

Kietzmann, Krueger, and Meyer Stories
Submitted by Sheri Kennedy, Great-great Granddaughter

John Jacob Meyer and Justina Augusta (Kietzmann) Krueger Meyer

My name is Sheri (Hernden) Kennedy and proud to be a Great-Great Granddaughter of John Jacob and Justina (Kietzmann) Meyer.

I owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to Darla Gebhard at BCHS (Brown County Historical Society). She deserves full credit for starting me on this path of obsession with the Uprising of 1862 and the discovery of my ancestral roots. I had never even heard of this historical event, much less my ancestors' involvement in it, until in the process of researching my family genealogy I met Darla. She was the one who made the connection between my Great-Great Grandmother "Augusta Meyer" and the Uprising survivor "Justina (Kietzmann) Krueger".

We had always known her as Augusta since that is what she went by after the Uprising. My mother had always heard stories about her from her Grandmother (Florence Augusta Meyer – Youngest child of John & Justina (Kietzmann) Meyer). My mother was deserted by her mother at the age of two and my Grandfather sent for his mother, Florence, to come live with them and help out with his two children. So, all while growing up she would hear about her Great Grandmother that survived the Indian Massacre in Minnesota, somewhere near "Browns Town" she thought.

My mother had done some research tracing our roots and when I became interested in 2004, she handed over the reins to me. I decided to start with this Great-Great Grandmother named Augusta that had been in the Indian Massacre.

After a little investigating I realized the area was Brown County and the event was probably the Sioux Uprising of 1862. Next we planned a trip to Brown County in 2005 and that is when we met Darla at the BCHS. We started telling her the story of Augusta and she kept saying "That sounds like Justina Krueger". We had never heard the name "Justina", but Darla went and got her file anyway. Sure enough, it was the same person and my Mother and I spent the day with Darla learning about Justina Augusta Kietzmann Krueger. Then to top things off, Darla also told us the story of John Meyer and his first family. That was one of the best days of my life. It is so amazing to find out you are related to such an incredible people.

John and Justina met in St. Paul where the refugees from the Uprising had been sent, and on November 3, 1862 were married. Only three weeks later, on November 25, 1862, John enlisted with the 1st Minnesota Mounted Rangers in Company L (merged with Co K) and served until December 2, 1863, under H.H. Sibley. I don't know how involved he was in Sibley's Expedition

against the Indians, but have to wonder if he enlisted to somehow avenge the deaths of his family.

Justina gave birth to their first child, a boy they named Daniel, on October 14, 1863, in Minnesota, while John was still enlisted. He was home with his new family for nearly a year before being drafted to serve in the 4th Minnesota Infantry, Company A, on November 17, 1864. He arrived in Savannah, Georgia, by train, to join the rest of his regiment, after the burning of Atlanta, on January 9, 1865. From there he accompanied his regiment in joining Sherman's March to the Sea.

On April 19, 1865, John was stricken with "fits of epilepsy" during roll call and sent to the hospital in Newbern, North Carolina. After two weeks in the hospital he was sent to a "Convalescent Camp" in Alexandria, Virginia, and never did become fit to return to his unit. On July 19, 1865 John was honorably discharged from Louisville, Kentucky, and sent back to Minnesota.

With the end of the Civil War and John's military career over, the couple was finally able to live a simple life of farming without the threat of being separated. They had only been married for less than three years and separated for a large portion of it. Now was there time to enjoy their life together and with their growing family.

John and Justina settled in Sharon Township, Le Sueur County, Minnesota. They lived here for about fifteen years and had six more children, all girls, one dying from Scarlet Fever at the age of three. Justina's children from her previous marriages also remained with them until they married. Their youngest daughter, Florence Augusta Meyer, was my great grandmother and the one who is responsible for keeping her parents memory alive in our family.

In the late 1870's the family moved to Oronoco Township, Olmsted County, Minnesota, and remained for a few years before moving on to Grand Forks County in the Dakota Territory. Justina's son, John Lane was the only one of all the children that did not move with them, instead he moved back to Wisconsin settling in Eau Claire County.

