

# The Henry Rippe & Catherine Rötter Family

By Sharlene K. Miller



The Henry & Catherine Rippe nee Roetter Family (ca 1910)  
Back (L to R): Sophie, Mary Pfingsten, William, John, Frank and Emil Rippe.  
Front: August, Henry E, Sr., Theodore, Catherine Rippe nee Roetter and Henry Rippe, Jr.  
- photo courtesy of Sharlene Miller

**Name:** Heinrich Edward Rippe  
**Called:** Henry Rippe, Sr.  
**Born:** 27 September 1857, Will County, Illinois  
**Died:** 23 December 1913, Ohioa, Fillmore County, Nebraska  
**Wife:** Catherina Rötter  
**Called:** Catherine Roetter Rippe  
**Born:** 05 July 1862 in Wriedel, Uelzen, Hannover, Germany  
**Died:** 08 November 1928 Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska

Heinrich Rippe was the second child of Georg and Caroline Rippe. He was born in Washington Township, Will County, Illinois on 27 September 1857.<sup>1</sup> Henry attended rural school in Will County, Illinois and stayed in Illinois until his marriage to Catherine Rötter.<sup>2</sup> According to Delores Lowe, the Georg Rippe family first settled in DuPage County, Illinois where three of their children were born. In 1864, they moved to Will County, Illinois.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"The Late Henry Rippe," *The Ohioan*, undated newspaper clipping received from Loretta Schleif nee Rippe.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Edward Rippe – Catherina Rötter Marriage Certificate (04 February 1880); family papers held by Sharlene Miller in 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Delores Lowe, "Unpublished notes" held by Sharlene Miler in 1998.

Life was not easy during this time in America. Henry was a child during the Civil War years of 1861 to 1864. Abraham Lincoln was the president of the United States and was also from Illinois where the Rippe family lived. When Henry was a young boy growing up in Will County, many towns had not yet been established. Even if there was a settlement of people, most were not really towns and had not been incorporated. The early settlers were very religious and usually established some type of church or place of worship. St. Johannes United Church of Christ, where the Rippe family attended, was not established until 1864. The church is located 1 mile south and 1.5 miles east of the town of Beecher and is on the north side of the road that divides Sections 22 and 27 of Washington Township.<sup>4</sup> It is in this church that Henry Rippe was confirmed on 17 March 1872 by Pastor Friedrich Gottlieb Reinicke.<sup>5</sup> It is also where Henry Rippe and Catherina Rötter were united in marriage by Reverend Emil Daniel Richard Keuchen.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>4</sup> "Where the Trails Cross," Volume 16:1 (Illinois: South Suburban Genealogical Society, Fall, 1985), pages 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> St. Johannes United Church of Christ (Beecher, Illinois), Confirmation Records, read by Karen Rowe.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Edward Rippe – Catherina Rötter Marriage Certificate (04 February 1880); family papers held by Sharlene Miller in 1998.

On 04 February 1880, when Henry was 22 years old, he married Catherina Rötter, daughter of Henry Rötter and Catherine Schröder.<sup>7</sup> Catherina was only 17 when she applied for her marriage license at the courthouse in Will County on 28 January 1880.<sup>8</sup> Her father Henry Rötter gave his consent for her to marry Henry Rippe. Christian Rippe, who may have been Henry's uncle, was the best man and Caroline Rippe was the matron of honor.<sup>9</sup>

It is possible that Henry and Catherine Rippe lived near Woodworth, Iroquois County, Illinois for a short time prior to moving to Fillmore County, Nebraska. In a description about the St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Woodworth, it is stated that Henry Rippe and August Pflingsten attended church services regularly at the church.<sup>10</sup>



Catherine Rippe nee Roetter, Sophie, Mary, Henry and William Rippe. Photo take ca 1887.

In 1881, Henry and Catherine moved to Fillmore County, Nebraska. They settled on a farm a few miles southwest of Ohioa where they continued to live until their deaths. The farm was located in NE ¼ Section 24 in Belle Prairie Township.<sup>11</sup> The Rippe family was quite religious. They and 14 pioneer families met and formed a Lutheran Congregation. The church is now known as the Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. Sometimes this church is referred to as the South Lutheran Church and was originally called St. John's German Lutheran Church. Henry and his brother, Louis, were charter members of this church. The official starting date for the church is recorded as 25 September 1887 with 15 pioneer families. They built the first church building on a five acre plot of land, 2 miles south and 0.5 miles west of the newly incorporated town of Ohioa.<sup>12</sup>

When Henry and Catherine moved to Fillmore County, the town of Ohioa had not been established. Ohioa was incorporated on 19 February 1887, shortly after the Burlington Railroad made a survey of the land and

established the town.<sup>13</sup> Before the establishment of the towns in Fillmore County by the railroad, the settlers had to travel great distances either on foot or by horse and wagon to the towns of Crete, Nebraska City or Beatrice to buy the necessary supplies for their families. It took several days to travel back and forth between home and the

<sup>7</sup> Will County, Illinois, Marriage License Application, book and page not cited, Rippe – Roetter marriage license application no. #7917; photocopy from Karen Rowe.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> *Cissna Park, Illinois Centennial Book 1882-1982*, (Illinois: unknown publisher and date), page 24.

