

Thirty Years in the USA – A Timeline for the Family of Johannes and Barbara (Kessler) Rombs

Here is a sequence of events as best I can estimate from existing data sources. It was an eventful 30 years!

1. Late summer, 1884: sale of property in Russiaⁱ
2. October, 1884: travel to point of departure (Bremen) – parents and 4 children (Lulu (age 18), Caroline (age 9), Nickolas (age 7), and Elizabeth (less than 2 years old at the time))ⁱⁱ
3. early Nov, 1884: ship departure (assumes 2-3 week voyage. Bremen to Southampton to NY)ⁱⁱⁱ
4. 11/22/1884: ship arrival in NY^{iv}
5. late Nov, 1884: travel to Ipswich, SD (then Dakota Territory)^v
6. winter, 1884 -1885: in Ipswich presumably with friends (like the Fischers noted below) and cousins. Schumacher and Usselman cousins may have been present.^{vi}
7. May, 1885: work begins on pre-emption claim land in SE ¼ of section 9, twp 120N, rng 69W, 5th meridian (Freedom Township) See the 1885 Territorial Census for evidence that they had moved in 1885.^{vii}
8. November, 1885: Birth of son Joseph (11/3/1885)^{viii}
9. November, 1885: pre-emption claim filed with help of Karl & Martin Fischer, friends and neighbors in Selz and Freedom Township; naturalization first papers filed^{ix}
10. December, 1885: homestead claim filed on SW ¼ of section 10^x
11. 1885 +/- : Johannes takes out one or more loans against both quarter sections.^{xi}
12. March, 1886: improvements started and residence eventually shifted to SE ¼ of section 10 in accordance with homestead requirements^{xii}
13. March, 1887: Birth of daughter Kathryn^{xiii}
14. August, 1887 : daughter Lulu marries Reuben House^{xiv}
15. 1888 +/- : Johannes defaults on loan(s) and loses ownership of part (all) of the land to the loan company in Iowa.^{xv}
16. April, 1892: naturalization finalized (second papers)^{xvi}
17. April, 1892: homestead claim finalized – it is not clear who owns this land at this time.^{xvii}
18. March, 1896: Barbara dies; family subsequently changes church affiliations and Barbara is buried in the Emmanuel Lutheran Cemetery near Wecota^{xviii}
19. August, 1898: Johannes marries Mary Kastan. (a second disastrous marriage)^{xix}
20. 1890s : At some point Elizabeth moves away from the family in Freedom Township and ends up working for an “abstractor” named James Johnston and his wife Lizzie. (See 1900 Fed Census entry for Elizabeth Rhombs.)^{xx}
21. 1899 : daughter Caroline marries Bert Austin^{xxi}
22. October, 1900: Johannes files for a timber claim on a large part of section 9 in Freedom Township^{xxii}
23. 1900 Fed Census: Johannes still residing in Freedom Township with Joe, Kathryn, and Caroline (and her family).^{xxiii}
24. June, 1902: Johannes formally divorces Mary Kastan.^{xxiv}
25. 1903 : daughter Elizabeth marries Clyde Thornburg (est. from 1915 SD census)^{xxv}
26. 1900 – 1910 +/- : at some point during this period, Johannes moves into Faulkton^{xxvi}
27. Aug, 1906: son Nicholas marries Mary Nelson^{xxvii}
28. May, 1910: daughter Kathryn marries Alva Vinton^{xxviii}
29. January, 1911: son Joseph marries Tena Thompson^{xxix}
30. August, 1914: Johannes dies near Beebe and is buried in the Emmanuel Lutheran Cemetery^{xxx}

Notes - Thirty Years in the USA – A Timeline for the Family of Johannes and Barbara (Kessler) Rombs

- i The time of sale of possessions in Russia is a guess.
- ii The details of travel from Russia to Bremen is speculation, except that ages of children are believed to be accurate based on “established” birth dates.
- iii The departure date for the SS Oder’s trip is an estimate. It is established that they were on the SS Oder from Southampton to NY. I have not been able to determine for sure that it actually started in Bremen or if they transferred from another ship in Southampton.
- iv Ship Manifest - <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVSV-3FB5>
- v Again, the details of travel from NY to Dakota territory are unknown. Train transportation certainly was used on at least the last leg of the journey. At the time of arrival, the railroad terminated in or near Ipswich.
- vi How they spent the winter of 1884-1885 is unknown.
- vii Land Entry Files (NARA – personally acquired copies) and 1885 territorial census (https://www.ancestry.com/sharing/18038310?h=bd811d&utm_campaign=bandido-webparts&utm_source=post-share-modal&utm_medium=copy-url)
- viii Baptismal Record for Joe Rombs (private, from Catholic church records in Ipswich, SD)
- ix Land Entry Files (NARA Entry Files No.13933 and 4709 – personally acquired copies)
- x Land Entry Files (NARA Entry Files No.13933 and 4709 – personally acquired copies)
- xi Probate Records from the Faulk County Courthouse (personal copies)
- xii Land Entry Files (NARA Entry Files No.13933 and 4709 – personally acquired copies)
- xiii 1900 Federal Census: "United States Census, 1900," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMRQ-N4R> : accessed 1 December 2019), Mildred B Austin in household of John Rombs, Enterprise, Millard, Saratoga, Sherman, Freedom & Pulaski Townships & School, Faulk, South Dakota, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 370, sheet 9A, family 85, NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1972.); FHL microfilm 1,241,549.
- xiv From tree published at familysearch.org: <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/LL7G-DF1>
- xv Probate Records from the Faulk County Couthouse (personal copies)
- xvi Land Entry Files (NARA Entry Files No.13933 and 4709 – personally acquired copies)
- xvii Land Entry Files (NARA Entry Files No.13933 and 4709 – personally acquired copies)
- xviii newspaper article (personal copy)
- xix Private copy of Marriage Record filed in the Faulk Co. Courthouse.
- xx 1900 Fed Census for the residence of James Johnston, showing Elizabeth Rhombs as “servant.”
- xxi Inferred from 1900 Federal Census: "United States Census, 1900," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMRQ-N4R> : accessed 1 December 2019), Mildred B Austin in household of John Rombs, Enterprise, Millard, Saratoga, Sherman, Freedom & Pulaski Townships & School, Faulk, South Dakota, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) 370, sheet 9A, family 85, NARA microfilm publication T623 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1972.); FHL microfilm 1,241,549.
- xxii Land Entry Files (NARA Entry Files No.13933 and 4709 – personally acquired copies)
- xxiii 1900 Fed Census - <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMRQ-N4R>
- xxiv Private copy of court records from Faulk Co. Courthouse.
- xxv 1915 SD Census: <https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/MMHR-QVN>
- xxvi The details of the move are unknown. That the move happened is shown by comparing 1900 and 1910 fed census records. - see <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMRQ-N4R> and <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MPX4-NXD> .
- xxvii SD Marriages: Ancestry.com. *South Dakota, Marriages, 1905-2017* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2005.
- xxviii From Ancestry.com. *South Dakota, Marriages, 1905-2017* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2005.
- xxix Personal records and Ancestry.com. *South Dakota, Marriages, 1905-2017* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2005.
- xxx death certificate (personal copies)