

CHRISTIAN G. KNORPP GRAVE

By Dave Hallemann



This beautiful gravesite majestically standing on a hillside surrounded by a cast iron fence is located in T39 R5 S21 SE¼ of the NW¼.

38° 4' 55" N / 90° 29' 0" W

Dave Hallemann and Jerry McKee visited this grave November 20th, 2003.

The tract the gravesite sit on was first entered by John Brookes of Jefferson County on 15th July 1825, recorded as Certificate #883, consisting of the E½ of the NW¼ of S21 T39 R5, 80 acres, and entering the W½ of the NW¼ of S21 T39 R5 Certificate #1061 on the 1st of May 1826.

13th March 1836 Johannes¹ Christian Knorpp and his wife Christine Magdalena (Schmid)² of Jefferson County, purchases the tract from John Brookes and his wife Elizabeth of Jefferson County for \$400.⁰⁰. The 160 acres entered by John Brookes at different times consisting of "...E½ of the NW¼ S21 T39 R5, 80 acres, also W½ of the NW¼ S21 T39 R5, 80 acres." Deed being recorded in Book D Page 263.

The 1840 Census list (Johannes) Christian Knorpp as having one male age 15-20; one male 20-30, one male 50-60; one female 20-30; and one female 40-50.

Ten years later (Johannes) Christian who would now be 60-70 years old, on 26th January 1846 transfers the tract to Christian **G(ottlob)** Knorpp for \$400.⁰⁰ "...E½ of the NW¼ S21 T39 R5, 80 acres and the W½ of the NW¼, 80 acres..." as recorded in Book H Page 97.

The 1850 Census show Christian G. Knorpp as being 34 year old farmer born in Germany; Mary T. 29 years old born in Missouri; John C. 9 born Mo; Jacob H. 7 born Mo; James C. 6 born Mo; Ann M. 3 born Mo; Mary M. 7 months born Mo; and John W Knorpp 20 year old laborer born Germany residing on the farm.

1860 Census we see Norppe (sic), Mary age 39 farming; John 19; Jacob H. 17; Ann M. 14; Conrad 16; Mary M. 19; Elizabeth 8; Carolina 5; Barbary 3; Jerry age not known a farm hand.

¹ Family History donated to De Soto Library by a family researcher appears at end of this article. It appears both father and son both went by their middle names.

² Same

Checking Probate 265 for Christian G. Knorpp we find on June 20th, 1853 one month after Gottlieb's death, Mary T. his wife relinquishes her right to administer his estate to her friend Jacob Smith. Heirs sworn by Jacob Smith were John, Henry, Conrad and that Christian G. died with out a will. \$4.⁰⁰ was paid to Michael Geitz for the making of a coffin. John McMullin, Robert McMullin, and W^m. Butler were appointed to appraise the property. As of July 21st, 1853 Christian owned, 40 acres in the SW¹/₄ S17 T39 R5; 160 acres E¹/₂ of NW¹/₄ S21 T39 R5 & W¹/₂ of the NW¹/₄ S21 T39 R5; 40 acres NE¹/₄ of the NE¹/₄ S20 T39 R5; 40 acres SW¹/₄ of the SE¹/₄ S17 T39 R5; 80 acres E¹/₂ of the NW¹/₄ S14 T39 R5; 40 acres entered in the name of the deceased and in the hand of John C. Knorpp, in all 440 acres.

On 15th January 1856 three years after Gottlieb's death, Mary T. Knorpp purchases from the U. S. Government, SE¹/₄ of the SE¹/₄ Section 17; SW¹/₄ of the NE¹/₄; W¹/₂ of the SE¹/₄; and the SE¹/₄ of the SE¹/₄ in Section 21 Township 39 Range 5, 200 acres, as recorded as Certificate #23287.

