz's grandparents lived to their late 70s and early 80s, unusual in those days, and they were alive when Franz was born.



The 1746 Birth record of Leopold Robrecht, Franz's father. Also appearing in this record are Franz's grandfather, Urbanus, and Franz's great-grandfather, Mauritz, born in Bühne in 1679.

WAR AND REVOLUTION

Franz lived during a time of war and revolution, both in Europe and in the New World. The year before his birth, the American Declaration of Independence was penned, followed by the American Revolution. German mercenaries from Hesse (three miles south of Bühne) fought on both sides of the Revolutionary War.

1789 saw the start of the French Revolution in Germany's neighbor to the west, where church lands were nationalized. The French clergy, being identified with the nobility of the old regime, became one of the main targets of the revolutionaries, and many French priests and nobles fled to Germany to escape the guillotine.

German princes, nobles, and bishops wanted to see the French Revolution fail. A powerful alliance of Prussians, Austrians, English, Dutch, and German princes, along with deposed French nobles wanted to re-install the French Royalty and the old order. Their attempts failed.



Bühne survived one of Germany's most devastating military conflicts – the Seven Years War (1756-63). When Franz's parents were children the area around Bühne was devastated by foreign armies. Neighboring villages, as close as two miles away, were pillaged and occupied by opposing forces.

During the Seven Years War, armies did not travel with supply wagons; they survived by pillaging food and supplies along the way. Hungry, marauding soldiers and horses, in addition to military battles, erased entire villages from the map. Those that survived endured indescribable hardships.

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Germany returned to home rule after Napoleon's defeat and retreat back to France in 1815. Bühne escaped the ravages of the Napoleonic Wars because this part of Germany was used as a staging area rather than a battlefield.



A tailor's workshop is shown in this 1570 German woodcut. Although Franz and Leopold Robrecht worked as tailors 220 years after this woodcut was made, their work was done in much the same way.

News of these revolutions electrified the German people, whose feudal society had changed little over the last 700 years. The 1810s, 20s, and 30s saw several political uprisings urging civil reforms and a democratic constitution. These uprisings were put down and the revolutionary leaders were forced to flee abroad, many never returned.

At the start of the Napoleonic Wars in 1806, Franz Robrecht and his wife were the parents of one child. After defeating the Prussian (German) Army, Napoleon's troops occupied Germany for seven years. When Napoleon was defeated and his armies driven from Germany in 1815, Franz and Anna's family had grown to four children with another due.

MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

Franz Robrecht was 25 years old when he married Anna Maria Lenz in Bühne on 4 May 1803. Anna Maria celebrated her 25th birthday eight days after their wedding. Most of Anna Maria's ancestors are also found in Bühne's earliest parish records dating to 1658.

Franz and Anna Maria lived with her parents in the Lenz farm house and that's where Franz and Anna Maria's seven children were born. Anna Maria's sister, Eva, and her husband, Bernard Wagener, and their six children also lived in the Lenz farm house, which was located on the outskirts of Bühne.

Anna Maria and her sister and brother were raised on the Lenz farm, indicated by 1787 tax records. In 1787 the County (Bishopric) of Paderborn, where Bühne is located, levied a head tax to finance rebuilding after the horribly destructive Seven Years War (1756-63).



This old farm house was located down the street from where Franz Robrecht and his family lived in 1831. In German villages the family living area and the barn were under one roof. This building was torn down in 1977.

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Georg Lenz died of cancer in 1805 and Georg's wife, Eva Maria Weber, died in the farm house in 1809.

A year after their marriage, Franz and Anna's first child, Clara, was born in 1804 followed by Johannes three years later. 1810 and 1813 brought Carolina and Ignatz. Anton was born in 1816, and two months later Franz's mother died at age 78.

Franz's youngest son, Joseph, was born in 1819. When Elisabeth Robrecht, our ancestor, was born in 1823, her sisters were 18 and 12 years old and her brothers were 15, 9, 6, and 3 years old. Three weeks after Elisabeth's birth, Franz's sister, Sophia, died. Sophia was married to the Bühne village policeman, Christoph Rasche, and they had eight children. Franz's father also died in 1823 at age 77.

According to 1831 tax records, the Franz Robrecht family moved from the farmhouse to the main part of the village, probably around 1829. The house they moved to was owned by Conrad Deventer, the husband of Franz Robrecht's oldest child, Clara. (See the map on page 3, in the Elisabeth Robrecht biography, chapter seven.)