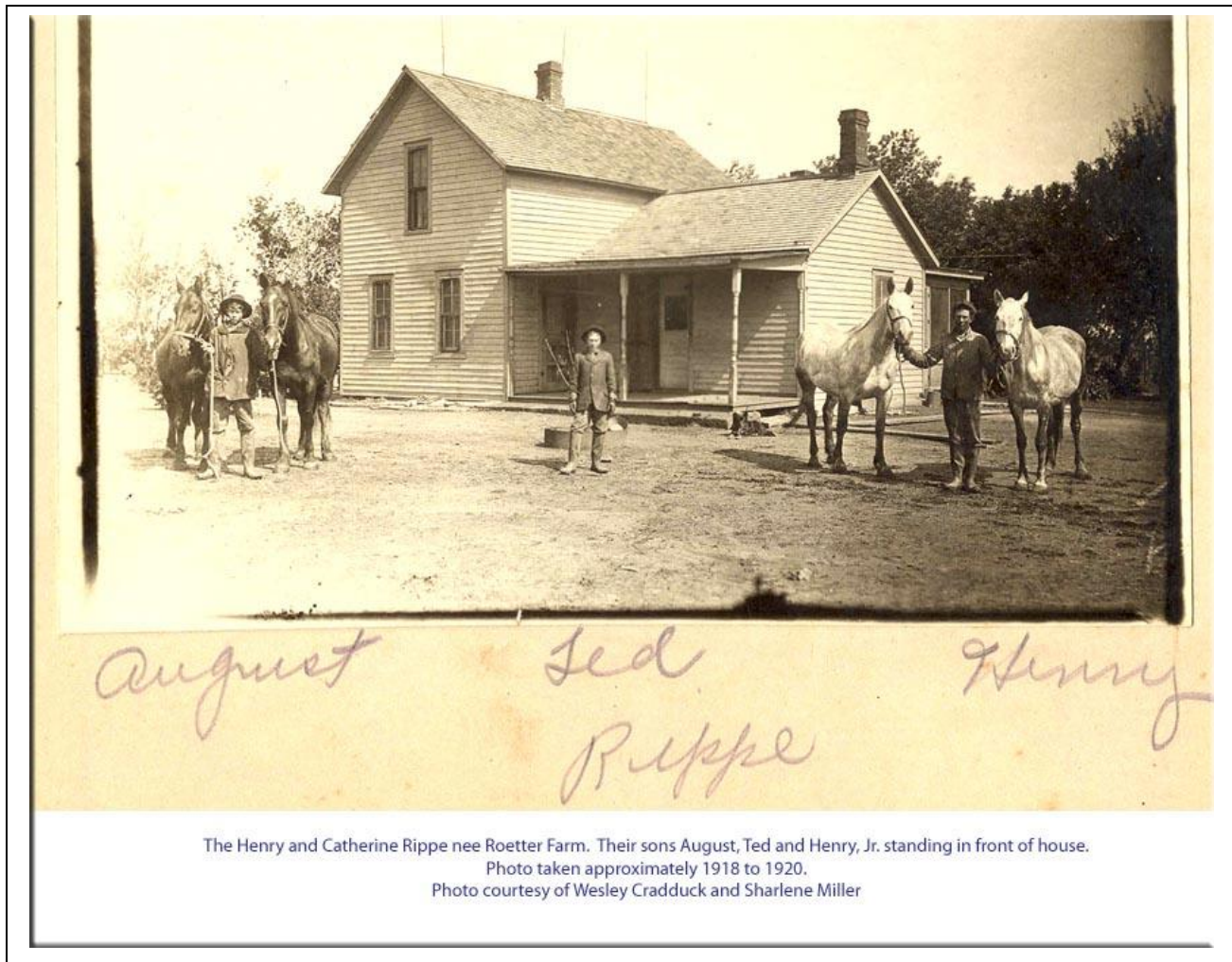
<sup>11</sup> Ohioa Centennial History Book Committee, *Ohioa 1887 to 1987*, (Nebraska: Self Published, 1987), page 235.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. page 18-19.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. page 3.

