



JOSEPH NEUHOFF

DGS Project March 2024



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Research Objective

Research the life and ancestors of Joseph Neuhoff, one of the founders of the Thanksgiving Square project in Dallas, in support of the relationship between the Thanks-Giving Foundation and the Dallas Genealogical Society.

Research Summary

Joseph Oscar Neuhoff came from a family with both a strong work ethic and a deep Catholic faith. The Neuhoff family legacy can be seen in both Dallas, Texas, and Nashville, Tennessee, in their philanthropy towards Catholic institutions, and numerous civic projects, including their donations to The University of Dallas, St. Paul Hospital and Thanksgiving Square.

Research Details

Joseph Oscar Neuhoff was born 19 March 1909 in Nashville, Tennessee.¹ His parents were Henry Neuhoff and Emma Erzen.²

Henry Neuhoff

Henry was born in Oberasbach, Germany on 25 June 1870.³ Since there is more than one Oberasbach in Germany, it is important to know the entire place name, as it is currently documented today: Oberasbach, Oberbergischer Kreis, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany; or Oberasbach, Morsbach, Germany (the best way to find it on a map.)



[Image provided through Google Maps, ©2024]

The red pin marks the location of the town, and it is a small, rural, wooded area today. Wikipedia notes that the population in the surrounding Morsbach area was 3,800 in 1866, and that today around 53% of the people residing there are Catholics.⁴

¹ U.S. Selective Service, World War II Draft Cards, Texas, 1940-1947, Joseph Oscar Neuhoff, 19 March 1909, National Archives at St. Louis; database and images online, *Ancestry*, "World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947", accessed 2 Feb 2024.

² Emma also appears in some early records as Anna Amelia. Likely her name was Anna Amelia Erzen, and she was known as Emma to friends and family. Emma has been used throughout the report for consistency.

³ Kirchenbukduplicat, 1656-1972, Births and Deaths, Henry Neuhoff, 25 June 1870; images online, *FamilySearch*, "Deutschland Geburten und Taufen, 1558-1898", film no. 007991825, image 337 of 897, accessed 1 March 2024.

⁴ "Morsbach", Wikipedia entry, translated into English; <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morsbach>, accessed 16 March 2024.

Until 1871, this part of what is now Germany was called Prussia; in 1871, the German empire was formed, including these parts of the country. The proximity to Belgium and the Netherlands would have made those two places the likely ports for someone departing for North America.

Henry's parents were Johannes Neuhoff and Catharine Reinhardt.⁵ They married 14 June 1862 in Morsbach, Germany. Johannes was "of Korseifen" and Catherine, "of Lichtenberg", which were nearby villages.⁶ They were Catholics.

Johannes and Catharine had at least the following children:

- Carl, born 1863-died 1865
- Mary Ann, born 1865
- William, born 1868
- Henry, born 1870
- Lorenz, born 1872
- John, born 1874
- Carl, born 1880
- Anna Mary, born 1882

Henry was in the middle of those listed here. There may have been others who died in infancy, based upon the gap in births between Henry's brothers, John and Carl.

Henry's father Johannes died 26 April 1881,⁷ at age 47, leaving his widow to support a large family of very young children, the eldest about 13 years old. Providing for everyone would have been very challenging.

At least half of the siblings (Henry, Lorenz, John, and Anna Mary) departed for the United States once they were adults.

Henry claimed to have arrived in the United States in May 1888, according to his naturalization papers. He stated in his naturalization application that, at age 18, he had traveled on the Red Star Line from Antwerp to New York, but he could not remember the ship's name.⁸

⁵ Kirchenbukduplicat, 1656-1972, Births and Deaths, Henry Neuhoff, 25 June 1870; images online, *FamilySearch*, "Deutschland Geburten und Taufen, 1558-1898", film no. 007991825, image 337 of 897, accessed 1 March 2024.

⁶ Kirchenbukduplicat, 1656-1972, Marriages, Neuhoff-Reinhard, 14 June 1862; images online, *FamilySearch*, "Deutschland Geburten und Taufen, 1558-1898", film no. 007991825, image 711 of 897, accessed 10 March 2024.

⁷ Kirchenbuch, 1656-1972, Births and Deaths, Johannes Neuhoff, 26 April 1881; images online, *FamilySearch*, "Kirchenbuch, 1656-1972", film no. 008221794, image 301 of 595, accessed 10 March 2024.

