

*Kull  
 Family*

THE KULL FAMILY HISTORY

*Following account concerns my great-great-grandfather, JOHN MICHAEL KULL, and his life ending with his emigration from Germany to the United States.*

*Willard N. "Bill" Reeve*

FOREWORD

The KULL family history on the following five pages has been taken from an unfinished rough draft that has been worked on by HELEN KULL, a daughter of CHARLES JULIUS KULL and granddaughter of JOHN M. KULL, in the last few years before her death in 1969.

She, in turn, had evidently based much of her work on material written earlier by IRVING EDWARD KULL, a cousin, who was a professor of history at Rutgers University and very much interested in his KULL ancestry and the history of the family.

In rewriting this history I have done some editing, making a few corrections, reworking the references, and adding the names of all the JOHN MICHAEL KULL's children. HELEN KULL's notes indicate she planned to add more about JOHN's brother, ANDREW W. KULL, his land purchase, his home and age.

We do know that he was born in 1808 in Wurttemberg and died in 1888 and that he was buried in Hill Cemetery, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. He married GERTRUDE PFROMMER, born in 1806 in Wurttemberg, died 1872 and buried also in Oak Hill Cemetery. They had no children of their own but adopted JOHN's son, ANDREW C., whose own mother, CYNTHIA, died when he was an infant.

KENNETH J. REEVE  
 Brown Co., Indiana, 1980

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 THE KULL FAMILY

1) JOHN MICHAEL KULL, son of JOHN MICHAEL KULL (mother's name not now known), was born in Wurttemberg, Germany, November 15, 1814. His family was poor. His mother had died and his father had died again. When JOHN was sixteen his father also died. There were other children in the family - ANDREW, who is years older, and DAVID, who was younger. There were also half or step-siblings. According to one record, he had a sister; according to another, two sisters, CATHERINE and ELIZABETH. The origin of the family is uncertain.<sup>1</sup>

On April 15, 1833, JOHN MICHAEL KULL was issued a passport in Neuenburg, Schwartswald District, by the King of Wurttemberg. His occupation was listed as having to do with trees. A description of his route is included and a notation that he was not free from military obligation.<sup>2</sup> The route that he was to travel through Prussian states to Bremen was indicated. It is noted that from Stuttgart, capitol of Wurttemberg, to Bremen is approximately 150 airline miles, to be travelled, presumably, on foot.

JOHN MICHAEL KULL's brothers, DAVID and ANDREW, accompanied him on the voyage. Brother ANDREW had lent him the money for the trip to America. Later, when he at last received a small inheritance from his father's estate, he returned it to his stepmother, who was in straitened circumstances. The three brothers left Bremen on a voyage which turned out to be a long and stormy one. On reaching port, however, they seem to have found difficulty in securing employment. Factories operated by water power were being built and there was a strong demand for machine-made goods and men to produce them. JOHN MICHAEL KULL worked for a year as a gunsmith, then

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for about four years in the woolen mills of Massachusetts.

About 1837 or 1838 the KULL brothers joined the great throng of immigrants pressing westward. The opening of the Erie Canal (Clinton's Big Ditch) gave easy access to passage up the Great Lakes. Boats traveled at about four miles per hour at a cost to patrons of one-half cent per mile. Meals, berths and other charges were extra. Able bodied young men were given the opportunity to pay for their passage by occasional forays ashore to fell trees and prepare wood for the engines. We can assume that the KULL brothers chose this alternative in order to conserve their hard-won earnings. When Michigan was reached, DAVID, conceivably irked by the slow progress and intervals of wood chopping, insisted on remaining there. Expostulations were unavailing so ANDREW and JOHN MICHAEL went on, leaving DAVID behind. They never saw him again.

Reaching Illinois, they worked on the Illinois and Michigan Canal, which had been begun in 1836 to connect Chicago with the Illinois and Mississippi River system. In later years JOHN MICHAEL told graphic stories of the Donnybrook Fairs celebrated by the Irish laborers on payday.

