Wilhelm was born in Kefinbrink, Germany on 26 Oct 1857. At an early age his family moved to Tribsees, Germany where he lived until he migrated to the United States.

Christiana Deth was born in Pommern, Germany on 03 Dec 1855. At an early age her parents died and she moved to Tribsees and was adopted.

Wilhelm and Christiana were married on 04 April 1880 in Tribsees. It is unclear where they lived in Tribsees as a young married couple. However they quickly became parents and had two sons, Frederick Carl Wilhelm born in 1880 and Wilhelm (Will) Henrick born in 1881.

In the 1880’s Wilhelm, Christiana and their two sons migrated to the United States eventually ending up in Lake Village, Indiana where he managed the Blair Ranch West of the village. The ranch was owned by Mr. Blair, a wealthy business owner from the Chicago area. The large ranch had many different livestock including cattle, hogs, sheep and horses.

Albert worked with his father on the ranch and when his father decided to retire from the rigors of the ranch, Albert traveled to Chicago and asked for an audience with Mr. Blair stating he thought he was the right man to replace his father. While Mr. Blair thought he might be too young he gave him a chance and Albert continued the ranch’s prosperity until he became a carpenter.
Tribsees, Germany to the United States

Wilhelm and his family’s home in Tribsees ... with a small court yard in back, they had to take the cow through the house to let her graze across the road.

The city gate Wilhelm passed through on his way to the U.S.

Street in Tribsees

Carl Christian Ferdinand Graefnitz; born in Kefinbrink on 18 Jan 1825, died 25 Dec 1872

married

Johanna Sopie Marie Henning; born in Bauersdorf, Germany.

Children

- Wilhelm C.; born in Kefinbrink on 26 Oct 1857, died in Lake Village 13 Aug 1925
- Unknown name infant
- Johanna Fredrich Adolf; born on 09 November 1861
- Carl Fredrich Wilhelm; born 28 July 1864
- Wilhelmine Johanne M.; born 17 Aug 1871
- Bertha Christine T.; born 18 Mar 1873
The Graefnitz Family

Wilhelm & Christiana Graefnitz

Albert with his Clarinet

Albert & Beulah Wedding Picture (1916)
Wilhelm & Christiana
Lyda – Lucy – Albert – Chris - Walter

One of Albert G’s Driver’s License
(of many)
Albert G's Baptism Certificate
William C. Graefnitz, one of the best known and most prominent residents of Lake Village, Ind. Died at his home in that place at 9:30 o’clock last Friday evening, after an illness of several weeks. His health was poor during the past winter and early last April he suffered a heart attack from which he partially recovered. He was able to be up and around until last Friday afternoon when he suffered an attack of neuralgia of the heart, which was the cause of his passing away.

Wm. C. Graefnitz was born in Kaffenbrink, Germany, on October 26, 1857 being 67 years, 9 months and 18 days of age. He received his education in Germany and learned the weaver’s trade later taking up agriculture which he followed for many years. He was united in marriage with Miss Christine Deth in Germany on April 4, 1880. In 1885 he and his family came to America, locating at Lansing, Ill. Where the resided until 1891 when they removed to a farm near Lake Village. For several years he was manager of the Blair Ranch, west of Lake Village, and about ten years ago he gave up the management of the farm and retired, moving to Lake Village.

Mr. Graefnitz enjoyed a wide acquaintance throughout this section of the country and was known as a man of strong character, thoroughly trustworthy and an upright citizen. He served his township two terms as assessor and one term as township trustee, besides other minor office which he filled with credit to himself.

At an early age he was confirmed in the Lutheran church in which he was a faithful member. There being no church of that denomination in his community and feeling that he must be active in church life he placed his membership in the Lake Village Presbyterian church and was one of the most faithful and active members.

Mr. Graefnitz was preceded in death by five children, four of whom died in early childhood and Fred who passed away eight years ago. The widow survives with the following children: William and Walter, Mrs. Melvin Herman, Mrs. William Sullivan and Mrs. C.F. Hall of Momence, Chris Graefnitz of Grant Park, Ill., Albert and Mrs. C.F. Bloominquist of Lake Village.