Checking Probate #757 for Knorpp minors we learn that on September 15, 1856 the court appoints *Mary T. Scheiver (Shire)*³ and W^m. Knorpp guardians of John C., 15 years old; Jacob Henry, 13; James C., 12; Ann M. 10; Mary M. 7; and Katherine E., 4.

Also a document in Probate 265 dated 1857 list Mary Schiver (Shire) as Guardian of John C.; Jacob H.; James C.; Ann M.; Mary M.; and Elizabeth C.

Circuit Court index list case #1549, State of Missouri vs. Mary Knorpp alias *Mary Shier*, on 27th November 1857.

Also located in Probate 265, was a court order dated 29th November 1862 for Jacob Smith Administrator of the estate of Christian G. Knorpp, to appear before the court with his accounts, which he was required to settle. J. B. Dover, Sheriff, had written on the summons that "the within names Jacob Smith was not found in my county" dated 5th January 1863.

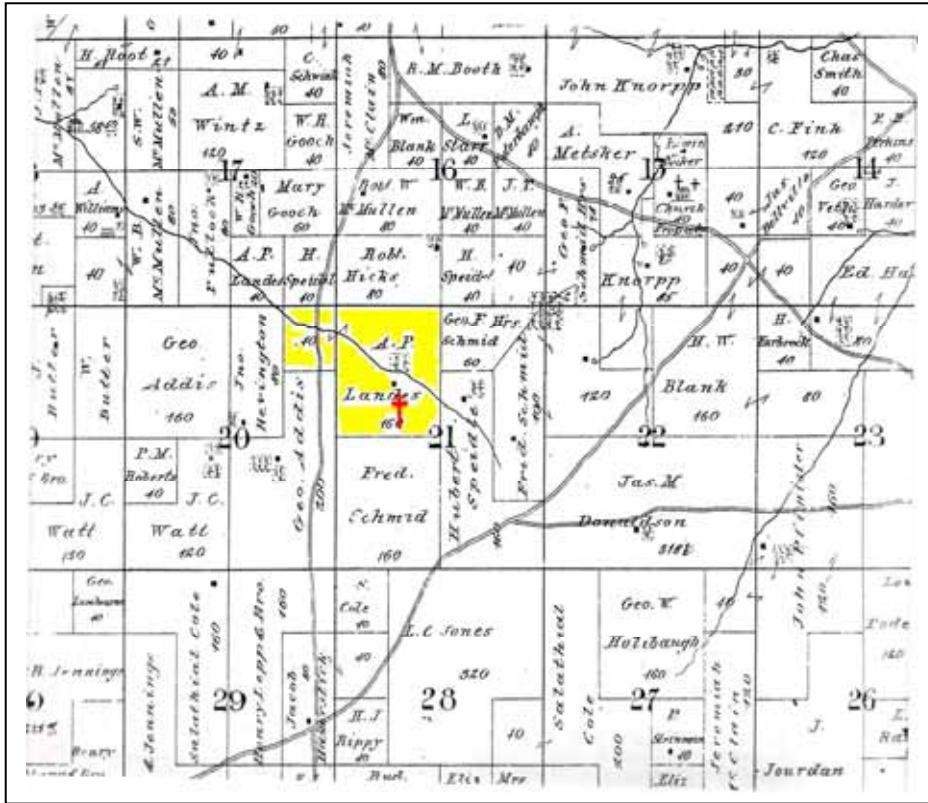
Although I could not find a direct transfer from Mary, Henry G. Knorpp and wife Rachael sell to John C. Knorpp "*E¹/₂ NW¹/₄ S21 T39 R5, 80 acres; W¹/₂ of the NW¹/₄ S21 T39 R5 80 acres; SW¹/₄ of the SE¹/₄ S 17 T39 R5 40 acres; NE¹/₄ of the NE¹/₄ S20 T39 R5 40 acres*, on 3 July 1865 as recorded in book U Page 488. No mention of the gravesite recorded.

With the above-presented evidence I believe we can safely put an "official" name to this grave as the "**Christian Knorpp Gravesite**".