nearest town. For those in Fillmore County, the distance was between 45 and 75 miles depending on where they lived and to which town they traveled.<sup>14</sup>

Henry and Catherine Rippe were the parents of 11 children. They were: Dorothea Elizabeth Lena **Mary**, Wilhelm Heinrich **Will**, Sophia, Adolf Heinrich Franz **Frank**, Heinrich Dietrich Johann **John**, Heinrich (died as infant), Louis (died as infant), Ernst Wilhelm **Emil**, Heinrich **Henry** Edward, **August** Henry George and Theodore **Ted** Gustav Heinrich.<sup>15</sup>



The Rippes endured several hardships during their lives. They lost two infant children. They also lost their barn to fire caused by a lightning strike. The barn and all of its contents burned completely. Through all of the difficulties they persevered and remained in Nebraska until they died. Henry Rippe, Sr. was only 56 years old when he died on 23 December 1913 at his home southwest of Ohiowa. The funeral services were conducted by Reverend Gus

<sup>14</sup> Ohiowa Centennial History Book Committee, *Ohiowa 1887 to 1987*, (Nebraska: Self Published, 1987), page 8.

<sup>15</sup> "Mrs. Catharina Rippe," *The Nebraska Signal*, November 1928, page and column not cited.

Klatt of the Grace Lutheran Church. He was buried at the Grace Lutheran Church Cemetery on 27 December 1913. He died following a lengthy illness and a series of operations. The possible cause of death was cancer of the stomach.<sup>16</sup>

Following Henry's death, Catherine Rippe continued to live on the farm with her younger sons. They in 1920 another tragedy struck the family. August became sick on 05 Demeber 1920 with diphtheria. The doctor was summoned early in the week. The family was placed in quarantine. On Friday, 10 December, about not August died.<sup>17</sup>

Catherina Roetter Rippe lived for 15 years following the death of her husband. After Henry's death, she managed the farm and was able to buy her brother Henry Rötter's share of her mother's farm, which was located in Section 18 of Franklin Township in Fillmore County. The farm was in the S ½ of SE ¼. By the time she died, she was the owner of 320 acres of land free of debt.<sup>18</sup> Her son, Will, eventually bought the home place and her son, Emil and daughter, Sophia, each bought 80 acres of the Henry and Catherine Rippe farm. Eventually her entire estate was lost during the depression years.<sup>19</sup>

For several years preceding her death, Catharine had kidney problems. She underwent surgery on 05 November 1928, which was unsuccessful. At 1 p.m. on 08 November 1928 she died from complications as a result of the surgery at the St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Lincoln, Nebraska. She was 66 years old at the time of her death. The funeral was held at 1 p.m. at the Rippe home and at 1:30 p.m. at the Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. Reverend William Harder conducted the funeral services. Mrs. Rippe's six sons were the pallbearers. The body was buried in the Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church Cemetery beside her husband.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> "The Late Henry Rippe," *The Ohiowan*, undated newspaper clipping received from Loretta Schleif nee Rippe.

<sup>17</sup> Obituary for August Rippe, *The Nebraska Signal*, December 1920, undated newspaper clipping received from Loretta Schleif nee Rippe.

<sup>18</sup> Unpublished notes by Harold Rippe.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> "Mrs. Catharina Rippe," *The Nebraska Signal*, November 1928, page and column not cited.

"Mrs. Catharina Rippe," obituary, *The Nebraska Signal*, undated newspaper clipping, received from Loretta Rippe nee Schleif, held by Sharlene Miller in 1995.

#### MRS. CATHARINA RIPPE

Mrs. Catharina Rippe, nee Roetter, was born July 5, 1862, in Wridel, Hannover, Germany, and passed away November 8, 1928, at the St. Elizabeth hospital, Lincoln, Nebraska, at the age of 66 years, 4 months and 3 days.

In 1866 the deceased came to America with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Roetter. They made their home near Beecher, Will Co., Illinois. There she received her training in the Lutheran faith and was confirmed April 9, 1876, in St. Paul's Evangelical church at Beecher. To this faith she remained true during all her life.

She was married to Mr. Henry Rippe February 4, 1880, in Washington, Illinois. To this union were born 9 sons and 2 daughters, of which 6 sons and one daughter remain to mourn the death of their mother. Two sons died in infancy; another son, August, died Dec. 10, 1920, and the oldest daughter, Mary, wife of Mr. Charles Pfingsten, died April 18, 1924.

In 1881, Mr. and Mrs. Rippe moved to Nebraska and settled a few miles southwest of Ohioa, where they lived until their deaths. They endured many hardships during their first years in Nebraska but the Lord richly blessed their labors.

