

# MIERKE RESEARCH PROJECT

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## **OBJECTIVE**

Who was the father of Max Mierke who was born in 1879 in Illinois and died 22 November 1909 in Big Falls, Minnesota, or Princeton, Minnesota, and what was his nationality?

## **RESULTS SUMMARY**

- Located and examined the Illinois birth record for Max Mierke.
- Located and examined the Minnesota death record for Max Mierke.
- Located and examined the Social Security Application (transcribed index) for Max Mierke.
- Examined and analyzed the 1880 census of Illinois for Fredrick Mearcke.
- Examined and analyzed the Illinois marriage record for Friedrich Mierke and Ernestine Kleps.
- Located and examined the passenger list for Friedrich Mierke of Germany.
- Located and examined the death index record for Christian Friedrich Mierke.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Max Mierke was born in 1879 in Illinois and died on 22 November 1909 in either Big Falls, Koochiching County, Minnesota, or Princeton, Mille Lacs and Sherburne Counties, Minnesota.

## **FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

### **Death Information – Max Mierke**

Death certificates often name the parents of the deceased, however, Minnesota death certificates are not readily available online. The death index for Max Mierke did not list his parents.<sup>1</sup> A good substitute for death certificates is the Social Security Administration Applications and Claims Index which shows that Max Paul Mierke was born on 30 October 1879 in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois to Fred Mierke and Teeny Klepo<sup>2</sup> This information was

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<sup>1</sup> "Minnesota, Death Index, 1908-2017," database, *Ancestry* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 19 August 2020), certificate no. 9829, Max Mierke, 28 December 1963; citing "Minnesota, Death Index, 1908-2017," Minnesota Department of Health, St. Paul, Minnesota. **(Document 1)**

<sup>2</sup> Social Security Administration, "U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007," database, *Ancestry* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 19 August 2020), entry for Max Paul Mierke, SS no. 475-10-2092. **(Document 2)**

transcribed from Form SS-5 which was filled out when a person applied for a Social Security card. The value of accessing this information is that it often represents primary information (given by someone with first-hand knowledge, and therefore probably very reliable.) However, sometimes information includes nicknames, as shown by the first names of “Fred” and “Teeny.” The birth record for Max Mierke gave the same basic information for his birth but listed his parents as Fredrick Mierke and “Ernstina” Kleps.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, since the records were transcribed, that makes them derivative records, so there may be typographical errors in them. The maiden name of Max’s mother is shown as both Klepo and Kleps. An image of the birth certificate for Max is available via The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Family History Center (FHC), however, most FHC’s are currently closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Original documents could also be ordered from Illinois and Minnesota to ascertain which was the true last name for Ernestine Klepo/Kleps.

### Census Records – Finding Fredrick Mierke

Census records are created every ten years per the United States Constitution. These are original documents that are important in that they captured those persons living in a specific household at a particular place and time. Unfortunately, it was not until 1940 that the person who gave the information to the census taker was identified. Census information is only as good as the knowledge of the person who gave it, and there may have been deliberate misinformation supplied, thus, corroboration with other documents with known informants is essential.

#### 1880 Census

Since Max Mierke was born in 1879, the first census in which he was enumerated was the 1880 census. As expected, Max was listed with his parents in the 1880 census living in Illinois.<sup>4</sup> “Fredrick Mearcke” was listed as age 31, born in Prussia, with an occupation of teamster. Fred’s wife, Ernestina was age 22, also born in Prussia. Max was age 8/12, and the enumerator wrote his birth month as August, however, that contradicts the information supplied in Max’s birth record. Prussia was an area of Europe that is generally known as Germany and Poland today.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "Illinois, Cook County, Birth Certificates, 1871-1940," certificate no. 8802, Max Mierke, 30 October 1879; database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NQTY-Z51> : accessed 19 August 2020); citing Cook County Clerk, Chicago, FHL microfilm 1287804. **(Document 3)**

<sup>4</sup> 1880 U.S. Census, Cook County, Illinois, population schedule, Chicago, p. 16C (stamped), enumeration district (ED) 156, sheet 31 (penned), dwelling 187, family 279, Fredrick Mearcke household; image, *Ancestry* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 19 August 2020); citing NARA microfilm T9, roll 197. **(Document 4)**

<sup>5</sup> *Map of Prussia* (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.: 2020); digital image, *Britannica* (<https://britannica.com/place/Prussia> : accessed 18 August 2020).

Figure 1. Map of Prussia



### Immigration – Fredrick Mierke

Fredrick Mierke arrived on the USS *Herder* in the port of New York on 21 May 1878. He was listed as 28 years old and a workman from Prussia.<sup>6</sup> The *Herder* was a Hamburg American steamship built in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1873.<sup>7</sup> The ship was 375 feet long by 40 feet wide. According to the ship's manifest, the *Herder* took on passengers in Hamburg [Germany] and Havre [France]. Fredrick made the trip "between decks" which probably meant steerage and was usually the cheapest of accommodations.