³ *Mary Knorpp married John Shire December 22, 1854. Gottlieb's sudden death caused financial hardships for Mary. She had to hire help to run the farm and her older children took on jobs, John running a fruit stand in St. Louis and Mariah waited tables at an inn in De Soto. Her marriage to John Shires helped for a time but he died about 1863 leaving her with three additional children.*

⁴ *Mary Knorpp married a third time in May 24, 1864 to George Sharp.*

Christian G. Knorpp Grave



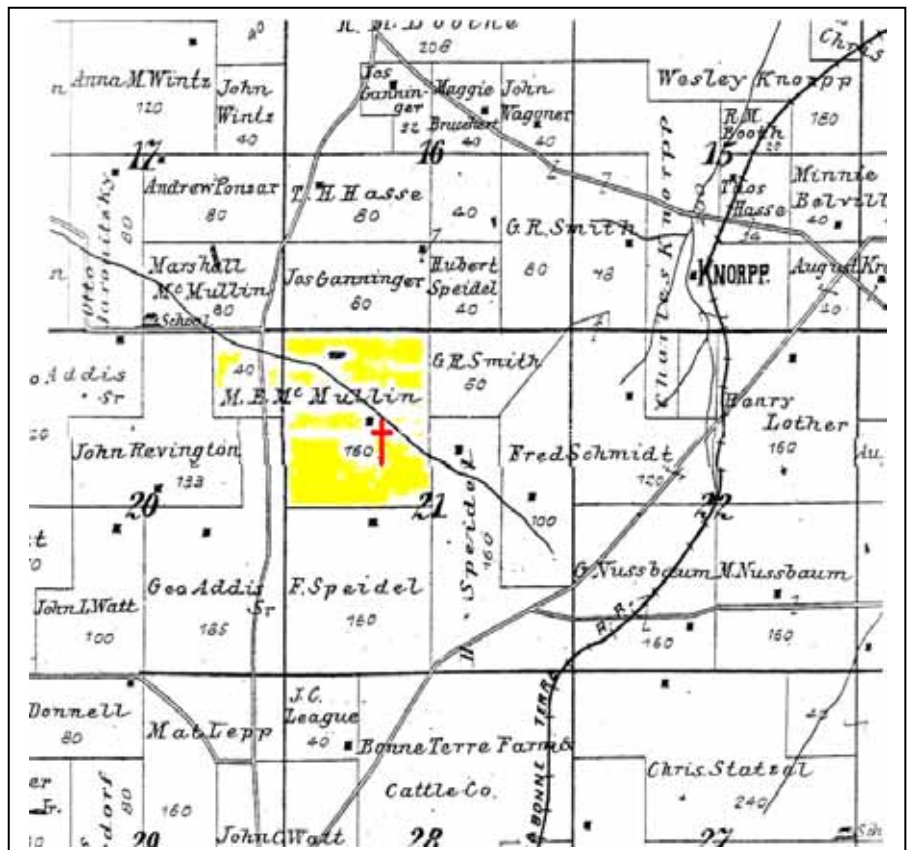
As can be seen in the picture at left, in 1876 the A. P Landes is in possession of the property.

