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# The Gerlt Family of St Louis, Missouri

## Introduction

You may be wondering: Why care about the Gerlt family? What makes them so special? Well, sometimes it's the mystery of family research that makes it intriguing, and fun. Here's what got me started.

From the Maytag Family Newsletter of August, 1994, there was a headline:

**THE TOENEBOHN MYSTERY**

Amelia Toenebohn was born in Tundern, Hanover. Her mother died when Amelia was a child and the father, Christian, remarried. He had been a teacher in Germany and educated Amelia at home.

22 May 1856, Daniel Maytag and Amelia Toenebohn were married in Independence, IA. Amelia's older sister, Hannah, was married to E. Gerelt on June 14, 1856, also at Independence. The Iowa Census for 1856 lists Amelia's father, step-mother, three step-sisters, and three step-brothers in Independence at that time. The family entered the United States at New Orleans in 1852. Amelia was born in Tundern, Hanover, Germany.

Effie (Maytag) Daehler wrote that her grandmother said that sister Hannah moved to St. Louis and they lost touch. Christian Toenebohn, his wife, and six children traveled to Minnesota to join a wagon train. The wagon train was ambushed by Indians and the members of the Toenebohn family were among those killed.

It is possible that research will provide us with information about the ambush. Advertising has not located anyone descended from Hannah Gerelt.

The newsletter primarily focused on Amelia Toeneboehn (the author's great grandaunt):

Amelia H Töneböen Toeneboehn

1837-1905

BIRTH 2 MAY 1837 • Tundern, Hameln-Pyrmont, Lower Saxony, Germany

DEATH 29 OCT 1905 • Laurel, Marshall, Iowa

This newsletter stated that Amelia Toeneboehn married Daniel Maytag in May, 1856. It further stated that Amelia's sister, Hannah Toeneboehn, married E. Gerlt in June, 1856. Following their marriages, Amelia and Hannah both stayed in Iowa. For some, as yet unknown, reason parents Christian and Caroline Toeneboehn and about nine brothers and sisters of Amelia and Hannah moved from Iowa to St. Louis, MO - probably fall of 1856.

Up until the publication of the 1994 newsletter, Amelia and Hannah Toeneboehn were unknown to the St. Louis Toeneboehn's. And, Hannah was unknown to both groups. Why were they unknown?

After the St Louis group departed Iowa, there seems to have been a loss of communication between the Iowa group (Hannah and Amelia) and the St Louis group (parents and siblings). This, because if you look at the available family information for the separate families, they obviously knew little or nothing of each other - even to modern times.

My theory for this loss of communication is related to the fact that Christian died young, in 1860, in St. Louis. Caroline remarried in 1861. Caroline started a new life with St Louis roots. Sisters, Amelia and Hannah and their families led their lives in Iowa. Further, it's thought now that Hannah's mother was not Caroline, but another mother who died in Germany prior to immigration.

The life Amelia Toeneboehn-Maytag is well documented. [Note: One of Amelia's sons was Frederick Louis Maytag, founder of Maytag corporation.] However the life of Hannah Toeneboehn-Gerlt was a mystery. Absolutely, nothing was documented about her and her family. Thus, I set about to restore the Gerlt Family of St. Louis.

Hannah Töneböen Tennebahn

1835–1914

BIRTH 13 APR 1835 • Tundern, Hameln-Pyrmont, Lower Saxony, Germany

DEATH 15 NOV 1914 • St Louis, Missouri

Edward H Gerlt Sr

1818–1883

BIRTH ABT. 1818 • Hannover, Lower Saxony, Germany

DEATH 11 APR 1883 • St Louis, St Louis City, Missouri

## Lost and Restored History

Recall that in June, 1856 Hannah Töneböen (also: Tennebahn, Toeneboehn) (1835-1914) married Edward H Gerlt Sr (1818-1883) in Independence, Buchanan county, IA. Edward was 17 years older than Hannah. Both were born in the Hannover region of Lower Saxony, Germany. We know that Hannah's father was Christian Töneböen (1809-1860). Currently, we surmise that Hannah's mother was Hanne Meier (1809-1836).

