

Families Grein, Wenzel and Schneider from Frankfurt



Here's another batch of photos that came to me from German ebay, most of them labelled. They seem to belong together and I'm so happy that they have stayed together all these years. When I come across a batch like this, I don't know if to laugh or to cry. I am excited to do the research and put together the puzzle pieces of their lives. But at the same time, I'm sad these photos have lost their family. So here they are, telling their story, hoping to be found.

All the photos have one thing in common – they are somehow related to the surname **GREIN**. Most of the photos were taken in Frankfurt in Germany, or Bockenheim which today is part of Frankfurt.



First up are photos of the family of Emil Wenzel and “aunt Liesi” née Grein. The boy is little Emil, the grown-up Emil’s nephew whom he adopted.



Finding their marriage record was easy. I find one **Elise Marie née Grein**, born on November 4th, 1871, marrying one **Ferdinand Carl Emil Wenzel** in Frankfurt in February 1893 (Click [HERE](#) to view). Judging from the outfit of “aunt Liesi”, the photos were taken some time in the 1900s. Elise’s outfit might have been tailored by herself, since according to her marriage record, she was a seamstress.



Emil Wenzel was born in Offenbach on January 24th, 1868, to parents Wilhelm Wenzel and Anna née Geist. In the marriage record, he was listed as a book pressman by profession. The uniform Emil was wearing in one of the photos is that of a medic of the German Army during WWI, but I unfortunately can’t say anything about his rank or his military career.



Elise passed away in February 1927 (Click [HERE](#) to view). Emil re-married in June 1932 in Frankfurt and Frieda Julie née Abicht became his 2nd wife. Emil passed away in December 1951 of stomach cancer (Click [HERE](#) to view). He lived to be 83 years old. Funny remark, if you zoom in, you see that Emil has asked the photographer to photoshop his moustache in the photo to look more even. Oh that vanity, just as old as the humankind!



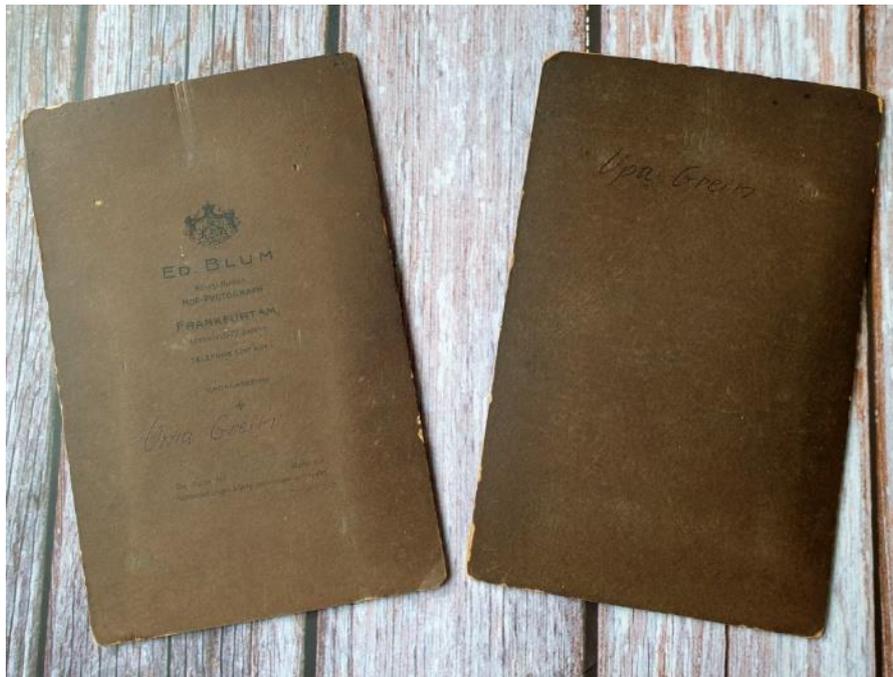
The girl in the photo above must have been Elise and Emil's daughter who must have been born some time at the turn of the century. I have not found a birth record for her, so unfortunately I don't know her name.

Emil and Elise also adopted little Emil who must have been the son of Emil Sr.'s sibling. The person who reported Emil Sr.'s death to the authorities in 1951, was one Emil Wenzel, commercial clerk from Frankfurt. I suppose he was the little boy from the photo. I have found Emil Sr. to have had two brothers: Wilhelm Ludwig Wenzel, born in 1870, but he only got married in 1916 to one Emma née Stephan, but the boy was born earlier than that. And then there was a brother called Friedrich Ludwig Georg Wenzel, born in 1869, who got married to one Therese née Querberitz in 1892. I believe little Emil could have been their son. Unfortunately I find no death records for his parents which could explain why little Emil was adopted by his uncle.



So if Elise was a born Grein, who were her parents? I believe that as the below photos are labelled "Granny Grein" and "Grandpa Grein", these are Elise's parents **Friedrich Grein and Antonia (also Antonie) née Meister**.