Funeral services were held on Monday afternoon at 2 o’clock from the Presbyterian church in Lake Village, and was attended by a large number of sorrowing friends. Among those present were a number of members of the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge of Momence, of which the deceased was an honored member, besides many others who had known him many years. Burial was in Lake Village cemetery. The profusion of floral tributes upon this occasion was mute evidence of the esteem in which the deceased was held in the community.
Mr. and Mrs. George Jackson
request the honor of your presence at the
marriage of their daughter
Beulah Marian

to
Mr. Albert F. Graefnitz

on Thursday at high noon, June first
nineteen hundred and sixteen

at their home
Battle Ground, Indiana

At Home
after June Festival
Lake Village, Indiana
Albert & Beulah at the Blair Ranch

Albert & Beulah on the Harley

Beulah & her class at Mill School (1912)
Graefnitz Family Picture
Back – Mary, Warren, Russell & Ruth
Front – Beulah and Albert
(1940)

Beulah (1944)

Albert (when he was a custodian at the Lake Village School)
Russ, Doris & Larry
(1944)

At a Graefnitz Reunion
(1952)

Ruth, Roy, Carolyn
& Roslynn Merchant

Albert, Dale, Ed, Mary
Linda (front), Bonnie & Beulah
(1953)
The whole Family at Grandma’s Birthday (1955)

The Graefnitz Boys
Russ – Larry – David - Terry

Russ & David - 1955

Roy and Kristin Boyd
Around 1972

Roslynn
Candid Shots Through the Years ...
Newspaper article on Albert’s 100th Birthday
Candid Shots Through the Years …

At 93, Graefnitz needs no elixir of Youth …

People meeting Albert Graefnitz for the first time may wonder if he has sipped from the fountain of youth.

At 93, the Morocco, IN man is almost as independent as he was at 20. He does his own house and yard work with a spritely spring to his step, and on sunny days often goes for a spin on his moped.

My daughter didn’t want me to get one, he says, with laughter in his bright blue eyes. She was afraid I would kill myself. Now I’m getting along so good that she doesn’t want me to get rid of it.

His daughter, Ruth Merchant, of Morocco shakes her head at his antics.

__________________________________________

“In 1921 I was making 40 cents an hour … worked 10 Hours a day, six days a week and I never took a Coffee break.”

__________________________________________

You don’t tell him anything, she says. We had a party for his 93rd birthday (Nov 10). We said we’d clean the house and he wouldn’t hear of it. He did it himself.

He cleaned off every shelf and that was quite a job, she says, pointing to the rows of shelves that cover the living room walls – shelves that hold a lifetime of photographs and memorabilia.

The dozens of items show the clarity of Graefnitz’s amazing memory. He remembers names, dates and other details surrounding all the items, and can even reproduce bits of conversations from years ago.

Graefnitz usually makes games and wood ornaments during the winter months when he has more leisure time. I bring my jigsaw into the kitchen and saw right on the table he says.

He wears a mysterious smile as he takes visitors to the master bedroom where he displays one of his biggest accomplishments, a model of the 1,100 acre ranch near Lake Village where he spent his childhood. The replica is made from toothpicks – and fond memories of the ranch are still clear after more than 60 years. I got a blue ribbon at the Indiana State Fair for this, he says proudly.

He reveals a hint of good humor as he shows his visitors the wooden figure of a dashing cowboy. I’ve tried to tell my grandchildren that I looked like that when I was young, and that I look like this since I’ve gotten old, he said pointing to a shriveled, zombie-like figure near the cowboy. But they won’t believe me, he says with a delighted grin, they just won’t believe me.

Excerpts taken
from the Kankakee Journal
(December 1, 1985)
From Grandpa’s story “Myself as I know me”  
( written at the age of 93 )

Chronological Events ...