John and Justina settled on the NW ¼ of section 30 in Union Township, Grand Forks County, North Dakota, next to Justina's oldest son Gottlieb Lane. Gottlieb always remained close to his mother, seeming to be a very devoted son. Their life in North Dakota must have suited them because it was here that they remained and raised their family.

Justina was a well-known mid-wife in Hatton and the surrounding area. She would also travel about in the summer and fall selling their surplus vegetables. At times she would travel as far as the North Dakota and Minnesota border. As she traveled about she would tell the story of her

tale of survival in the Sioux Uprising of 1862. She was much loved by the people of her community.

John Meyer was also a prominent figure in the Hatton community. He was instrumental in the organization of the Holmes Evangelical Church. Most everything in their life revolved around the church.

John was also the person responsible for the naming of Union Township where they lived. As the story goes, during a meeting for the organization of the township one of the men said that the township should be named Wymanville after his family. John was known to have a temper and to this suggestion he supposedly hit the table with his fist and exclaimed "To hell with Wymanville, we'll call it Union!", and Union it was.

John and Justina were devastated by the untimely death of their only son Daniel. He died on September 8, 1887, one month before his 24th birthday and only six months after being married, thus leaving no one to carry on the Meyer name.

Five years after losing Daniel, Justina suffered another major loss, that of her beloved husband John. He too had an untimely and tragic death. He died from injuries received from being crushed by the collapse of a grain storage building on their farm. After the accident he suffered for twelve days and died on October 8, 1892 leaving Justina a widow once again.

Whether it was out of necessity or simply loneliness, since all her children were married and gone raising their own families, Justina married for a fourth time on February 7, 1896. His name was August Yonke (Jahnke), also a widower, ten years her junior with three children still living at home. They lived in a house that belonged to Justina in Thief River Falls, Minnesota. Justina also owned a farm in Sanders Township, Pennington County, where they lived during the growing season.

This marriage was not a happy one and it makes me very sad to think that Justina lived out her final years with such unhappiness. Yonke was known as the "Town Drunk", lazy and worst of all was abusive towards Justina. This incredible woman, who lived through so much devastation and endured it all, surely did not deserve an end such as this.

There are letters that have been passed down in our family that were written by Justina in her final years. They were addressed to my Great Grandmother Florence (Justina's youngest daughter) in German and therefore we never knew what they were about. In 2005 Darla Gebhard aided us in finding a translator and we finally knew what the letters said. It was a bitter sweet moment. It was so wonderful to finally know what the letters said, yet it was also very sad to find out the hell her life had become.

We had always heard that Yonke was not the greatest person, but didn't know the extent of his mistreatment of Justina until the letters were translated. The letters were written by the suggestion of Justina's daughter Minnie (Lane) Schrepel. Minnie lived next to Justina in Thief River Falls and kept watch over her. She saw the abuse and wanted Justina to write her other children so they would have in writing what was going on in case something happened to her.

Justina attempted to leave Yonke on several occasions, but he always managed to convince her to come back. I don't know if she was ever really free of him, although he was not the informant on the death certificate.

She died at her home in Thief River Falls on September 9, 1908. I have the telegram that Minnie sent Florence when she passed. Her body was sent back to North Dakota to be buried next to her true love, John Jacob Meyer.

I was surprised to find that Justina had filed a will before she died. She did this to try to prevent Yonke from getting what little she owned. She wanted the house and land divided amongst her seven remaining children with Gottlieb being the executor. Even in death Yonke got the best of her. He contested the will and got everything. A Great Grandson of Yonke's still lived in Justina's house in the 1990's when my Mother visited the area. He remembered hearing stories of what a kind and compassionate woman Justina was.