⁸ *Petitions for Naturalization, compiled 1907-1963*, Records of the District Courts of the United States, RG #21, District Court, Middle District, Nashville, 1907 April- 1911 December, Henry Neuhoff, 6 Feb 1908, National Archives and Records Administration, Atlanta; images online, *Ancestry*, "Tennessee, U.S., Naturalization Records, 1888-1992", accessed 16 Feb 2024.

However, he appears to have misstated his actual arrival date. A passenger list shows a Henry Neuhoff of Germany, aged 23, arriving in New York, 23 Feb 1892. He traveled on the *Westernland*, a Red Star Line ship, that traversed the Antwerp-New York route.⁹ His occupation was given as cooper - someone who made wooden barrels or casks.

Henry then appeared in the 1892 New York state census in Monroe County, New York. Although households were not specifically delineated in those records, looking at the order of persons listed, it seems likely that Henry lived in the household of Peter and Frida Stroh. Peter was a butcher from Germany, and Henry's occupation was also given as butcher.¹⁰

By 1893, Henry was in St. Louis, Missouri, again listed as a butcher, and lived at 4010 Garfield Avenue, according to the city directory. He started his petition to become a naturalized citizen at this time, which would have required an earlier arrival date than his actual arrival in 1892.

Henry married Emma Ernzen 21 September 1897 in St. Louis, Missouri, in the Church of the Holy Ghost, by the parish priest, August Huettler.¹¹ The church was located on the corner of Taylor and Garfield Avenues, and the local city directory noted that the church held services in German.

Emma Ernzen

Anna Amelia (known as "Emma") Ernzen was born 21 Sept 1869 in St. Louis.¹² Emma's parents were John Ernzen and Angela Bohmann.

John and Angela had at least:

- Emma, born about 1869
- Catherine, born about 1872 – died April 1923
- George, born about 1877 – died July 1930

The family was enumerated in the 1880 census in St. Louis, where John worked as a stonecutter. John Ernzen died 7 December 1880.¹³ Like Henry, Emma lost her father at a young age and likely lived in similarly difficult circumstances.

⁹ Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820-1897, *SS Westernland*, 23 Feb 1892, Henry Neuhoff, line 812, NARA microfilm publication M237, roll 582; images online, *MyHeritage*, accessed 13 March 2024.

¹⁰ 1892 State Census, New York, Monroe County, Rochester, 13th Ward, Henry Nuhoff; images online, FamilySearch, film no. 004370013, image 314 of 362, accessed 12 March 2024.

¹¹ "Missouri, County Marriage, Naturalization and Court Records, 1800-1991", Henry Neuhoff and Anna Amelia Ernzen, 21 Sept 1897; images online, *FamilySearch*, digital folder 007513814, image 169, accessed 6 March 2024.

¹² Passport Applications, January 2, 1906-March 31, 1925, Henry and Anna Neuhoff, roll 1994, no. 179122, National Archives, Washington, DC; images online, Ancestry, "U.S., Passport Applications, 1795-1925", accessed 5 March 2024.

¹³ Missouri, St. Louis, Deaths, John Enzern, 7 December 1880; images online, Ancestry, "Missouri, Death Records, 1850-1931", accessed 6 March 2024.

By 1895, the whole Ernzen family was working – Catherine as a dressmaker, Emma as a stenographer, and George as a clerk.¹⁴ The addresses for Henry and the Ernzen family were about a mile away from each other in St. Louis. In the middle of the distance between them was St. Matthews Catholic Church (its first building, which was replaced in the early 1900’s with a more permanent structure),¹⁵ but the services were not held in German, so it’s more likely that Henry and Emma met at the church where they later married.

The Ernzen family, except for Emma, were buried in Calvary Cemetery in St. Louis.¹⁶ Angela, Emma’s mother, was buried there on 16 May 1900.

Henry and Emma

Henry and Emma had relocated to Nashville, Tennessee, in time for the 1900 census enumeration in June. They already had three children, including twin girls. Henry’s business was clearly growing. The family had two live-in servants, and Henry’s occupation was “Dealer of Hams”.¹⁷

Henry was producing boneless boiled hams, and in 1901, he took out an ad in the local newspaper explaining that his store had some fire damage, and he would therefore need time to replenish his supply.¹⁸

Later that year, Henry formed a partnership with Henry P. Fritz, to “open a cold storage house”, providing the public with “the very best grade of Western and dressed beef...[and] every variety of sausages and oysters”.¹⁹

Henry became a citizen of the United States in 1908, when he and the family (except his last two children, who were not yet born), were living in Nashville on Sixth Avenue.²⁰ This area was known as the “Germantown” of Nashville.