Wilhelm & Christiana had five children while living in Germany
- Charles, born 1878, died on the Atlantic Ocean
- Augusta, born 1879, died on the Atlantic Ocean
- Fredrick Carl Wilhelm, born 26 June 1880
- Henry, born 1880, died on the Atlantic Ocean
- Wilhelm Henrick, born 30 September 1881

Wilhelm, Christiana and two sons migrated to Dyer, IN in 1883 to work in hay fields
Family moved to Lake Village, IN to work on Sholts farm
Youngest daughter killed on RR and with $600 Wilhelm purchased an 80 acre farm near LV
In 1897 Wilhelm moved his family to the Blair Ranch and became a “straw” boss, later became the manager
From 1888 to 1901 Wilhelm and Christiana had eight more children
- Bertha Caroline, born 09 Jan 1888 in Lansing, IL
- Elfreda Maria Wilhelmina, born 14 August 1889 in Lansing, IL
- Christian Carl Ludwig, born 03 Feb 1891 in Lansing, IL
- Albert Frederick, born 11 Nov 1892 in Lake Village
- Walter Hendrik, born 09 Aug 1896 in Lake Village
- Lida Anna, born 23 Aug 1896 in Lake Village
- Mary, born in 1899 in Lake Village and lived only one day
- Lucy Helena, born 01 Sept 1901 in Lake Village

In 1915 Wilhelm left the ranch and was elected the Twp. Assessor, in March Albert became the manager
On 01 June 1916 Albert married Beulah
In 1918 Walter was sent to France to fight in WWI ... his uncle Wilhelm Frederick was in the German army and was killed right before the armistice
In 1921 Albert left the ranch to become a carpenter
In 1925 his father passed away
In 1932 his mother passed away
Albert and Beulah had six children from 1917 to 1926
- Russell, born 27 Aug 1917
- Forrest, born 1919 died at 3 weeks, buried in Battle Ground, IN
- Marian, born 1920 died at 6 weeks, buried in Battle Ground, IN
- Ruth, born 16 Mar 1922
- Mary, born 28 Jun 1924
- Warren, born 23 Jun 1926

Beulah died 04 Apr 1968
Albert built his last home in Morocco at the age of 80 in 1972 and lived there till his death in 1992
Graefnitz Family Tree

The Family Connections

Graefnitz                        Jackson                        McConnell

Albert Graefnitz        Beulah Jackson
The Jackson Family Connection

George & Mary Jackson
Beulah, Wilbur & Hubert

Beulah, Wilbur & Hubert Jackson

Beulah Jackson

LAFAYETTE JOURNAL

DEATHS

GEORGE JACKSON

BATTLE GROUND, March 25.—(Special)—George Jackson, 81, local resident died yesterday at the Methodist hospital, Fort Wayne.

Mr. Jackson was born in Huntington county, Pennsylvania, and graduated from the Academy at McAlvey. He married Mary Jane McConnell, of Oxford, in 1887 and taught school near his birth place for eight years. He moved to Ulysses, Kan., returning to Indiana in 1898. He was a member of the Presbyterian church.

Surviving are the wife, a daughter, Mrs. Beulah Graefhitz, of Lake Village; two sons; Wilbur, of Fort Wayne; and Hubert, of Gary; a sister, Margaret Jackson, of Huntington; and three brothers: Hugh, of Saltsburg, Pa.; Forrest, of Huntington; and Leo, of Phillipsburg, Pa.

Funeral services will be conducted from the local M. E. church Sunday.
The Jackson Family Connection

Great Grandma Mary (McConnell) Jackson (1851 – 1939)

Beulah & Wilbur Jackson
### Migration of Wilhelm and Christiane to the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passenger List (Ship - California)</th>
<th>Listed on the California Passenger List with Wilhelm:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name:</strong> Wilhelm Graefnitz</td>
<td>• Christiane (b. 1856)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Departure Date:</strong> 29 Okt 1885 (29 Oct 1885)</td>
<td>• Fritz (b. 1880)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Destination:</strong> New York</td>
<td>• Wilhelm (b. 1881)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimated birth year:</strong> abt 1856</td>
<td>• Auguste (b. 1883)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age Year:</strong> 29</td>
<td>• Carl (b. 1885)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender:</strong> männlich (Male)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family:</strong> Household members</td>
<td>(found in Ancestry.com)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residence:</strong> Degelsdorf, Preußen (Germany)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation:</strong> Landmann</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ship Name:</strong> California</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Captain:</strong> Winckler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shipping line:</strong> Edward Carr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ship Type:</strong> Dampfschiff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accommodation:</strong> ohne Angabe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ship Flag:</strong> Deutschland</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Port of Departure:</strong> Hamburg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Port of Arrival:</strong> Amerika (USA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Photo # 19-N-13844  USS California moored off the Mare Island Navy Yard during the early 1870s