The date of the brothers arrival in Wisconsin is uncertain. There seems to have been an exploratory trip about 1839 on which they selected land they would like to own. It is evident that they recognized the good clay soil upon which maples and oaks flourish. It is doubtful whether any formal  
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measures to obtain land were taken at that time. Records of the old Milwaukee Land Office may show. Early in the spring of 1840 they returned, guided through the woods by a small compass.<sup>3</sup> Calculations must have been made most carefully, for their route took them back to the place they had previously agreed upon, later to become the ANDREW KULL farm in North Bloomfield, Walworth County, Wisconsin. JOHN MICHAEL KULL chose land a few miles to the southwest. Both must have been inwardly rejoiced at finding for themselves a settled, though difficult, way of life in a fair country.

The first quarter section of JOHN MICHAEL's farm was bought directly from the United States government, the grant being signed on March 25, 1841, by President William Henry Harrison, nine days before his death. The second parcel was purchased seven years later, President James A. Polk signing the grant on February 1, 1848, approximately four months before Wisconsin Territory entered the Union as a state.<sup>4</sup>

Before the purchase of the land, on January 8, 1841, JOHN MICHAEL KULL married CYNTHIA SLAFTER. She had been born May 25, 1824, the daughter of CALVIN and JERUSHA SLAFTER of Cuba, New York. JOHN and CYNTHIA lived in a little log cabin to the east of the brick house built later. Their first child, MARGARET ELIZABETH, was born November 16, 1842. Their second child, ANDREW CHRISTOPHER, was born April 12, 1845, CYNTHIA died August 14, 1845, at the age of twenty-one years, leaving a daughter less than three years old and a son of only four months. ANDREW was taken to rear by his uncle ANDREW and his wife, GERTRUDE PFROMMER, of Stuttgart, Germany. He became known as ANDREW, Jr., and eventually was made their heir.

Almost two years after the death of CYNTHIA, JOHN MICHAEL, hearing of a personable young woman living on a farm near Burlington, traveled over with his oxcart to meet her. On June 6, 1847, he and MARGARET ANN RUNKEL were married and he brought her and her little French trunk<sup>5</sup> back to the little log cabin where he and CYNTHIA had lived. MARGARET ANN was born July 14, 1825 in Grolsheim, Heuse-Darmstadt, not far from Bingen on the Rhine. She came to the United States with her parents, JOHN R. and AGNES RUNKEL, and presumably an uncle ANTHONY (?), who had been with the French army which had invaded Russia.<sup>6</sup> A niece, CHRISTINE RUNKEL, later KIMBALL, also seems to have come with this group.

MARGARET ANN, age twenty-two at the time of her marriage, undertook the care of little MARGARET ELIZABETH. Her first child was ANTHONY, born March 30, 1848. After his second marriage, probably the most difficult part of JOHN MICHAEL's life lay before him — days full of toil and hardship. Land had to be cleared, wells dug, shelters and rail fences built for the livestock. He and neighbors helped with the construction of roads where mere trails had been.

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Nine years after he married MARGARET ANN, he hauled by ox team from Kenosha (thirty miles over the roads of the time) enough cream-colored handmade brocks to build a commodious and firmly built house. The walls are thick, reinforced by hand-hewn oak beams keyed together by wooden spikes, and handmade square nails. It is strong and sturdy today, over a hundred years old, an excellent example of pioneer architecture.

JOHN MICHAEL KULL planted two orchards and a nursery of choice fruit trees - several varieties each of apples, peaches, plums, and especially

strawberries of superior quality and much diversity. All these were procured from New York and used to produce scions for other settlers. It has been said that in its prime it was the oldest and best nursery in the state. There were also an unusual amount of small fruit - gooseberries, raspberries, currants and blackberries.

The children were well and suitably clothed and there was always an abundance of good food. Indeed a list of the food provided the family in that early day is amazing. Honey, fruit, vegetables (including the only asparagus in the community), dairy products, poultry and other meats, stone-ground corn and wheat - essentially more wholesome nourishment than can be procured today.

JOHN and MARGARET ANN KULL had eleven children born between 1848 and 1870; ANTHONY J., ANNA MARIA, AGNES ADELIA, CHARLES JULIUS, EDWIN ORLANDO, PHILIP HENRY, ROSALIA ANN, JOHN WILLIAM, GERTRUDE ATLANTA, FRANK S., and IRENE. All lived to reach maturity and marry except ANTHONY J., who died at age twenty years.