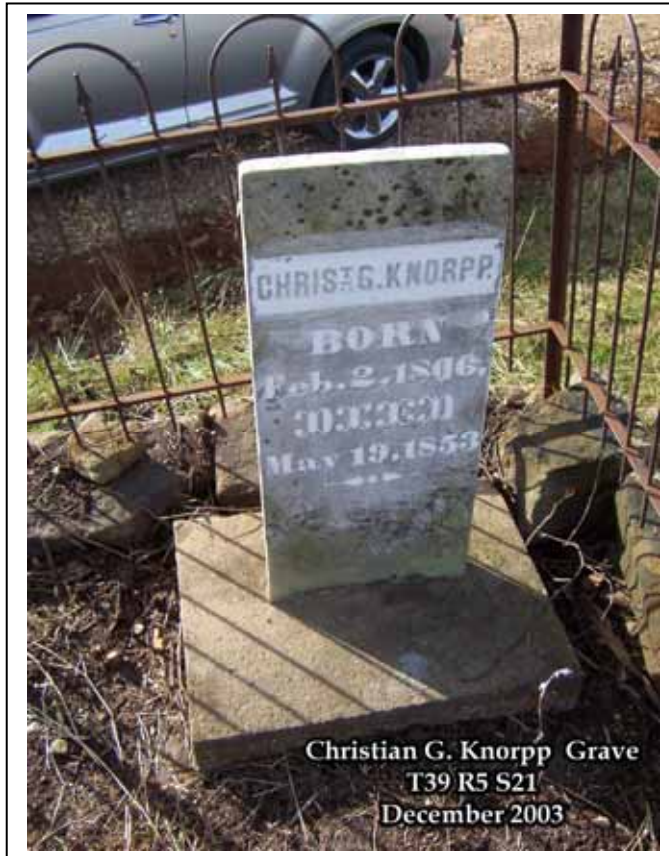
The cross I added to the photo to denote the location of this grave.

Johannes and Christina are buried in the Flucom German Methodist Cemetery near the future town of Knorpp in Section 15.

By 1898 M. E. McMullin has ownership of this tract. As before I added the cross to show location of this grave.

The town of Knorpp now in existence, can be seen in Section 15, 1 mile away. The school in section 17 is McMullin School.





Chris^T G. Knorpp

Born
Feb. 2, 1806

Died
May 19, 1853

Gottlieb died tragically being killed by a team of oxen while hauling logs for a barn. (Mariah Tamm, daughter Recollection)

I would like to thank Frank & Betty Wood owners, and Bill & Ginny Reed restorers, for their insite in preserving this historic site for future generations. And to James R. Shortridge, family researcher, who so generously gave the De Soto Library this family history allowing future generations access to this material.

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This family history was given to the De Soto Library and is included here.

CHRISTIAN GOTTLIEB KNORPP AND MARY THERESA NORWINE

Christian Gottlieb Knorpp, son of Johannes Christian Knorpp and Christina Magdalena Schmid, was born February 2, 1816 in Marbach am Neckar, Wurttemberg, and died May 19, 1853 in Jefferson Co. MO. He married Mary Theresa Norwine January 28, 1840 in St. Francois Co. MO.

Both of his parents were natives of Marbach, where his father worked as a vinedresser. Johannes and Christina immigrated to the United States in July 1836, bringing with them Christian, his younger brother Johannes (christened October 10, 1824), and his younger sister Christine Sophie (christened November 10, 1833) [Wurttemberg Emigration Index at Ancestry.com]. They probably docked in New Orleans and then traveled north on the Mississippi River following the path of earlier German colonists to the St. Louis area. They settled in Jefferson County, Missouri, about six miles southeast of De Soto. The elder Knorpps are buried there in the Dutch Cemetery at the hamlet of Flucom (Johannes Dec. 13, 1787-July 24, 1863; Christina Sept. 6, 1793-July 8, 1869). The family belonged to the Evangelical United Church in Wurttemberg.

Christian probably was called by his middle name since he chose to write only Gottlieb on his marriage license. He was a farmer, and worked early on for the Kleinschmidt family (LDS FamilySearch). In 1840 he began to buy government land in Township 39N, Range SE. The initial forty acres formed the northwest quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 15. He owned two hundred acres by the time of the 1850 census, valued at \$1,200. Gottlieb died tragically, killed by a team of oxen while hauling logs for a barn (Mariah Tamm recollection). He is buried on his farm, the only occupant of the brushcovered Knorpp Cemetery on land owned in 2003 by Frank and Betty Wood (St. Louis [News Democrat](http://NewsDemocrat.com), Dec. 29, 2003 at www.stltoday.com).

