

The attached typescript is a copy of a letter which was written by Frank F. Estein to his nephew, John Van Harlingen of Sonora, California, in 1906. The punctuation and spelling are the same as those in the copy of the letter in my family's archives, which was allegedly copied just as Frank Estein wrote it. The fate of the original letter is unknown. At one point, it fell into the hands of cousins Louise and Johanna Meyer of San Francisco, California, in the 1930's. In 1934, Johanna made a handwritten copy of the original letter and sent carbon copies of it to my grandfather, Edward Henry Nohrden of Watsonville, California, and his 3 sisters and brother. My grandfather's father, John Henry Nohrden, also emigrated from Germany and was married to Anna Martha Estein, one of Frank Estein's sisters.

I have appended explanatory notes on pages 9 and 10.

John Christopher Nohrden  
September 27, 1985

Walnut Spring, Tex. June 3rd, 1906

My own dear Nephew <sup>1</sup>  
and family.

I can't call to memory when I was gladder than when the 11 o'clock passenger train carrying the U.S. mail ran in day before yesterday bringing me your kind and appreciated letter of May 26th. I was at the depot at the time and when I saw the smoke from the engine as it came in sight out of a cut nearly a mile away, I remarked to a friend of mine, that engine is certainly pulling a letter for me from California, and sure enough when I looked in to my box at the p.o. and took it out I felt joyful and yet uneasy untill I read it; in fact I felt queer. wanted to be off to myself glad to get the letter and yet fearing I'd have to read some fearful sad news, but now I must try to show you all my appreciation by answering. Perhaps you have heard and remember hearing your Dear mother and my Darling sister tell of my tender and sympathetic heart toward all the Estein generation and especially my pet sister Lizzie. I will now proceed to write you a short scetch of our antecedands as far back as of my Grand-fathers

and our Grand-mother from my mother side. I will also write you something concerning my adventure and after father and mother died.

Our Grand father from father side entered the french army during the Revolutionary war a rather uneducated youth (man) by name of John Eckstein.<sup>2</sup> when discharged from service the french military authorities wrote his name John (Jean, "french") Estein<sup>2</sup> leaving the ck out and I presume, he was the only Estein in the world, at any rate he soon thereafter married a refined and intelligent young german lady and to this union 3 sons and 1 daughter were born.

Your grandfather, John Estein was born in Kurhessen Apr. 3rd. 1880<sup>3</sup> uncle Almond Estein came next then Conrad Estein and last, but not least our aunt Elisabeth Estein, she was my good little old aunt because she petted me more than any one else she always took my part in a disput over marbles and when mamma took a notion to give me, what Pat gave the drum.

They all married and raised large families in Kurhessen (monarchy) in and near Cassel (the Capital) but father property and residence was the

Ulfenmuehle<sup>d</sup> on the River Fulda near the village Breitenbach where our mother and all of us old enough before leaving Germany went to school to be taught by the same teacher and were baptised by the same preacher, who baptised mother, confirmed her in the lutherian church and afterwards all the children as fast as they got to be 14 years old. Father was the sole owner of the oil mill saw mill vinegar and mustard factory and in connection carried on a tremendous lumber trade<sup>s</sup> and shipment down the river to Cassel, Carlshafen, Bremen, and into the United States he shipped large amount of prepared mustard.

Uncle Conrad owned and operated a similar establishment of about capacity of fathers

Papa and uncle Conrad were corpulent men father a little the tallest either weight about the 280 to 290 pounds. Uncle Almond was a Planter and owned Brewery establishments in connection. Conrad establishment was near Cassel about 12 hours walk from Ulfenmuehle. Your dear mother like my daughter Gertrude was the very image

in size and apperance of your grand-mother and both inherited mother tender feelings and sympathetic actions.

Father was married twice, my mother's sister Fredericka Mouraquez<sup>6</sup> (french disant) had 5 children, of which two died in infancy, the other 3 very well remember brother Carl Cristopher, married a highly educated and pretty young lady after becoming exempt from military service, no children, last heard from 12 years ago. Minnie married Andrew Imgrund had 3 or 4 children, never saw but one here in America we left the foregoing two in Germany and sister Louisa of the first marriage came to the United States with us and married Henry Meyers in 2, 3 perhaps 4 months after we landed in New Orleans. I was the oldest child of Louisa Gertrude father's second wife they were married July 16 - 1834.<sup>7</sup> I was born May the 8th 1835 next Bro. Anton born Jan. 3 - 1836. The exact dates of births and deaths I have forgotten and give you their name according to age Wilhelm Conrad died in

California<sup>8</sup> then Bro. Louis who died of Cholera in Sister Louisa Myers in N.O. house perhaps 2 months after father and mother's death these were us 4 boys about a year and a half difference in our age and we were a always hale and hardy and rather a tough set and when one got a paddling we all got it untill I got old enough to hold mamma and laugh and talk her out of the notion. and I rarely ever failed mamma was so good natured and we frequently diserved a real cow hyding. Oh we were a desperate set of little criminals. Then comes Lizzie probably 7 years younger than I, then Anna (Mrs. Henry Nohrden)<sup>9</sup> next Edward a young mashinist was killed in a New Orleans Mashine shop while working a heigth some machinery gave away over head and crushing him to death, next Henry another noble boy died in our home Ulfenmuehle in Germany this was the first time I ever saw some one dye and it liked to killed us; mother had told