There's not a day that goes by I don't think of my Great-Great Grandparent's, John Jacob and Justina (Kietzmann) Meyer. They had witnessed and lived through such tragic events in August of 1862 that few could ever imagine and even less could survive. Justina's most descriptive and accurate narrative was published in the "History of the Great Massacre by the Sioux Indians in Minnesota" by Charles S. Bryant and Abel B. Murch. In conclusion to my thoughts, I always come back to what Justina said at the end of this narrative:

"In St. Paul I became acquainted with John Jacob Meyer, a countryman of mine, who had lost all his family by the late Indian massacre. On the relation of our mutual sufferings, we soon became attached to each other, and on the 3rd day of November, A.D. 1862, we were married. My present husband is in the service of H. H. Sibley. I was twenty-eight years of age on the 17th day of July, 1863. My experience is a sad one thus far. I hope never to witness another Indian massacre"

Justina Augusta (Kietzmann) Meyer – June 1863

**Justina Augusta (Kietzmann) and Friedrich Christoph Krueger – Sacred Heart Massacre
Submitted by Sheri Kennedy**

Justina was married a total of four times. She married her first husband, Daniel Lehn, in Germany and had two boys, (1) Gottlieb J. and (2) John G., before coming to America. They arrived in New York on July 22, 1856 and went directly to Marquette County, Wisconsin, where Justina's brother Paul Kietzmann had settled.

They had only been in Wisconsin for less than a year when Daniel Lehn died in early 1857. Justina was pregnant with their third child when he died. She married Friedrich Krueger in July of 1857, before giving birth to this child. On January 6, 1858, (3) Wilhelmine "Minnie" Lehn was born.

Friedrich was also a widower and brought to the union six children. He had four biological: (7) Augusta, (8) Louise, (9) Caroline and (10) Delia and two stepchildren (or nieces and nephews since his first marriage was to his widowed sister-in-law whose name was also Justine Auguste): (11) Wilhelmine and (12) August. So, the total number of children between the two, at the time of their marriage, would have been eight and one on the way. It's all very confusing and probably more information than you want or need, but I am compelled to tell you anyway.

On the 1860 US Census the Krueger family consisted of all nine children mentioned above plus (4)-Henriette who was born on January 1, 1859, bringing the total to 10 children. They were still living in Neshkoro Township, Marquette County, WI. Justina was likely pregnant with their second (5)-daughter since I approximate her birth to have been between August of 1860 and April of 1861.

In the spring of 1860 Justina's brother Paul Kietzmann with a group of local Germans (including the Busse and Lenz families) started for Minnesota. They stayed in Cannon Falls (listed on 1860 Census in Holden Township, Goodhue County, MN) for about a year and then moved on to Renville County in the spring of 1861. Paul Kietzmann is referred to as one of the first, if not the first, to set claim in the Sacred Heart Settlement.

In the spring of 1862, only eleven weeks before the Uprising, Justina and her family came to Sacred Heart. Friedrich set claim to a quarter section of land adjacent to Justina's brother Paul, in Flora Township, Renville County, MN. He proceeded to build a cabin large enough to accommodate their growing family and had recently completed it when the Uprising broke out.

Since Friedrich's two stepchildren, (11)-Wilhelmine and (12)-August, remained in Wisconsin and Justina had given birth to a third (6)-Baby girl in February, Justina and Friedrich traveled to Minnesota with the following ten children:

- Justina's three Lehn children: (1)-Gottlieb, (2)-John, (3)-Minnie
- Friedrich's four daughters: (7)-Augusta, (8)-Louise "Lizzie", (9)-Caroline, (10)-Delia "Tillie"
- Justina & Friedrich's three daughters: (4)-Henriette, (5)-Girl age 2 years, (6)-Baby age 2 months

Even though they came with ten children, at the time of the Uprising the Krueger's had nine children in their household. Friedrich's oldest daughter, (7)-Augusta, had come to Minnesota with the family but was working away from home at the time. It is said that "kind neighbors made room for her in their crowded buggy in which they safely reached Fort Ridgely".

The following is a list of the children and stepchildren that were with Justina and Friedrich Krueger during the Uprising. After each of their names I have added a little information as to their age and what happened to them during the Uprising. I have also numbered each child and if I have any additional photos or information on them it is also enclosed and labeled with their name and corresponding number. I would assume that when Justina talks of the "eight children in the bed of the wagon and one in a shawl" (Bryant's "MN Indian Massacre" pg. 307) they would also be the following.