¹⁴ *1895 Gould’s St. Louis City Directory*, St. Louis, Missouri, entry for Ernzens; images online, Ancestry, “U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995”, accessed 12 March 2024.

¹⁵ “A Brief History of St. Matthews”, *stmatthewtheapostle.org*, accessed 16 March 2024.

¹⁶ St. Louis, Missouri, Catholic Cemetery burials, Ernzen family, Calvary Cemetery, Section 20, lot 119, John, Angela, and George Ernzen, and Catherine (Ernzen)and George Chester; index online, *awaittheblessedhope.org*, accessed March 16, 2024.

¹⁷ 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Davidson County, Tennessee, e.d. 69, sheet 7B, Henry Neuhoff household; images online, *Ancestry*, accessed 24 Feb 2024.

¹⁸ “Notice!”, *The Tennessean*, 29 June 1901, (Nashville, TN), page 16; images online, Newspapers.com, accessed 20 Feb 2024.

¹⁹ “An Innovation”, *The Tennessean*, 6 October 1901, (Nashville, TN), page 3; images online, Newspapers.com, accessed 20 Feb 2024.

²⁰ Petitions for Naturalization, *Ancestry*. See note 8.

Joseph Oscar Neuhoff, their eighth child, was baptized at St. Assumption Church in Nashville on 18 April 1909. His godparents were Mrs. Lorenz Neuhoff (his aunt), and Mr. Oscar Geny.²¹

Similar to Henry's parents, Henry and Emma also had a very large family, nine children in all. Joseph was born second to last. In 1910, they still lived in Nashville, Tennessee, where Henry ran the meat market.²²

By this time, Henry and Emma had:

- Angela, born 1898
- Helen, born 1899
- Catherine, born 1899
- Henry, Jr, born 1901
- Rose Mary, born 1902
- Cecilia, born 1905
- Dorothea, born 1906
- Joseph, born 1909

Henry and Emma's last child, John, was born in 1911.

In 1914, the Assumption Church in Nashville was forming a group of married women parishioners, and Mrs. Henry Neuhoff was the president.²³ Henry's business was booming – society pages mention the decorators hired to do the new family residence on North High Street and documented when the family departed for their summer residence on White's Creek Road.

In 1920, their daughter Catherine Neuhoff died at the age of 21, from "thyrotoxic fever", with a secondary or contributing cause being "exophthalmic goiter".²⁴ These symptoms are associated with hyperthyroidism.²⁵ She was the only one of Henry and Anna's adult children to die before their parents.

In June 1922, with the elder children more than capable of managing the younger ones, Henry and Emma departed on a European tour anticipated to last four months.²⁶ The couple planned

²¹ "North Nashville," *The Nashville Banner*, 20 April 1909, (Nashville, TN), page 4; images online, *Newspapers.com*, accessed 20 Feb 2024.

²² 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Davidson County, Tennessee, e.d. 15, sheet 1B, Henry Neuhoff household; images online, *Ancestry*, accessed 24 Feb 2024.

²³ "North Nashville," *The Nashville Banner*, 22 Sep 1914 (Nashville, TN), page 5; images online, *Newspapers.com*, accessed 20 Feb 2024.

²⁴ State of Tennessee, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Death Records, Catherine Neuhoff, 11 November 1920, Nashville, TN, certificate no. 21901; images online, *FamilySearch*, "Tennessee Deaths, 1914-1966", film no. 1299714, accessed 12 March 2024.

²⁵ Frank Lahey, MD., "The Crisis of Exophthalmic Goiter", *New England Journal of Medicine*, 9 August 1928; online, <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM192808091990601>, accessed 6 March 2024.

²⁶ North Nashville," *The Nashville Banner*, 17 Jun 1922 (Nashville, TN), page 5; images online, *Newspapers.com*, accessed 20 Feb 2024.

to visit the “British Isles, France, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy [and] Belgium.”²⁷ They returned in September 1922. Joseph also returned home for Christmas that year – he had been away at school at the University of Dayton.²⁸

Meanwhile, the business continued its expansion, this time into Atlanta, where Henry’s brother Lorenz was taking the lead. Lorenz (more often identified as Laurence in the US) had moved to the US around the same time as Henry, and they had lived nearby in Nashville until the Atlanta expansion took place.