Franz Robrecht died of pneumonia in Bühne, Germany, on 21 December 1844 at age 67. He was buried two days later in the Bühne church cemetery where his wife, Anna Maria, joined him in death two years later at age 68.



Bühne Cemetery where Franz Robrecht and Anna Maria Lenz were buried in 1844 and 1846. Unlike purchased burial plots, German grave sites are leased, usually for a few decades, and then the graves are removed (to an ossuary) to make room for new burials.

Franz lived to see 10 of his 38 grandchildren, of whom only three lived out their adult lives in Germany.

Of Franz and Anna Maria Robrecht's seven children, three remained in Germany and four emigrated to the United States. Those who stayed in Germany were:

Clara (born 1803) married Conrad Deventer in Bühne in 1828 and they had seven children. Clara died in Bühne at age 56. Two of her children died in childhood, three remained in Germany, and two sailed to America and settled in Newark, NJ.

Johann (born 1807) died of tuberculosis at age 29, unmarried. Like his forefathers, Johann was a tailor.

Joseph (born 1819) died of a fever at age five.

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FRANZ'S EMIGRANT CHILDREN

Four of Franz Robrecht's seven children immigrated to the United States between 1848 and 1859 and they all settled in the "Germantown" neighborhood of Newark, NJ. This thriving German immigrant community made up one third of Newark's population by the 1860s.

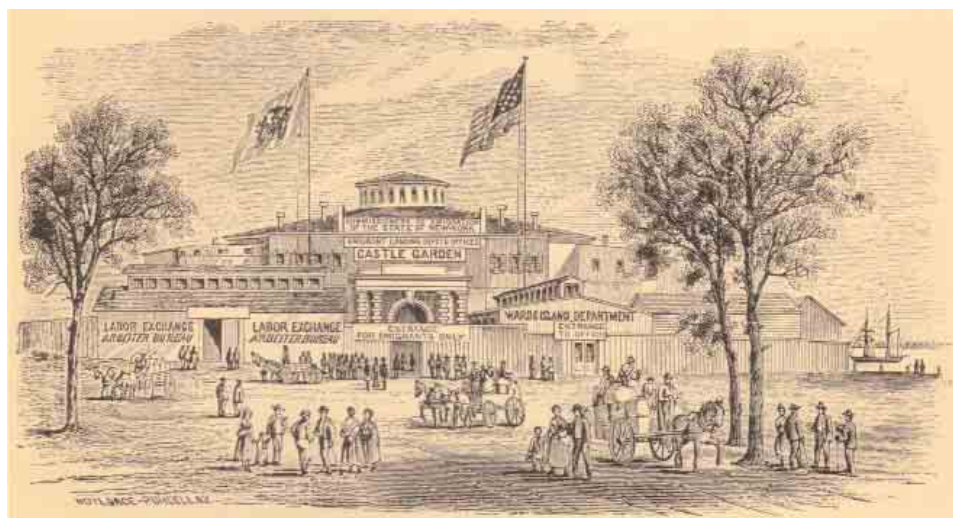
Carolina (born 1810) married William Temme in 1845 in Böhne. Their first child was born in Böhne, Germany, in 1849 and their second child came in 1853 after they arrived in the United States. William Temme worked as a laborer in Germany and in Newark.

In 1836, before her marriage to William Temme, Carolina gave birth to Charles, whose father was not named. Children like Charles, born out of wedlock, were often treated poorly and everyone in the village knew who they were. These children were baptized with their mother's last name and



Those who had little money could stay in mass accommodations, such as this seaport emigrant hostel, while waiting to board ship. Others camped out dockside in covered wagons and tents. Steerage conditions aboard ship were similar to those in the emigrant hostels; families were accommodated in large rooms that offered primitive, unsanitary living conditions and passengers slept three to a wooden bunk. Atlantic crossings took seven weeks in the 1850s, and passengers made themselves at home as much as possible and passed time with card playing and music.

labeled "Illegitimus" in church parish record books (kirchenbücher).



Castle Garden, through which all steerage passengers were required to pass, was located on the tip of Manhattan Island. Carolina, Ignatz, and Anton passed through Castle Garden when they arrived in America in the late 1850s. Castle Garden operated from 1855 to 1892 when its function was replaced by Ellis Island. 1870 woodcarving.



On-board medical care was poor and the average mortality rate was 1.8 percent during the 1850s on ships sailing from Hamburg. If an infectious disease broke out on the voyage, the number of dead could climb to 20 percent.