I don't know where they got married, but when their daughter Elise was born, they were living in New York (Click [HERE](#) to view)! They lived in the East Village at the address 2nd Street 211 in Manhattan. Friedrich, the American version of Friedrich, was a locksmith from Darmstadt, and the birth record says that mother Antonia had been born in Baden, Germany. So this makes it even more confusing for me that both Friedrich and Antonia were born in Germany, Elise (or Elisabeth at birth) was their 4th child, and the younger children of the couple were born in Germany. So what were they doing in New York in 1871 when Elise was born, and why did they return to Germany? I have not found the couple in any census lists of the US. But I have a theory and about that a little later. At the time of Elise's birth, father Friedrich Grein was 27 years old, so that would make his birth date about 1844. Mother Antonia née Meister was born on January 25th, 1842, to parents Franz Michael Meister and Elisabetha née Falk in Bühl, Baden in Germany. She had 10 siblings.

Moving on with the photos in the batch, here's the next lady whose maiden name was Grein, "Granny Schneider née Grein" here with her husband "Grandpa Schneider". And voilà – we've found Friedrich and Antonia's second daughter and Elise's younger sister **Marie Louise Schneider née Grein and her husband Heinrich Wilhelm Schneider**.



Marie Louise Grein was born on October 4th, 1874 (Click [HERE](#) to view), to parents Friedrich and Antonia Grein in Bockenheim in Frankfurt where her photo from around 1905 was taken. By that time, she was already married to Heinrich Wilhelm Schneider. They had tied the knot in October 1899 (Click [HERE](#) to view). Marie died of a stroke in August 1945 at the age of 70 (Click [HERE](#) to view). Heinrich Wilhelm was a postal clerk who had been born on April

30th, 1872, in Wehen. So he was just 18 years old in the photo above. He was raised by his mother Wilhelmine Christine Schneider, but there is no record of his father on his birth certificate. And that is all I've managed to find out about this couple. Well, they must have had children cause these photos used to belong to one. But who they were and when they were born, those records I unfortunately cannot access online. Elise and Marie had a bunch of other siblings as well:

—**Luise Karolina Grein** died as a 1-month-old baby in July 1864 in Bühl in Baden. By the time of her birth, her parents Friedrich Grein and Anna née Meister were not married. And although she was born out of wedlock, we can read that Friedrich Grein confirms his fatherhood of the child (Click [HERE](#) to view on page 175).

Having a child out of wedlock was considered shameful at the time, especially being a member of the local Catholic congregation. Perhaps the community banished her for this “shameful” act? The local communities in Baden were experiencing poverty and famish at the time, which increased the financial burden for the community to care for their poorest members. Several communities in Baden selected local families to send them into the New World, financed their journey and with that decreased their own financial burden to care for them. Perhaps Antonia was sent away too? She had 10 siblings, so her family probably had enough financial burden. Or perhaps Antonia volunteered, so that she could leave the pain and heartache of just losing her first child behind and jumped at the opportunity. There is one 23-year-old Antonia Meister travelling to New York onboard “Atalanta” in December 1865 (Click [HERE](#) to view passenger list). Could this have been our Antonia, travelling alone? Friedrich is not on the passenger list, so perhaps he travelled before or later and the couple was reunited in New York. Oh my imagination just runs wild here, imagining Antonia arriving in Ellis Island, the impressions she must have had, coming from a small town in Baden! How did the couple find each other in the big melting pot of Manhattan? Was Friedrich waiting for her in New York? Or did the thought of never seeing his beloved Antonia again send Friedrich on his own journey to New York, determined to find her and marry her? Or did the couple plan this together? Did they get married in New York upon her arrival?



And although, as I've mentioned above, Elise's birth record says she was the couple's 4th child, I don't find the two children Friedrich and Antonia must have had in New York before Elise was born in 1871.

At some point, the Greins returned to Germany and settled down in Frankfurt, namely when their next child Marie Louise was born in Frankfurt in 1874 (as written about above).

—**Louise Friederike née Grein**, born on January 28th, 1877, in Frankfurt. She passed away at the age of 8 in March 1885.

—**Heinrich Friedrich Grein**, born on February 11th, 1880. He married Elisabeth Margareta née Alt in 1913. I find a Heinrich Grein working as a taxi coachman in Frankfurt in 1926. Heinrich passed away in 1944 in Heppenheim. I wonder if this could have been Heinrich Grein. The photo was in the batch, but unfortunately it is not labelled.



—**Antonie née Grein** was born on October 13th, 1882. She married one Karl Jakob Ludwig Gimbel/Gimpel in 1903. She passed away in July 1931 in Frankfurt.

—**Frieda née Grein**, born on November 24th, 1884, in Frankfurt. She married Friedrich Robert August Beutler in October 1909. When her husband died in 1950, Frieda was still alive and living in Falkstrasse 56 in Frankfurt. I have absolutely no clue if and how the next photos relate to the Greins, but they are labelled in the same handwriting, so I assume they do. There are several photos of this woman, perhaps the daughter of Marie and Heinrich Schneider? She could have been born at the beginning of the 1900s. She looks to be in her 20s or 30s in the 1930s when these photos were taken.



I think the above lady had a son called Johannes (whose nickname was Hans and Hannes). There are many photos of him, including childhood photos and a photo of him as a soldier in WWII.



This has turned out to be quite a long blogpost, I hope you have enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed researching it. I will cherish these photos and keep them safe until one day perhaps a Grein, Schneider or Wenzel descendant finds this blogpost in the world wide web.

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