With German regard for learning, the education of their children was a matter of intense concern to MARGARET and JOHN. Under their mother's direction the girls became excellent housekeepers and superior cooks. The boys helped with household tasks as youngsters and as they grew older acquired the diverse skills farmers on the frontier were compelled to master. Since Johnny Appleseed had ended his effort to start orchards by scattering seed in every generation before, one accomplishment should be especially noted. All of the KULL boys became expert in the care of apple trees. Their father saw to it that they understood cultivating, fertilizing, grafting, and breeding apples.

Aside from the training the children received at home, MARGARET and JOHN made a great effort to give their children the opportunity to obtain all of the formal education then available, in that respect far surpassing the accomplishments of their neighbors. ANTHONY attended the Institute for the Deaf at Delavan, Wisconsin and later, Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. CHARLES attended the Lake Geneva High School, milking cows each morning before starting out, and walking back and forth. MARGARET, ANDREW, SUSAN and AGNES were educated in Miss Moody's Select School in Lake Geneva. GERTRUDE, IRENE and FRANK attended the Whitewater Normal School (now a university), and EDWIN was a student at Wheaton College in Illinois. Information on the other children is not now available but the record as it stands is most remarkable for a day when necessity required the young men to be provided with fuel and food from home.

JOHN MICHAEL KULL helped with the organization of a church, the members of which met in the schoolhouse at the edge of the farm. When in 1852 the church was formally established in Genoa, he was one of the first members, contributing generously to its building and maintenance. Above all, his own behavior established a standard. He set a good example for his boys. There was no drinking or smoking; profanity and indecent stories were never heard in his house.

His life was shortened and his last months saddened by a tragedy. He had been harassed by young hoodlums in the neighborhood who stole his apples, uprooted young trees, and overturned his beehives. One such group, having been invited to a party where biscuits were to be served, decided that honey was needed for the biscuits. Who had the honey? L. ? Forthwith they went to get it, and were making off with one or more of the hives when he was aroused. Whether or not he gave a warning shout is not clear, but he shot, wounding one boy in the arm. The boy's arm was mangled as a consequence. When the matter came to court he was fined one thousand dollars. Worried over the loss

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of what was a large sum of money in his advancing years, and distressed by the injury done the boy, he failed rapidly, dying July 31, 1881, at the age of sixty-seven years. MARGARET ANN died December 5, 1891. Both were buried in the Bloomfield Cemetery, about two miles south of the old farm. Also buried there is their son ANTHONY J. KULL, JOHN and first wife CYNTHIA's daughter, MARGARET ELIZABETH, wife of EDWIN ROSE FRISBIE HART, is buried there as well. She died Sept. 7, 1877, age thirty-five years, in Chicago.

Originally buried in Bloomfield Cemetery, but later reinterred in the Oak Hill Cemetery in Lake Geneva by ANDREW KULL, Jr. (eldest son of JOHN MICHAEL KULL), were his own mother, CYNTHIA SLAFTER KULL, his four year old son, HENRY ANDREW KULL, and his adoptive parents, ANDREW M. and GERTRUDE PFROMMER KULL.

#### REFERENCE NOTES:

1. The early history of the KULL family offers an opportunity for research in Germany. IRVING S. KULL, grandson of JOHN MICHAEL KULL, found some published information on the origin of the family in Wurttemberg, and a coat of arms of the family. The head of the house seems to have been born in Castle Stuttgart. IRVING said that all of the KULLS that he had met in America - in Ohio and New Jersey - seem to have come from Stuttgart. He found the following information in the genealogical library at Rutgers University: "NIKLAS KULL was knighted by Kaiser Ferdinand II in Vienna, July 24, 1628. He was the supervisor of the salt works at the Castle Stuttgart, Nov. 5, 1635." Mr. Monette, genealogist at Rutgers, listed NIKLAS as the founder of the family. In regard to the knighting of NIKLAS KULL, Ferdinand II had begun the Thirty Years War in 1618, ten years before this ceremony, resolved to win back Germany to the Catholic faith. By 1628 he had overthrown the Danish king, conquered the Palatinate, and seemed on his way to master Germany. Unquestionably he needed salt as a meat preservative for his army. Siebmacher's *Wappenbuch*, Vol. VI, 2 & 3, pg. 219, Plate 121, gives a description of the KULL coat of arms: On a large shield, a mermaid or siren, with fishtail twisting behind her to the right, hair flying, holding a crown in her right hand; above, a crowned helve; at top, another mermaid with two fishtails, holding them with her two outstretched hands. Colored red and white.