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Young Charles was almost nine years old when his 34 year-old mother married William Temme. Three years later, in mid 1848, 11 year-old Charles sailed to America with his 24 year-old aunt, our ancestor Elisabeth Robrecht. Charles's mother, stepfather, and half siblings arrived in Newark several years later. Carolina died in Newark in 1873.

Ignatz (born 1813) married Amalia Wieggers in 1842 in the neighboring village of Beverungen, Germany, where they had nine children, four of whom died in childhood in Germany. Ignatz and his oldest son sailed to America in 1857 with Ignatz's brother, Anton, and his son. Ignatz's wife, Amalia, sailed to America two years later with their four surviving children and Anton's daughter. Ignatz operated a shoemaking business in Newark from 1858 to 1888, the year of his death.

Anton (born 1816) married Marianna Ewald in Bühne in 1847. They had four children before Marianna died at age 35, shortly after the 1856 death of her infant daughter. In March 1857, Anton and his son sailed to America on the Brig Jeverland with Ignatz Robrecht and his son.



Letters written from immigrants to their relatives in Germany were read with great interest and often shared with the entire village.



St. Mary's (left) and St. Peter's German Catholic Churches in Newark where the Robrecht immigrants worshiped, married, and baptized their children.

Anton's two surviving daughters joined him later in Newark, one crossing the Atlantic with Amalia Robrecht, Ignatz's wife, and their four children in 1859 on the Ship Göschen that sailed from Bremen, Germany, 150 miles north of Bühne.

In 1859 Anton married Apollonia Bachmann in Newark where they raised Anton's three children from his first marriage in addition to eight of their own, born between 1859 and 1875. Anton was in business as a tailor from 1861 to 1904 in Newark's Germantown neighborhood where he died in 1905.

Elisabeth our ancestor (born 1823) sailed to America mid 1848 with her 11 year-old nephew, Charles Robrecht, who was her sister Carolina's son. Elisabeth claimed to be Charles's mother in their emigration record.

Shortly after her arrival in the U.S., Elisabeth married William Mönighoff in New York, where their first two children were born. Elisabeth and William had five more children after they moved to Newark in 1850. William Mönighoff, born just 13 miles from Bühne, operated a grocery store in "Germantown" Newark from 1851 to 1892, the year of his death. Elisabeth died in 1873. See Elisabeth's biography, chapter seven.

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Charles, who left Germany with our ancestor, Elisabeth Robrecht, married Margaretha Freund in Newark in 1860. Widower Charles later married Anna Maria Huber. They raised their nine children, one of whom may have been from Charles's first marriage. According to the 1900 census, Anna Maria gave birth to twelve children, indicating she was a widowed mother of three when she married Charles. Charles and his large family lived in "Germantown" Newark where he worked as an iron molder.

Elisabeth's brothers, Ignatz and Anton Robrecht, initially ran their businesses out of the Mönighoff Grocery store after their arrival in Newark. They later moved their growing shops to other locations within the neighborhood. William Temme, Carolina's husband, also listed the grocery store address as his business location.

St. Mary's, St. Peter's, and St. Augustine's church parish books in Newark, NJ, tell a story of a close-knit immigrant family, worshipping together and serving as godparents and witnesses at baptisms and marriages for five decades in the large extended Robrecht family.



Several Robrecht gravesites are pictured in this photo taken at St. Mary's German Catholic Cemetery in Newark where Ignatz, Anton, and Elisabeth are buried along with their spouses and many of their children and grandchildren.

The following article, printed in Harper's Magazine in October 1876, describes Newark's "Germantown" Community.

We find an interesting picture of German life in Newark.

A wondrous tide of Germans has flooded Newark, dropping into all vacant lots and spreading itself over the flats to the east and the hills to the south and west, until it numbers one-third of the voting population. The German quarter on the hill is one of the interesting features of the city. A section nearly two miles square is a snug, compact, well-paved city within a city, giving evidence of neither poverty nor riches.

The Germans who dwell here are chiefly employed in factories and nearly all own their own houses. They live economically and save money. German habits and German customs appear on every side. The women carry heavy bundles, great baskets, and sometimes barrels on their heads. Wherever there is room the Germans have gardens and raise vegetables for Newark Market. At early morning the women may be seen driving their one-horse wagons into town.

In 1833 there were 75 known Germans living in Newark and by 1835 the number was 300, probably hearing of the place by letters home.