Currently, we do not know the identities of Edward H Gerlt's parents. There were other Gerlt family in Missouri contemporary with Edward Sr. The parents of those folks are the following:

Father:

Johann Justus Gerlt 1775–1824 BIRTH 07 JAN 1775 •

Jühnde, Hanover, Prussia, Germany DEATH 21 DEC 1824 • Jühnde, Kingdom of Hannover (Germany)

Mother:

Marie Christine Rosine Bete 1778–1828 BIRTH 11 FEB 1778 • Jühnde, Hanover (Lower Saxony, Germany) DEATH 10 DEC 1828 • Jühnde, Hanover (Lower Saxony, Germany)

The surname **Gerlt** was spelled various ways in public documents (census, birth/death, resident): Geratt, *Gueratt*, Gerlts, Gerlte, Gerelt, Gerrald, Garalds, Jerrald, Jerrals, Jerrold, Jerrolts, Jeralds

I surmise the name Gerlt was pronounced phonetically, like: J e r - e l t

In the 1850 federal census, Edward Gerratt (i.e., Gerlt) was living in St. Louis, MO, working as a clerk and living in a "coffee house" Bartolds Inn, a historic Inn in the Maplewood area of St. Louis.



**BARTOLDS INN ST LOUIS, MO**

It seems likely that Edward immigrated in the 1840's, though no records have been found. I wonder now if the Gerelt's and Tönebön's knew each other back in Germany, and, if the marriage between Edward and Hannah was "arranged". Further, I speculate that Edward had some measure of influence on the Tönebön family moving to St. Louis from Iowa in the middle 1850's.

In the June, 1856 Iowa State Census for Buchanan County, no Gerlts were found. Thus, Hannah and Edward must have moved immediately after being married.

The death certificate for their son, Edward H Gerlt-Jarrald Jr (1854-1925), indicated he was born in Alton, Madison County, IL. Madison County, IL is one county north of St. Louis, MO, on the IL side of the Mississippi River. Thus, we can assume that this is

where they initially settled. It does appear that Edward Sr was a Cooper throughout his life (A Cooper is a person trained to make wooden casks, barrels, vats, buckets, tubs, troughs and other similar containers from timber staves that were usually heated or steamed to make them pliable. )

Now, the stated birthdate for Edward H Gerlt-Jarrald Jr is Nov 18, 1854 is interesting and bears some reflection. This date is well before the 1856 marriage of Edward and Hannah. So, what to make of this anomaly?

Here are several theories:

1) **His stated birthdate is NOT correct.** Assuming Hannah was not pregnant at the time of her marriage, the earliest possible birthdate for Edward Gerlt Jr would be Feb/Mar, 1857. Based on the 1860 census, where he was stated to be six (born 1854), this does not seem a viable option.

2) **His father was NOT Edward Gerlt Sr.** Might Hannah have had a first husband, the father of Edward Gerlt Jr? There is a tradition in the Tönebön family history that Christian Tönebön, wife, and children immigrated from Germany, and traveled from New Orleans to Minnesota to join a wagon train. The wagon train, on its way to Iowa, was ambushed by Indians and members of the family were killed. Might Hannah's first husband been among those killed? Thus, Edward Gerlt Sr was her second husband and he adopted Hannah's infant son and gave him the name Edward Gerlt Jr? [Note: As a nephew of Hannah Tönebön, there should be DNA matching. To date, I have NOT seen any DNA matches with Gerlt descendants.]