A post office called Knorpp operated on Gottlieb's former land in Section 15 of Plattin Township from 1890 until 1914. A hamlet by that name is still shown on maps.

Mary Theresa Norwine, daughter of Conrad Joseph Norwine and Mariah Marian Bische, was born September 1, 1819 in Ste. Genevieve, MO, and died November 1, 1890 at her home in southern Jackson Co. MO. She married Christian Gottlieb Knorpp January 28, 1840 in St. Francois Co. MO. She married John Shires (Scheurar on the marriage license) December 22, 1854 in Valle Twp., Jefferson Co. MO. She married George Sharp (Scharp on the marriage license) May 24, 1864 in Jefferson Co. MO.

The Norwine family (originally Norwein) comes from the Frankenthal community in the Palatinate (i.e. Pfalz). This city is about sixty miles northwest of Marbach and just west of the Rhine River. Mary's father, a rope maker by trade, brought his family to the United States in 1818. They docked in New Orleans and then came upriver to the French settlement of Ste. Genevieve, Missouri. The family resided there at Mary's birth, but moved inland to adjacent St. Francois County by 1821 (the Germania area, three and a half miles west of what is now Bonne Terre). After at least twenty years there, her parents moved another few miles west to Potosi in Washington County. Conrad (Jan. 9, 1772- Dec. 1847) and Mariah Marian (Sept. 11, 1785

[1782?]-abt. 1862 [1872?]) are both buried there in the St. James Catholic Cemetery (on N. Missouri St., just north of the Austin Inn). For some reason their children renounced the family faith. Daughter Mary became an Evangelical like her first husband (and later a Methodist), while the others became Baptists (Harriette Shortridge notes). According to one of her granddaughters, Mariah Marion owned slaves during her residence in St. Francois County (Tamm recollection).

Gottlieb's sudden death created financial troubles for Mary. She had to hire help to run the farm and her older children took jobs. Son John ran a fruit stand in St. Louis, for example, and daughter Mariah waited tables at an inn in De Soto (P. Hill Times, May 1, 1925; Tamm recollection). Her marriage to John Shires in 1854 helped temporarily, but he died about 1863, leaving her with three additional children. She married a third time in 1864 and moved three years later to a farm four miles north of Pleasant Hill, Missouri. Several of her older children previously had relocated to this area. Her land, the northern half of the southwestern quarter of Section 33, Township 47N, Range 30W, abutted on its south side the eighty-acre homestead of her son James. These two tracts were joined after her death. Mary was buried in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery next to Mr. Sharp, who had died in 1877.

Children of Christian Gottlieb and Mary Theresa:

1. **John Christian Knorpp** was born February 4, 1841 in Jefferson Co. MO, and died April 26, 1925 in Kansas City MO. He married Anna Pepper December 12, 1860 in Jefferson Co. MO, daughter of Lawrence Pepper and Mary Ward. John and Anna had six children: Lawrence (1861-1949), John Walter (1867-1952), William Christian (1869-1954), Morris Milton (1871-1927), Wesley (1877-1953), and Mary Anna (1883-1883).

John was an extremely successful businessman. In 1858, at age seventeen, he accompanied a group of prospectors from St. Louis to the Pike's Peak gold country. Although disappointed with Colorado, he had sensed opportunity in Pleasant Hill, Missouri, a town on his route, and so he returned home via this community. The Missouri Pacific Railroad was building west at this time, and learning that the city would have to relocate to be trackside, he purchased two lots near the new town site. Then, after going back to Jefferson County and marrying, he decided to move his new family to Pleasant Hill in October 1864.