In the mid-1920’s, Joseph’s older brother and sisters began to marry. First Cecilia, to Felix Saino, 1925; then Jane Hudson to Henry Jr., in 1926; then Rose Mary to Tom Grady, also in 1926. Around this time, two of his sisters began the process of becoming nuns. Angela would become Sister Henrietta; Helen would become Sister Mary Helen.

The family remained in Nashville through 1930. Around 1931, the original business was sold to Swift & Co., for \$2 million.

By 1932, sons Henry, John and Joseph were all in Dallas, where the Neuhoffs were opening a new meat packing plant that would come to be known as the Neuhoff Brothers Packing.

Henry and Anna had traveled from Tennessee for a visit, probably to see their new grandchild, named MaryAnn, born in June of that year to their son Henry and his wife Jane. The Neuhoffs planned to travel from Dallas, Texas, to Daytona Beach after their visit. Unfortunately, they never made it. On 2 July 1932, there was a car accident in Georgia, resulting in serious injury to Henry and the death of Mrs. Neuhoff.²⁹ Henry eventually returned to Nashville, but his sons remained in Dallas.

Joseph O. Neuhoff, Sr.

Joseph, identified as “Joe” in most records in his adult life, was involved in the Catholic community at a young age, serving as an altar boy while he lived in Nashville. He also enjoyed the outdoors, as a Nashville newspaper noted, when he was part of a group of boys who spent “three days in the woods...waded the creeks with their clothes on, killed snakes, fished, and went ‘frogging’”.³⁰ His love of the outdoors continued throughout his life.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ “The Personal Side” *The Tennessean*, 4 Jan 1923 (Nashville, TN), page 5; images online, *Newspapers.com*, accessed 20 Feb 2024.

²⁹ “Mrs. Neuhoff Fatally Hurt in Accident”, *Nashville Banner*, (Nashville, TN), 3 July 1932, page 1; image online, *Newspapers.com*, accessed 27 March 2024.

³⁰ “Fun Alive, Likewise Snakes”, *Nashville Banner*, (Nashville, TN), 23 July 1922, page 20; image online, *Newspapers.com*, accessed 27 March 2024.

He attended school at both the University of Dayton, and Vanderbilt University, where he was in the School of Engineering, and a member of the Tau Delta, a scholarship fraternity there.³¹

Joe married Ann Rebecca Folsom 8 Jun 1937 at Holy Trinity Church in Dallas.³²

Joe and Ann had:

- 1) Joseph Oscar, Jr., birth date removed for privacy³³
- 2) Ann Rebecca, born 24 May 1940, died 25 Dec 2020³⁴

As was required for all men of eligible age, Joe completed a draft registration card for World War II on 16 October 1940. He gave the family address as 8738 Canyon Drive in Dallas.³⁵

By 1946, the family had moved to 8502 Jordan Way, where Ann hosted the St. Ann's Society of Christ the King parish auxiliary meetings.³⁶ Ann was also involved in many of the organizations doing charitable work in Dallas, such as the Junior League, and she participated in the women-organized drives to sell war bonds.³⁷

Many news articles in Dallas show the family participating in local events, such as the children's activities at Catholic schools, and in sporting events, throughout the 1940's.

Joe's involvement with charitable organizations was also impressive. He served on the board of directors for the local Red Cross in 1951,³⁸ was on the finance committee to purchase a new building for Christ the King School in 1952, the board of directors for the Dallas Council of Social Agencies in 1953,³⁹ and one of the chairmen for a \$4 million building fund for St. Paul's hospital in 1958.

³¹ "Vanderbilt Prize Winners Honored at Commencement", *Nashville Banner*, (Nashville, TN), 11 June 1930, page 13; image online, *Newspapers.com*, accessed 27 March 2024.

³² Joseph O. Neuhoff Weds Miss Ann Rebecca Folsom", *Dallas Morning News*, (Dallas, TX), 8 Jun 1937, page 10; image online, *GenealogyBank*, accessed 2 Feb 2024.

³³ Texas, Department of State Health Services, Birth Index, 1903-1997, Joseph O. Neuhoff, birth date removed for privacy, Dallas County, TX; index online, *Ancestry*, accessed 12 Feb 2024.

³⁴ Findagrave memorial no. 229856587, Ann Rebecca "Becky" Neuhoff Griffith, 25 Dec 2020, creator snippets, added July 2021, accessed 6 March 2024.

³⁵ Selective Service System, World War II Draft Registrations, Joseph Oscar Neuhoff; images online, *Ancestry*, accessed 12 Feb 2024.