2. In 1968 JOHN MICHAEL KULL's original passport was in the care of JERRY KULL, son of EDWIN O. KULL.

3. HELEN E. KULL noted in 1969 that she had the old miniature compass in her possession. She said that it was unquestionably of Chinese origin, made of brass, elaborately decorated, and with a chip of green jade, simulating a leaf, attached by a wire loop through which a cord could be threaded. Since the clipper ships were then sailing, it is probable that it was purchased from a sailor.

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4. HELEN E. KULL noted in 1969 that JOHN MICHAEL KULL's original land grants were in her possession at that time.

5. HELEN E. KULL made these notes concerning MARGARET ANN RUNKEL's "Little French trunk". This relic has intrinsic interest. It is a keyhole trunk, covered with suede leather, once cream-colored, now darkened with age. It is strongly made, fortified with wooden braces capped with brass and with strips of metal. The leather straps, now fallen off, were decorated with pyrographic designs. The escutcheon has a traced design, and the key is hand made. When I tried to have it duplicated I was told it would cost more, as originally made, than one of similar size made by machinery, of 24 karat gold. The trunk originally had a tray, now long gone. A closed compartment was made of the top, and on the base of this is a picture indicative of the time. Some children are playing around a pool or fountain in a park, with a palace in the background. There are several children, a nursemaid is wheeling some twins in a carriage, a little girl is playing with a dog, two others are feeding fish in the pool and five little boys with miniature crossbows are shooting at a bird fluttering above them, held by a string tied to its legs. Where was the S.P.C.A. ?

6. This uncle, returning home from a visit to MARGARET on an extremely cold night, fell into a stream in the darkness and died of exposure, a strange end for one who had survived the rigors of the Russian campaign.

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MICHAEL KULL (son of JOHN MICHAEL KULL, mother's name not now known.)

b. 15, 1814, Neunasz, Wurttemberg, Germany

d. 14, 1881, Madison, Dane Co., Wisconsin

Bloomfield Cemetery, Walworth Co., Wisconsin

1: (1) Jan. 8, 1841

ELA SLAFTER

b. 25, 1824, Cuba, Allegany Co., New York

d. 14, 1845, Bloomfield, Walworth Co., Wisconsin

first in unmarked grave in Bloomfield Cemetery, later reinterred in Oak Hill Cemetery, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

her: CALVIN SLAFTER, b. Apr 11, 1784, Mansfield, Conn., d. Sep 7, 1857, Portage Co., Wisconsin

other: JERUSHA DEXTER, b. Jan 23, 1791, d. Mar 8, 1861, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

2: (2) June 6, 1847

MARGARET ANN RUNKEL

b. 14, 1825, Grolsheim, nr. Bingen on the Rhine, Hesse Darmstadt, Germany

d. 5, 1891

in Bloomfield Cemetery with husband.

her: JOHN R. RUNKEL.

other: AGNES ———?

Children of Marriage #1:

MARGARET ELIZABETH KULL 1842 - 1877

ANDREW CHRISTOPHER KULL 1845 - 1927

Children of Marriage #2:

ANTHONY J. KULL 1848 - 1868

JOHANNA MARIA KULL 1849 - 1883

MARGARET ADELIA KULL 1850 - 1916

HARLES JULIUS KULL 1853 - 1945

EDWIN ORLANDO KULL 1855 - 1941

WILFRED HENRY KULL 1857 - 1919

MARGALIA ANN KULL 1859 - 1937

JOHN WILLIAM KULL 1863 - 1923

GERTRUDE ATLANTA KULL 1865 - 1959

FRANK S. KULL 1868 - 1957

MARGARET KULL 1879 - 1904

Information on the above children:

MARGARET ELIZABETH KULL ("Maggie") — b. Nov 16, 1842, Bloomfield Twp., Walworth Co., Wisconsin

d. Sept. 7, 1877, Chicago, Ill. Buried Bloomfield Cemetery, Walworth Co., Wis.