John first partnered in a general merchandise store (Knorpp and Chandler), but then purchased 240 acres north of town and turned to farming and livestock. His rural home, erected in 1868 or 1869, still stands on the county-line road in Section 32, Township 47N, Range 30W. In 1885 John turned this farm over to his oldest son and returned to Pleasant Hill proper. He had co founded two businesses there the previous year-the Citizens Bank and the Cass County Land and Cattle Company-and both proved profitable. The cattle company was huge in scope. It was capitalized at \$400,000 and controlled some 3,600 acres near Roswell, New Mexico. With most of this southwestern region being open range and in good condition, the company was able to return 420 percent on investment over its first twenty-one years of existence. As the ideal grass situation gradually worsened, the company dissolved itself in 1910.

A move to Kansas City in 1902 signified John's arrival as a major financial player. He purchased a residence at 2932 Euclid, formed the John C. Knorpp Trading and Loan Company, and became a director of the First National Bank of Independence. He also helped to manage some 62,500 acres of land he had purchased in the Texas panhandle (Carson and Donley Counties). This Texas land

(as well as banks in the local towns of Clarendon and Groom) eventually passed to his sons Lawrence, Walter, and Wesley. When John died, his pallbearers included the leading Kansas City bankers W. T. and James M. Kemper. Burial was at the Pleasant Hill Cemetery after services in the Methodist church he had helped to found. For more information see the Pleasant Hill Times for May 1, 1925 and Mrs. Ralph E. Randel, ed., A Time to Purpose: A Chronicle of Carson County, Vol. 2 (n.p.: Pioneer Publishers, 1960), pp. 191-193.

Anna Pepper Knorpp was born November 28, 1839 in Spalding, Lincolnshire, England. She died December 12, 1909 in Pleasant Hill and is buried there.

2. **Henry Jacob Knorpp** was born **October 3**, 1842 in Jefferson Co. MO, and died January 8, 1919 in Pleasant Hill, MO. He married Mary Rachel Mesplay July 23, 1863 in Washington Co. MO, daughter of Victor Bartholomew Mesplay and Susanne Nieves (Susan Neves?). He married (?) Nellie B. Hurst July 22, 1897 in Pleasant Hill. He married (?) Anna Dems March 9, 1899 in Pleasant Hill. Henry and Mary had eight children: John B. (abt. 1864-), Ida (abt. 1867-), Mary (abt. 1869-), Cora (1872-), William Sharp (abt. 1874-), Michael (abt. 1877-), Charles (abt. 1879-), and Grace (1881-1965).

Henry moved to Pleasant Hill shortly after his older brother, where he worked as a blacksmith. Sometime between 1870 and 1880 he moved south to the lead-mining country of Jasper County, Missouri. There, in Webb City about 1889, he was blinded in the left eye by a steel chip that flew out while he was cutting a patch for a boiler. Two years later a cinder put out his other eye. These accidents prompted Henry to return to his extended family in Pleasant Hill. By all reports he never felt sorry for himself and continued to lead an active life (P. Hill Times, Jan. 10, 1919). He raised Brazilian sweet potatoes, for example, and one year was reported to have sold 19,000 plants (P. Hill Times, May 19, 1905). Henry's son Will ironically suffered a fate similar to that of his father. An explosion in the Joplin lead mines about 1903 shot fine rock dust into his eyes, leaving him with no sight in one eye and only half vision in the other (P. Hill Times, Dec. 20, 1912). Henry is buried in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

Mary Mesplay Knorpp was born July 10, 1840 in Old Mines, Washington Co. MO. She died August 13, 1896 in Pleasant Hill and is buried there.

3. **James Conrad Knorpp** was born July 21, 1844 in Jefferson Co. MO, and died September 19, 1923 at his home in southern Jackson Co. MO. He married Laura Alice Thalman December 19, 1871 in Seymour, Jackson Co. IN, daughter of Johannes Jakob Thalman and Anna Miriah Vagen. He married Mary M. Talbot April 30, 1908 in Pleasant Hill, MO. James and Laura had seven children: Martha Alice (1873-1934), Cora Elizabeth (1876-1956), Lillie May (1878-1878), James Reuben (1879-1972), Walter Clark (1882-1970), Dean Thalman (1889-1970), and Harry Conrad (1895-1979).

