

Sisters Lula and Elizabeth Goppinger

This sweet photo of the sisters Lula and Elizabeth Goppinger came to me from the United States. Oh, how I love an identified photo! I couldn't wait to start digging!



It was quite easy to find paper trail on the sisters, since I knew their names and had an indication of location. I might also know the reason why this photo is without a family. But about that later.



Elizabeth Storck nee Goppinger

The oldest of the sisters, **Elizabeth Frances Goppinger** was born on February 13th, 1882, in Sheffield, Iowa, to parents George and Ellen Mary Goppinger. She married Henry H. Storck on March 15th, 1907, in Floyd, Iowa. The censuses list no children for Henry and Elizabeth. Henry had been a farmer, like his father, and was working as the manager of the Stock Buyers Association in 1927. Sadly, Henry died in a tragic accident on June 18th, 1927. The cause of death, as reported in his death certificate, was "struck by railway train while crossing track on Gilman Street in motor truck". This must have been such a shock for his wife Elizabeth, I can imagine it was difficult for her to cope

on her own. She moved back to her parents' residence and lived there as a widow until her death in 1963. She is buried at the Hillside Cemetery in Sheffield.



Lula Storck nee Goppinger

The younger sister in the photo, **Lula Olena Goppinger** was born on May 14th, 1886, in Sheffield, Franklin in Iowa. She married August Frederick Storck on October 3rd, 1912, in Franklin, Iowa. Franklin was a farmer and a son of German immigrants from Sheffield. Did you notice that Lula married a man with the same surname like her sister Elizabeth? That is not a coincidence, Henry and August Frederick were brothers.

Lula and Frederick had one son, born on August 16th, 1913, and they named him **Georgearl Henry Storck**. Strangely, in the 1920 census, Lula and her husband Frederick are no longer living together and Lula is listed as divorced, living with her parents and son in Clinton, Franklin, IA. I find Frederick in the 1930 census, married to a woman named Olga with whom he had a daughter Sadonia in 1923. Lula passed away on March 2nd, 1966 and is buried at the Hillside Cemetery in Sheffield.

Lula's son Georgearl Henry Storck was a farmer, like his grandfather George. He was about 5'11" tall, had "ruddy" skin and brown eyes. He was drafted into the US Army in October 1940. On July 6th, 1938, he had married Onabelle nee Zunkel in St. George, Utah. As far as I could find out, the couple had no children. Georgearl passed away on November 21, 1984, in Dakota at the age of 71. He is buried together with his wife on the Hillside cemetery in Sheffield, Franklin. Onabelle outlived him by 15 years.

This might explain why this photo is without a family. After Georgearl passed away, there might be no one to hold on to this family's photos as there seem to be no other direct descendants.

But I want to end this family story on a more positive note, on a more hopeful note. That's why I will add a few words about Lula and Elizabeth's parents **George and Ellen Mary Goppinger**. George Goppinger and Ellen Mary nee Ormrod married on January 29th, 1880, in Jo Davies, Illinois. George had been born on December 31st, 1855, in Bavaria in Germany, and Ellen was a first generation American, born in 1857 in Rhode Island to English immigrants.

George is your classic self-made man, the American dream that Hollywood movies are made of! I found the most interesting biography of George Goppinger on Ancestry in a book called "History of Franklin County, Iowa: a record of settlement, organization, progress and achievement":

"Early in life he became imbued with the desire to see America and determined that as soon as old enough he would set sail for the new world. He worked at the shoemaker's trade until he had saved enough money to pay his passage and in August, 1869, emigrated to the United States. He reached Milwaukee, Wisconsin, without funds and was obliged to borrow two dollars in order to get to Sheboygan, spending the winter at work in the lumber woods. The year 1870 witnessed his arrival in Franklin county, Iowa. In the spring of 1871 he came to Sheffield and purchased one hundred and

sixty acres of wild prairie land in Ross township. This was still a pioneer district and the hardships of its early settlers were numerous. During certain seasons of the year, when the region was largely a swamp, Mr. Goppinger's primitive little dwelling was often extremely uncomfortable because of invading water and dampness. For five years, Mr. Goppinger had no "Sunday" clothes. However, he was long-headed enough to realize that land here would eventually become valuable and therefore worked industriously, earnestly and untiringly. Today he owns six hundred acres of excellent farming land in Ross township and a substantial residence in Sheffield."

Please read the whole story about George Goppinger [HERE](#).

According to the 1910 census, so roughly at the time the above biography of George was written, George and Ellen as well as their unmarried daughter Lula were living in the 8th Street in Clinton, Iowa. Unfortunately, the census list does not say which house number. There are many smaller residences in the street today, I wonder if any of them date to the years of the 1910 census, and if the Goppinger residence still stands today. According to the 1920 census, George and Ellen as well as their then divorced daughter Lula with son Georgearl lived in the South 1st Street in Clinton, Iowa. Again, no house number is indicated.

I find George, Ellen and Lula on a passenger list travelling from Germany back to the United States in 1910 on board "President Lincoln" (Click [HERE](#)). Was this the first time George visited his Bavarian roots after he had set sail towards the New World 41 years earlier? It must have been quite a moving experience for him, introducing his birth country to his wife and daughter. He had lots to be proud of and maybe even boast a little with, he had made it from a simple shoemaker's assistant to a self-made land-owner in America.

Ellen Mary had married George in 1880 when he had just had the dream and a vision. She stayed with George through thick and thin until George's death in March, 1922. Ellen passed away in 1938, and the couple is also buried at the Hillside Cemetery in Sheffield, IA, like their daughters and grandson.

Photos Without Families, originally shared on www.photoswithoutfamilies.blog