3) **His mother was NOT Hannah Tönebön.** Edward Gerlt Sr was 17 years older than Hannah Tönebön (he was 38, she was 21). Might Edward Sr have had a first wife and children, with Edward Gerlt Jr, the youngest, still living at home? Thus, Hannah was his second wife and she adopted Edward Gerlt Sr's infant son. If this option is true, then there could have been other children of Edward Sr and his first wife. [Note: As a nephew of Hannah Tönebön, there would be no DNA matching. To date, I have NOT seen any DNA matches with Gerlts descendants.]

4) **His parents were NOT Edward Gerlt Sr and Hannah Tönebön.** It's entirely possible that Edward Gerlt Jr was born to another couple (likely in Alton, Madison County, IL) and adopted by Edward and Hannah as their own child. In fact, based on what is presently known, this may be the most viable option. If so, only DNA analysis will possibly reveal his true ancestry. Interestingly, for me, Ancestry.com assigns Edward Jr as "stepson of great-grandaunt". While, for his brother Louis and sister Amelia, Ancestry identifies them as 1st cousin twice removed.

However, this conundrum invites more research, including DNA analysis, with the descendants of Edward H Gerlt-Jarrald Jr. It should also be noted that there were many people with the surname Gerlt in the St Louis area contemporary with Edward Gerlt Sr. Were these folks direct relatives; brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, parents?

In the June, 1860 census, Edward Geratt (i.e., Gerlt) and family, were living in Weston, Platte County, MO (just north of Kansas City). They had two children; Edward and Louisa. This census Edward reported that he was born in France, 1820 - not Germany. Edward Gerlt Sr reported that he was employed as a Cooper.

In March, 1865 Edward Gerlt Sr joined the US Army, mustering in at Leavenworth, KS, joining the 7th Calvary. This was during the time period in which the Civil War was winding down. He mustered out in Sept, 1865 at the rank of Private. Later, following Edward's death in 1883, his widow, Hannah, received a pension for his service.

In the June, 1870 Federal Census, the Jerrolts (i.e., Gerlt) family was living in Tremont, Buchanan County, MO (just north of Kansas City). They had three children; Edward Jr, Louis, William. Louisa must have died before 1870. Edward Gerlt Sr reported that he was employed as a Cooper.

In Nov 1876, 21 year old Edward H Gerlt-Jarrald Jr married 18 year old Johanna Schulte in St Louis, MO. Together, they would have seven children; the only known Gerlt descendants.

NOTE: Edward Jr used the surname Jarrald following the way it was spelled in the 1870 census, when he was 15 years old. However, even that surname was spelled a variety of ways in public documents: Garalds, Jeralds, Jerrold

In Nov, 1880 Federal Census, the Gerlt Family was living in St Louis, MO. They had two children; Louis and Amelia. William died about 1872 at the age of 12. Edward Gerlt Sr reported that he was employed as a Cooper.

On April 11, 1883, Edward H Gerlt Sr died in St Louis and was buried at St. Peter's Cemetery in Normandy, MO.

In April, 1884, Hannah Hanne Tönebön-Gerlt married Jacob S Matzenbaugh in St Louis, MO.

In the 1900 Federal Census, Hannah, now widowed, was living with her daughter Amelia (also widowed) in St Louis, MO. In the 1900 census, she stated that she had given birth to five children and that 3 were living - see below.

Hannah died in St Louis Nov 15, 1914 and was buried at St. Peter's Cemetery in Normandy, MO.

There now are Find a Grave memorials for Hannah Tönebön-Gerlts and Edward H Gerlts Sr, linked to four of their five children:

1) <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/89324837/hanna-gerlts>

2) <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/89324835/edward-h-gerlts>

Edward Gerlt-Jarrald Jr died in 1925 in St Louis, age 70. He and his wife had seven children:

Louisa Gerlt died in 1860 in St Louis, age 3.

William Gerlt died in 1872 in St Louis, age 12.

Amelia Gerlt-Rinkel died in 1963 in McAllen, TX, age 92, childless.

Louis Gerlt died in 1951 in McAllen, TX, age 83, childless.

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