- (5) – Girl Krueger – Age: 2 years (estimate) – Killed during massacre.

Group A

(1) – Gottlieb "G.J." Lehn – Age: 9 yrs 4 mo

(2) – John "J.G." Lehn – Age: 7 yrs

Group A hid in the woods with neighbor boy August Yess, witnessed massacre and fled to Fort Ridgely. See "Story of J.G. Lane"

Group B

(3) – Wilhelmine "Minnie" Lehn – Age: 4 yrs 7 mo

(8) – Louise "Lizzie" Krueger – Age: 13 yrs 4 mo

(9) – Caroline Krueger – Age: 10 yrs 8 mo

(10) - Delia "Tillie" Krueger – Age: 8 yrs 7 mo

Group B escaped and traveled 12 days and 27 miles to Fort Ridgely. See "The Story of Minnie Krieger-Half Sister of J.G. Lane".

(6) – "Baby" Krueger – Age: 6 mo

The "Baby" was taken off the "field of slaughter" by her siblings in group B and left in the "Tille" house where she is believed to have starved to death.

See "The Story of Minnie Krieger-Half Sister of J.G. Lane".

(4) – Henrietta “Hattie” Krueger – Age: 3 yrs 7 mo

Captured during the massacre and taken prisoner and surrendered at Camp Release. See enclosed copy of chapter IV-Henrietta of “Captured by The Indians” by Minnie Bruce Carrigan.

John Jacob and Caroline (Zitzlaff) Meyer – Middle Creek Massacre
Submitted by Sheri Kennedy

John Jacob Meyer was born in Kuppingen, Wuerttemberg, Germany, on May 1, 1829 to Johann and Maria Elisabeth (Roken) Maier. He was educated in Germany to be a teacher, but instead of remaining in his Homeland living the life he was prepared for, he decided to go to America and try his hand at farming. He arrived in New York on May 21, 1853 and in September of 1857 he was listed as living in West Newton Township, Nicollet County, Minnesota.

John Meyer and Caroline Zitzlaff were married in Brown County, Minnesota, on September 19, 1857. They were both listed on the marriage record as residents of Nicollet County. A witness for this marriage was Caroline’s brother-in-law, John Sieg, who was killed in the Uprising at the Meyer house, along with his entire family.

Shortly after their marriage, John and Caroline Meyer laid claim to the SE ¼ of Section 7 in Beaver Falls Township. The other three quarter sections were claimed by Caroline’s family, consisting of: brother and wife Michael and Mary (Juni) Zitzlaff and father John living with them, sister and husband Anna (Zitzlaff) and John Sieg, sister and husband Wilhelmina (Zitzlaff) and William Ienenfeldt.

John Meyer had recently been elected Renville County Commissioner and on the 18th of August, 1862, was away from home recruiting men to work on the county roads. Even after reading all accounts of the Meyer/Zitzlaff massacre, I still cannot definitively know that John Meyer made it home before the massacre took place. I wonder if maybe he had arrived home, saw his family butchered and then fled to Fort Ridgely. I wish I knew for sure, but I probably never will since John did not give an account of the events that I know of.

Whichever the case may be, shortly after arriving at Fort Ridgely it was attacked by the Sioux and John was one of the armed citizens that helped in its defense. His name is misspelled on the monument listing the defenders as “John Moyer”.

In November of 1862 in the German Evangelical newspaper “Der Christliche Botschafter” (lists) John Meyer as the author of nearly 70 obituaries for the members of the Church that were victims of the Uprising, including his own family and that of Justina’s. I have obtained an original printing of this newspaper and would like to eventually have them all of the obituaries translated.

I believe John Meyer chose not to talk of the horrible events of the Uprising of 1862, unlike Justina who always talked openly about her experiences. Even in my family the stories were always about Justina being in the Indian massacre and John being a Civil War Soldier. It was not known by my family until 2005 that John had a first family and that they were killed in the Uprising. I also think there must have been some shame in his not being able to protect his family and that he survived and they perished.