

## Building a Case for John Henry Kappelmann

While tracing the history of my great-grandfather Henry (a.k.a. John Henry) Kappelmann, there was some question as to which of the various “Henry” or “John Henry” Kappelmanns in Franklin County, MO he actually was. It was well established from family history that he had lived in the Boeuf Creek area of Franklin Co. and had moved his family to Lafayette Co., MO in 1878. However, trying to identify exactly where he lived in Franklin Co. and who his parents were was difficult because of all the similar names and the frequent switching of given names. When he first came to Lafayette Co., he was known as “John H.” but in later life he called himself “Henry” which is the name recorded on his tombstone.

The family had little information about Great-Grandfather Kappelmann’s early life or ancestors. So the problem was one of trying to match known facts about him, such as his birth (1837) and family members along with family stories, to available historical records. In the process, I was fairly certain that he lived on a farm on the area of present day Boeuf and Lyon Townships, just east of Detmold. One can find the farm of J. H. Kappelmann on a plat map made in 1877, just one year before he moved from the area. The only problem was that some early research involving the Kappelmann families in Franklin County (replicated in a number of family histories) suggested that the J. H. Kappelmann living there had married a Barbara Havener, not my gr-grandmother Katherine (or Catherine) and had later moved to St. Louis.

The following is an explanation as to why I still believe that the person in question is my gr-grandfather. The reason this is significant is that this J. H. Kappelmann is generally accepted to be the son of Peter and Marie Beste Kappelmann who can be traced back to Borgholzhausen, Germany. Some additional information provided by the earlier trace was that J. H. Kappelmann had a store in Detmold. This could possibly support several family stories about John “Henry”.

The Borgholzhausen church records list Peter and Marie Kappelmann’s older son being born on Dec. 5, 1837 and christened as “Johann Heinrich”. The passenger list for the 1846 voyage of the ship *Mississippi* shows Peter immigrating to the U. S. with his wife Mary Elisa and children Cath. Wilhelm., Mary Charlot., Catri. Mary, and John Henry. The younger son Louis was born on the Atlantic Ocean during that voyage. The family then shows up in the 1850 and 1860 census records. [Note. Since Peter died in 1858, the family is listed in 1860 with mother “Elisabeth” as the head. She was using her middle name at that time.] By the time of the 1870 census, the children had all married and the mother was living with her youngest son Louis. The 1877 plat map of the Boeuf Creek area shows an interesting pattern of farm ownership. As noted earlier, John Henry’s farm bordered Detmold on the east and directly east of John Henry’s farm was that belonging to the estate of Louis. (He had recently died in Dec. 1876.) Just north of J. H. and Louis’s farms was that of their sister Catherine and brother-in-law Frank Hoemann. These farms were just to the west of Bethlehem (or Boeuf) Lutheran Church where the families were members.

Two Franklin Co. records can be clearly associated with Gr-Grandfather John “Henry” Kappelmann. The first is a marriage record in the county archives showing “Mr. Henry Kappelman” married to “Miss K. Elisa Kappelman” on Nov. 6, 1861. This date matches the family records for my great-grandparents’ wedding. Note that J. H. was using his middle name at that time. The second record is found in the special Missouri census conducted during 1876. Fortunately, the Franklin Co. portion of this enumeration has survived. The Franklin County, Lyon Twp. (Township 44N, Range 3W) listing includes John H. Kappelmann and his family as entries 360 to 368. The listing of children living at that time matches the names and age groups of my great-grandparents family. While it is a little difficult to determine the order in which the enumerator polled the area, adjacent families in that listing can be matched to the various farms shown in the 1877 plat map. In particular, the next family in the listing was that of Louis Schroeder, who lived directly south of J. H. Kappelmann. Other families in the immediate area that appear in adjacent pages of the listing include Hermann Hoelscher, Henry Lefmann, Henry Vogt, and others. So, clearly this enumeration was for the Boeuf Creek area near Detmold.

A number of other items would tend to support the identification of the J. H. Kappelmann outside of Detmold as that of my great-grandfather. After he moved to Lafayette Co., his nephews (sons of brother Louis) followed there. John Henry and Katherine’s older children (including my grandmother Marie) went to school at Boeuf Lutheran and were confirmed there. Mother spoke of her mother walking to school along Boeuf Creek. While Mother never knew (or at least never mentioned) that her grandfather had a store in Detmold, she often recounted several stories that may be connected. He always light-heartedly referred to himself as the “postmaster of Boeuf Creek” (not an official position); but, having a store there, he may have distributed mail to people living in the area. He also said that the reason he left Franklin County was that people were “borrowing money from him and not repaying”. Was it possible that some people bought goods at his store on credit and didn’t pay off their account? He may have decided to quit storekeeping and return to farming in a new area.

How did it happen that the J. H. Kappelmann in Detmold was associated with another person? The Franklin County marriage records do list a John Kappelmann of Franklin Co. marrying a Barbara Havener of Franklin Co. on July 4, 1877. However, John H. “Koppelmann” and wife Barbara can be found in the 1880 census for Boone Township, Franklin Co. where he was listed as a farmer. The St. Louis reference may have arisen from an association with “John H. Koppelman”, a prominent furniture dealer on Morgan St. in St. Louis in the mid-1800s. However, he is part of an entirely different family from Hanover, Germany.