and taught us so much about heaven and God that I wanted to go with Henry and not let him go alone. Then there is Mina used to live with Anton then Jean died in N.O. while very small after I left but I forgot Alexander a baby boy died in Bremen while waiting for the Equipment of our ship and some real nice people came to where we stopped and begged mamma to have the sweet little boy placed in the arm of a beautiful young lady who died near by about the same time. Yes and I remember it was either your dear mother or sister Anna say our little brother has gone to Heaven with a nice lady. Then come John (Jean) and Katherine<sup>10</sup> who died in New Orleans after father and mother died and I had left New Orleans. Father taken sick with yellow fever on Thursday eve<sup>11</sup> before Sunday 3 A.M. when he died Sept. 16 mother taken sick next day (Friday) after pa was taken sick and died Sept. 17 Monday 10 A.M.<sup>12</sup> after pa's death sister Louisa was down with yellow fever and I took down on the way to sister Louisa house

from mother funeral we landed in N.  
Orleans the 17 Feb. 1853<sup>13</sup> were 7½ weeks on the  
water in the 3 mast sailship Uhland commanded by  
Capt. Ulmhausen a very clever gentleman 2 mates and  
2 stewards were also nice clean men and I soon  
became their favored of other passengers. The crew  
of sailors also took a particular liking to me and  
I had lots of good fun. I had just been called home  
from University to imigrate to America with father  
family to keep us boys out of the army as a tryal of  
brother Carl cost father over \$1000<sup>00</sup> well I was in  
pretty fare shape to take in a little sailing canoe  
accross the Atlantic pond. I sure had lots of fun  
among the 749 deck passengers and 65 cabin  
passengers there were but few of the lot that were  
any thing near like our sorts of people. I had  
never heard their Dialect and I could not  
understand them when they talked low dutch but  
few could talk german proper and our  
voyage to America we had 3 births and 3  
Deaths, all this happened below deck I was  
the only passenger permitted to assist in the  
burials at sea there was a detail of saylors



perhaps 8 or 10 and me who performed the  
burial ceremony just at 12 o'clock at night. I  
must close for this time but will in the near  
future write more of mother and her stock of  
people, of my adventures and my family, of sea  
sickness, of half saving a dutch sandy complected  
freckled fellow and let him go for 3 days and  
nights and answer your kind letter more  
fully Kind regards and best of love from my  
wife and son to you all

I am ever your uncle

P.F Estein

## CLARIFICATIONS

- 1 Frank Estein's nephew was John Van Harlingen, son of his sister, Elisabeth A. Estein. Elisabeth was married twice: first to Frank Rath, a saloon keeper in Sonora, California; second to John Van Harlingen, an auctioneer in Sonora. John Van Harlingen (Jr.) became owner and publisher of the Sonora Democrat, one of two newspapers in Sonora.
- 2 Frank Estein identified his grandfather as John Estein. The Evangelical Church parish in Breitenbach, Germany, identified Frank's grandfather as Christoph Estein from Sangerhausen. The grandfather's baptismal name was likely Johan Christoph Eckstein.
- 3 This date is obviously in error. The Evangelical Church parish in Breitenbach stated that Johannes Estein was 34 at the time of his marriage to Louise Gertraude Mourques in 1834; thus, John (Johannes) Estein's date of birth was likely 3 April 1800 and not 1880.
- 4 "die Muehle" is the noun for "mill" in German. Ulfenmuehle was the name of the mill at the place where the Ulfen River flows into the Fulda River, just east across the Fulda River from Breitenbach. Ulfenmuehle was still present on a 1984 topographical map of the region.
- 5 John (Johannes) Estein, Frank's father, was described as the administrator of a lumbering magazine in the Breitenbach Evangelical Church records. The land register of Breitenbach described John Estein as the proprietor of the Ulfen mill 1834-1853.
- 6 The Breitenbach Evangelical Church identified John Estein's first wife as Friedrike Elisabeth Mourques.
- 7 The Breitenbach Evangelical Church gave the date of this marriage as 16 October 1834. Johannes Estein, 34 years old, was the widower of Friedrike Elisabeth Mourques and son of the deceased Christoph Estein of Sangerhausen and his deceased wife, Anna Gertrude Heunemann. Louise Gertraude Estein, almost 17 years old, was the daughter of Peter Mourques of Homberg an der Ohm and his wife, Anna Cunigunde Schmidt. Their church wedding was held in Breitenbach.
- 8 William Conrad Estein was identified as a barber in the 1860 U.S. census for Sonora, California. He died 8 December 1879 in Stockton, California.
- 9 Anna Martha Estein, my great-grandmother, was born 27 March 1844 in Ulfenmuehle, married 23 May 1861 in Sonora, California, to John Henry Nohrden, died 27 February 1893 in Watsonville, California. 6 children.

CLARIFICATIONS cont'd

- 10 Frank Estein described 12 children, including himself, as offspring of John and Louise Gertrude Estein. The ship's passenger list for their arrival in New Orleans enumerated 9 children. Accounting for the child (Henry) who died young and the other child (Alexander) who died while they were awaiting the ship in Bremen, this indicates that the youngest child, Katherine, was likely born in New Orleans. Katherine was not named on the ship's passenger list.
- 11 September 16 was a Sunday in the year 1855, indicating that John Estein likely died 16 September 1855.
- 12 Similarly, September 17 was a Monday in the year 1855, indicating that Louise Gertrude Estein died 17 September 1855.
- 13 The ship's passenger list gives the date of their arrival in New Orleans as 18 January 1854. The Captain of the ship was O. Lahusen, and it included 375 steerage (deck) passengers. Ref: National Archives Microfilm Publication M-259, Roll 39, Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, Louisiana, 1820-1902.