Married Sept. 14, 1862, Camp Utley, Racine, Wis.

EDWIN ROSE FRISBIE HART (son of Ichabod A. HART & Damaris Rose FRISBIE)

b. Dec 31, 1839, Sandusky, Erie Co., Ohio; d. July 9, 1900, Chicago, Ill. Buried Rosehill Cemetery, Chicago, Ill.

Children: Edwin Orris, Mabel Rose, Sherman Alexis, Gertrude Eliza, Eva Elizabeth, Ira Andrew

ANDREW CHRISTOPHER KULL — b. Apr. 29, 1845, Bloomfield Twp., Walworth Co., Wis.

d. March 1, 1927; buried Oak Hill Cemetery, Lake Geneva, Wis.

Married (1) Dec. 14, 1861, to:

MARGARET RIETBROCK, b. Aug. 5, 1845, Wheatland, Kenosha Co., Wis.; d. Aug. 23, 1895, Buried Oak Hill Cemetery, Lake Geneva, Wis.

## Kull Family

## The Kull Family—Cont'd.

Children of Marriage #1: Francis C., Helen M., Henry Andrew, Adolph, Frederick, Herman, Grover

Married (2) Aug. 18, 1909

CAROLYN SCRUTON KLUG, b.—? d.—?

No children of Marriage #2.

3. ANTHONY J. KULL, b. Mar 30, 1848, Bloomfield Twp., Walworth Co., Wis.  
d. April 16, 1868, single, buried Bloomfield Cemetery.
4. SUSAN MARIA KULL, b. June 30, 1849, Bloomfield Twp., Walworth Co., Wis.  
d. July 20, 1883, married Jan. 22, 1875, to:  
WILLIAM SLAUGHTER, b. Aug. 11, 1843, Tippecanoe Co., Wis., d. Dec 10, 1917, Canton, Miss.  
Children: Clara Bell, Nellie Mabel, George Andrew, Gertrude Agnes.
5. AGNES ADELIA KULL, b. Sept. 25, 1850, Bloomfield Twp., Walworth Co., Wis., d. Jan. 11, 1916  
Married Sept. 21, 1872, to:  
GEORGE STOCKWELL, b.—? d.—?  
Children: Ivie, Philip K., George, Verne, Agnes, Marion.
6. CHARLES JULIUS KULL, b. March 11, 1853, Bloomfield Twp., Walworth Co., Wis.; d. 1945  
Married (1) March 16, 1885  
ESTELLE COVELLE, b.—? d.—?  
Children: Helen, Mildred  
  
Married (2) Jan. 5, 1929  
HATTIE ROGERS, b.—? d.—?  
Children: Charles, Adelbert
7. EDWIN ORLANDO KULL, b. Feb. 7, 1855, Bloomfield Twp., Walworth Co., Wis., d. 1941  
Buried Genoa Cemetery, Genoa City, Wis.  
Married Nov. 15, 1882  
ADDIE CAROLYN GRANT "Callie", b. 1859; d. 1953; buried Genoa Cemetery, Genoa City, Wis.  
No children.
8. PHILIP HENRY KULL, b. April 8, 1857, Bloomfield Twp., Walworth Co., Wis., d. March 19, 1919  
Buried Genoa Cemetery, Genoa City, Wis.  
Married April 25, 1883  
GRACE STODDARD, b. 1860, d. 1902, buried Genoa Cemetery, Genoa City, Wis.  
Children: Irving Stoddard, Edith G., Harry, George Philip, Walter Higgins.
9. ROSALIA ANN KULL, b. June 29, 1859, Bloomfield Twp., Walworth Co., Wis., d. May 4, 1937  
Married April 14, 1883  
OTTO ARP, b.—? d.—?  
Children: Clarence, Lloyd, Olive.
10. JOHN WILLIAM KULL, b. Apr. 7, 1863, Bloomfield Twp., Walworth Co., Wis.; d. May 6, 1923  
Married April 9, 1887  
LUTHE GARDNER, b.—? d.—?  
Children: Winthrop, Edwin, Orris, Margaret.
11. GERTRUDE ATLANTA KULL, b. June 5, 1865, Bloomfield Twp., Walworth Co., Wis.; d. 1959  
Buried, Genoa Cemetery, Genoa City, Wis.