On the 23rd of December, 1913, the strong tie of fellowship which bound Mrs. Rippe and her husband together was severed by death of her husband.

Mrs. Rippe had been ill with kidney trouble for several years. In spite of the best of medical aid her condition grew worse. She was operated at the St. Elizabeth hospital in Lincoln on Monday, Nov. 5, but it was to no avail. She was relieved from her suffering at one o'clock in the afternoon on Thursday, November 8, 1928, leaving to mourn her death six sons, William, John, Emil, Henry, Frank, and Theodore, daughter, Mrs. Sophia (Henry) Molthan, all living near Ohioa; 15 grand children; 5 great grand children, 5 daughters-in-law; one son-in-law; one brother, Mr. Henry Roetter of Farnam, Neb., and many other relatives and friends.

The deceased was a faithful member of this St. John's Evangelical Lutheran church. Her quiet, humble, friendly disposition won the hearts of many. From her lips bereaved may hear the words:

God be with you till we meet again,  
By His counsels guide, uphold you,  
With His sheep securely fold you,  
God be with you till we meet again.  
God be with you till we meet again,  
'Neath His wings securely hide you,  
Daily manna still provide you,  
God be with you till we meet again.  
Till we meet at Jesus' feet, God be  
with you till we meet again.

"Mrs Catharina Rippe," obituary, *The Nebraska Signal*, undated newspaper clipping, received from Loretta Schleif nee Rippe, held by Sharlene Miller in 1995.

The funeral was held on Sunday afternoon at one o'clock from the home and at 1:30 from the South Lutheran church, Rev. William Harder, officiating. The church was filled to overflowing with relatives and friends who gathered to pay last respects. Several appropriate songs were sung by the church choir. Rev. Harder took as his text John 16:22, "And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Mrs. Will Molthan and Mrs. Will Bahe were in charge of the flowers, the offering being large and beautiful. The pall bearers were the six sons of Mrs. Rippe, William, Frank, John, Emil, Henry and Theodore. Interment was in the church cemetery.

Relatives and friends attending from out of town were: Mr. and Mrs. Earnest Rippe and son, Edward, of Brüning; Mr. and Mrs. Lou Rippe and son, Irvin, Mrs. F. W. Apking, Mrs. Minnie Thole, and Mr. and Mrs. Herman Kappmeier, all of Geneva; Mr. and Mrs. Richard Quandt and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Vanskiver of Davenport; Mr. and Mrs. August Dittmer of Carleton; Mr. and Mrs. Art Leuben of Belvidere; and Mr. and Mrs. Herman Higel and daughter of Brüning.

#### Card of Thanks.

We wish to extend sincere thanks to all who so kindly assisted us during the illness and death of our beloved mother and sister, Mrs. Henry Rippe. We also wish to thank those who contributed the beautiful floral offering, the choir and the pastor for the songs and words of sympathy which brought us comfort.

Henry Rippe.

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Rippe and family.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Rippe and family.

Mr. and Mrs. John Rippe and family.

Mr. and Mrs. Emil Rippe and family.

Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Rippe.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Molthan and family.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Roetter and family.

"The Late Henry Rippe," Ohioa Ohioan (Ohioa, Fillmore Co., NE), undated newspaper clipping in family papers of Loretta Schleif nee Rippe held by Sharlene Miller in 1995.

## IN MEMORIAM

### The Late Henry Rippe

Henry Rippe, Sr., was born September 27, 1857 in Washington, Illinois; and died at his home south-west of Ohioa, December 23, aged 66 years, 2 months and 27 days.

On February 4, 1880, he was united in marriage with Miss Catharine Roetter. In 1881 they came to Fillmore County, where they went thru the trials and the hardship of the early settlers. This union was blessed with eleven children, nine sons and two daughters. The funeral services, conducted by Rev. Klatt, was held from the south Lutheran church, Saturday. A large congregation was present. His loss is mourned by his wife and family, 10 grand-children, 2 brothers, three sisters and a host of immediate relatives and friends.

While our hearts are lonely, and he is absent from home;

Help us, O God, to say Thy will be done;  
help us to look beyond;

Where there is no pain nor death, where there is joy and happiness;

O dearest father, thou hast left us, here thy loss we deeply feel:

But 'tis God who hath bereft us, He can all our sorrows heal. —G. Klatt

### Card of Thanks.

Not until distress and sorrow comes, and sooner or later it does come to us all, does one fully appreciate the ministrations of friends. For the attentions and remembrances of many kind and indulgent friends, during the sickness, death and burial of our beloved husband and father, we wish to tender our most sincere and heartfelt thanks with the assurance that their kindness will ever be held in remembrance by us.

Mrs. Henry Rippe and family.