After being raised in hilly Jefferson County, James took the advice of his older brother John that the prairies near Pleasant Hill offered better opportunities for agriculture. He moved west in March 1866 and worked initially in John's store. A few years later he met his future wife while they both were employed on John's new farmstead. James purchased eighty acres a mile east of his brother in 1869, moved there in 1872, and stayed the rest of his life. He farmed as a matter of necessity and

invested in his brother's bank in Pleasant Hill, but reserved his passion for livestock trading. His Highland Place Stock Farm eventually grew to a thousand acres. There he would bring feeder cattle to fatten for the Kansas City Stockyards. According to his obituary, his animals topped that market on a regular basis. James, like his siblings, was a Methodist. He is buried in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery. See the Pleasant Hill Times for September 1923 for more details as well as Allen Glenn's History of Cass County, Missouri (Topeka: Historical Publishing Company, 1917), pp. 472-473.

Laura Thalman Knorpp was born July 12, 1851 in Seymour, Jackson Co. IN. She died January 15, 1905 in Pleasant Hill and is buried there.

4. **Ann Mariah Knorpp** was born about 1847 in Jefferson Co. MO, and died about 1942 in Chicago IL. She married John H. Tamm December 20, 1865 in Jefferson Co. MO. Mariah and John had eleven children.

An interview with Mariah by her granddaughter Esther Michel provides the following insights. Mariah had a traumatic experience as a girl when she went into a farm building after hearing the family's dogs barking. She found a deer cornered there. It charged Mariah, who luckily was carrying an ax to chop wood. She hit the deer on the head, killing it.

Mariah met her husband, a carpenter and bridge builder from Chicago, when he came to De Soto in the fall of 1865 to help with reconstruction after the Civil War. He stayed at the inn where Mariah was working as a waiter. After a courtship of six weeks, they married and left for Chicago. The couple remained in that city the rest of their lives.

5. **Mary Magdalena Knorpp** was born in 1849 in Jefferson Co. MO, and died in 1945 near Pleasant Hill, MO. She married Philander Spencer. Mary and Philander had two children: Enos (1876-1878) and John Edward (1882-1973).

Mary and Philander lived in East Lynne, Cass County, Missouri during at least 1916 and 1917, but had moved to the Pleasant Hill area by 1923. Philander (1842-1925) was a native of Napanee, Ontario, a small town near Kingston. The couple are buried at the...

6. **Elizabeth C. Knorpp** was born April 6, 1852 in Jefferson Co. MO, and died December 23, 1880 in Webb City, Jasper Co. MO. She married John Lawrence Mesplay March 5, 1871 in Jackson Co. MO, son of Basile Mesplay and Isabella Sullivan. Elizabeth and John had three children: William Lawrence (1872-1967), Charles Walter (1875-), and Henry O. (1877-1899).

John (1846-1885) worked in the lead mines of Jasper County. He was a first cousin of Mary Mesplay, the wife of Henry Knorpp above. Both Elizabeth and John died young. They are buried there in the community of Orongo, Jasper County.

CHILDREN OF MARY THERESA AND JOHN SHIRES:

1. **Caroline Shires** was born June 13, 1855 in Jefferson Co. MO, and died August 27, 1902 in Pleasant Hill, MO. She married James W. Heslar.

James moved to Marshall County, Indiana, after his wife's death (P. Hill Times, Aug. 26, 1910). Caroline is buried in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery, but James is not.

2. **Barbara E. Shires** was born December 3, 1856 in Jefferson Co. MO, and died April 28, 1917 near Pleasant Hill, MO. She married Reuben P. Henley February 14, 1882 in Pleasant Hill, son of Joseph B. Henley and Mary Ann Belt. Barbara and Reuben had five children: Elzie B. (1883-1946), Lottie Belle (1884-1962), James Conrad (1885-1958), Harry Robert (1891-1962), and Fielding B. (1893-1956).