³⁶ "Church Auxiliaries", *Dallas Morning News*, (Dallas, Texas), 14 May 1946; images online, *GenealogyBank*, accessed 5 March 2024.

³⁷ "Women Report Heavy War Bond Sales in Drive", *Dallas Morning News*, (Dallas, Texas), 22 April 1943, page 13; images online, *GenealogyBank*, accessed 5 March 2024.

³⁸ "Overton Re-Elected as Red Cross Chief", *Dallas Morning News*, (Dallas, Texas), 20 July 1951, page 14; images online, *GenealogyBank*, accessed 25 March 2024.

³⁹ "Agencies Council Sets Meeting for Monday", *Dallas Morning News*, (Dallas, Texas), 18 May 1953, page 8; images online, *GenealogyBank*, accessed 25 March 2024.

Ann continued to organize charitable drives such as the Benefit Tea for the Mother's Club of Christ the King School,⁴⁰ and the Junior League Garden.

The couple also jointly participated in the funding and organization of the MardiGras Ball over many years. The proceeds from the event supported the Jesuit High Scholarship Fund, creating opportunities for students who could not afford the fees to attend on a scholarship basis.⁴¹

Joe was President of the Serra Club in 1958 – a club of “leading Catholic business and professional men dedicated to fostering vocations to the priesthood, sisterhood and brotherhood” among the youth of their diocese.⁴²

Joe's father Henry died in St. Paul Hospital in Dallas, 5 April 1964. *The Austin American* reported that Henry “had fractured a hip Friday after coming to Dallas for the dedication of St. Paul Hospital and the Katherine Neuhoff Memorial Chapel, named for a daughter.”⁴³ His occupation on his death certificate was given as “Capitalist”.⁴⁴

Throughout the 1950's, Joe's job was often reported in the papers as the “secretary-treasurer” of “Neuhoff Packing”. Following the death of their father, Joseph's brother Henry became Chairman of the Board, and Joseph was elected President of Neuhoff Brothers Packers.⁴⁵

That same year, the Thanks-Giving Square foundation was formed, with Joe Neuhoff as part of the original group. He became a trustee of the University of Dallas, and at one time, served as a director for the State Fair of Texas. University of Dallas named their Institute of Ministry and Evangelization in honor of both Joe and Ann Neuhoff.⁴⁶

Joseph Oscar Neuhoff died 27 May 1970 in Dallas, Texas.⁴⁷ He is buried in Calvary Hill Cemetery and Mausoleum, in Dallas, with his wife Ann who died 18 Dec 1988.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ “Benefit Tea Sponsored by Mother's Club”, *Dallas Morning News*, (Dallas, Texas), 11 Nov 1951, page 11; images online, *GenealogyBank*, accessed 25 March 2024.

⁴¹ “Princesses Will Select Own Music”, *Dallas Morning News*, (Dallas, Texas), 21 Feb 1954, page 1; images online, *GenealogyBank*, accessed 25 March 2024.

⁴² “Serra Club Elects Joe Neuhoff”, *Dallas Morning News*, (Dallas, Texas), 2 May 1958, page 2; images online, *GenealogyBank*, accessed 25 March 2024.

⁴³ “People: Henry Neuhoff, Sr., 93”, *The Austin American*, (Austin, TX), 7 April 1964, page 15; images online, *Newspapers.com*, accessed 19 Feb 2024.

⁴⁴ Texas, Death Certificates, Henry Neuhoff, 5 April 1964, certificate no. 22072, Dallas, Texas; images online, *Ancestry*, “Texas, U.S., Death Certificates, 1903-1982,” accessed 18 Feb 2024.

⁴⁵ “Stock Split by Neuhoff”, *Dallas Morning News*, (Dallas, TX), 15 Dec 1964, page 10; image online, *GenealogyBank*, accessed 2 Feb 2024.

⁴⁶ University of Dallas, website, “Neuhoff Institute – Our History”, <https://udallas.edu/faith-service/centers-institutes/neuhoff-institute/about/history-neuhoff.php>, accessed 29 March 2024.

⁴⁷ “Joseph Neuhoff Dies at 61; Helped Build Meat Company”, *Dallas Morning News*, (Dallas, TX), 28 May 1970, page 5; images online, *GenealogyBank*, accessed 2 Feb 2024.

⁴⁸ Findagrave memorial no. 173902456, Ann Folsom Neuhoff, 28 Dec 1988, creator debbs1223, added Dec 2016, accessed 6 March 2024.