Reuben (1856-1917) was a farmer/stockman in the Pleasant Hill area. He died two months after his wife.

3. **William H. Shires** was born about 1861 in Jefferson Co. MO, and died after 1925, probably near Pleasant Hill. He married after 1880. William and his wife had at least three children: Alfred (-1958), Theresa (-), and Jessie (-).

William was a powerful man physically, but was looked down on by his Knorpp halfbrothers for a lack of good business sense. In 1909 he purchased the original 240 acres of John Christian Knorpp's homestead for \$27,000. A newspaper account called this farm one of the area's best properties (P. Hill Times, Nov. 26, 1909). William's son Alfred was a friend of James Knorpp's son Clark. Although an alcoholic, Alfred was a good baseball player. William's daughter Jessie married a Rector; his daughter Theresa married H. D. Skites of Chillicothe, Missouri.

THE CHILDREN OF MARY THERESA NORWINE, 1916

This photograph (*not available*) marks both a family reunion and a birthday celebration. The date is October 1, 1916, a Sunday two days before the 74th birthday of Henry Jacob Knorpp. Assembled at Henry's house in Pleasant Hill, Missouri, (to surprise him after church) are all his surviving siblings. They arranged themselves before the camera in order of age. At the right is the oldest brother, John Christian Knorpp (age 75), an extremely successful banker and business entrepreneur from Kansas City who likely hired the photographer. Next to him is Henry, a blacksmith by trade before he was blinded about 1890 while working in the Joplin lead-mining district. The third Knorpp brother, with hat in hand, is James Conrad, age 72. He lived nearby and was recognized as one of the state's leading livestock traders.

Ann Mariah, the oldest sister, is 69. She had married bridge contractor John H. Tamm of Chicago when he came south to the family's hometown of De Soto, Missouri, to help with reconstruction after the Civil War. The couple moved to Chicago and stayed there permanently. Next to Mariah is Mary Magdalena, age 65. She had married an Ontario man, Philander Spencer, but the couple lived on a farm in southern Jackson County near her brother James. The two people on the left side of the photograph are half-siblings to the Knorpps. Barbara E. Shires, age 60, had married Reuben P. Henley, a local farmer/stockman. She died six months after this reunion. Her brother, William H. Shires, completes the family group. Still a powerful man physically at age 55, he farmed midway between Mary and James and lived there in a house that John had built in the late 1860s.

The mother of all these people, Mary Theresa Norwine, was a native of Ste. Genevieve, Missouri. She married Christian Gottlieb Knorpp in 1840 at her family's home in St. Francois County. The couple both were of German stock (she from Frankenthal in the Palatinate, he nearby in Marbach, Wurttemberg) and they settled on a farm in Jefferson County. After Gottlieb was killed in a farm accident in 1853, Mary Theresa married John Shires. Shires also died young. Then, shortly after marrying George Sharp, she moved to a farm near Pleasant Hill. Two of her children had died prior to this photograph: Elizabeth C. Knorpp (1852-1880), who had married John Mesplay, and Caroline Shires (1855-1902), who had married James W. Heslar. In the years to come, Henry would die in 1919, James in 1923, and John in 1925. Their sisters lived into the 1940s. The Pleasant Hill Times for October 6, 1916, contains an account of this reunion. Other attendees included Morris and William Knorpp (two of John's sons), their wives, and Morris's daughter Anna. Henry's daughter Grace was there as well, along with her husband and daughter. Accompanying James was his wife and children Alice, Clark, Cora, Dean, and Harry, plus Clark's wife and their five children. Mariah came alone, but Mary brought her husband, her son Edward, and Edward's wife Della. Barbara's husband attended, too, along with their son Elzie and Elzie's wife and son. Finally, William brought his wife and their daughter Jessie. Pleasant Hill Cemetery.