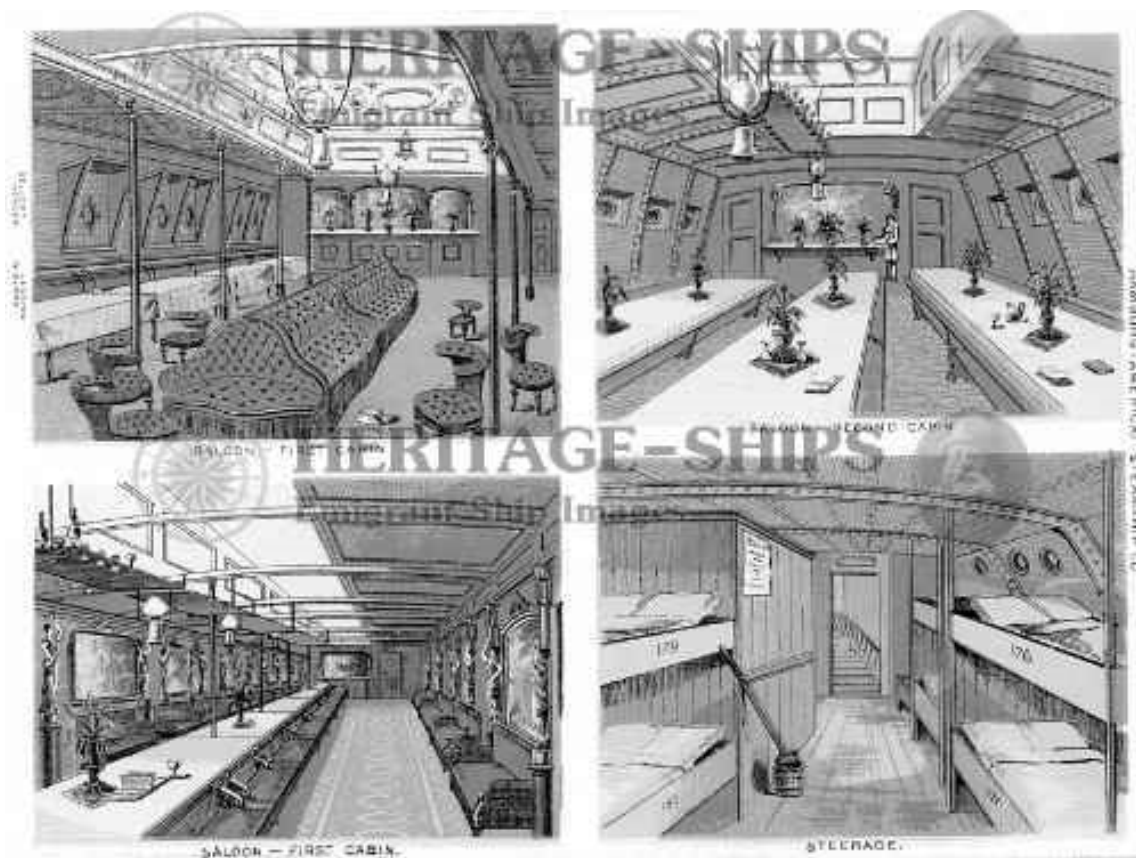
<sup>6</sup> "New York, Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island), 1820-1957," database with images, *Ancestry* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 19 August 2020), entry for Fredrick Mierke, age 28, arrived in New York, New York, 21 May 1878 on the *Herder*. **(Document 5)**

<sup>7</sup> "S/S *Herder*, Hamburg America Line," *Norway-Heritage* ([http://www.norwayheritage.com/p\\_ship.asp?sh=herde](http://www.norwayheritage.com/p_ship.asp?sh=herde) : accessed 19 August 2020).

Figure 2. USS *Herder*



Figure 3. Interior, USS *Herder*



## Marriage – Friedrich Mierke & Ernstine Kleps

About a year after arriving in New York, Friedrich Mierke had made his way to Chicago, Illinois, where he married “Ernstine” Kleps.<sup>8</sup> They gave their ages as 30 and 22, respectively. Neither listed a birthplace, instead stating that they were “of Chicago.”

## Death – Friedrich Mierke

The death index listed another name for Friedrich, naming him as Christian Friedrich Mierke. He died 28 August 1929 in Mille Lacs County, Minnesota.<sup>9</sup> An imaged copy was not available online but could be ordered to see if it holds the names of his parents.

## CONCLUSION

The object of this research paper was to find the father of Max Mierke and what his nationality was.

- Fredrick Mierke arrived in New York, New York on 21 May 1878 from Prussia.
- Friedrich Mierke married Ernstine Kleps on 20 July 1879, in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.
- Max Mierke was born on 30 October 1879 in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. His parents were listed as Fredrick Mierke and Ernstina Kleps.
- Christian Friedrich Mierke died on 28 August 1929 in Mille Lacs County, Minnesota.

Direct evidence from primary and secondary sources proves that the parents of Max Paul Mierke were Christian Friedrich Mierke and Ernstine Klepo/Kleps. “Fred” Mierke was an immigrant from Prussia (present-day Germany), arriving on 21 May 1878 in New York City. He married Ernestine Kleps on 20 July 1879, and died on 28 August 1929.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Order death certificate for Max Paul Mierke to see if it names his parents. There is a question as to his mother’s maiden name, either Klepo or Kleps.
- Research Ernestine Klepo/Kleps to find when she died.
- Research Ernestine Klepo/Kleps to find her parents.
- Order the death certificate for Christian Friedrich Mierke to see if it names his parents.
- Research Albert Earl Patrick Mierke’s maternal line.
- Research Marjorie (Gallinger) Mierke’s lineage to find her parents.

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<sup>8</sup> "Illinois, Cook County Marriages, 1871-1920," Cook County, database, Friedrich Mierke-Erntine Kleps, 20 July 1879; database, *FamilySearch* (<http://familysearch.org> : accessed 19 August 2020); citing FHL microfilm 1030109. **(Document 6)**

<sup>9</sup> "Minnesota, Death Index, 1908-2017," database, *Ancestry* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 19 August 2020), certificate no. 8575, Christian Friedrich Mierke, 28 August 1929; citing "Minnesota, Death Index, 1908-2017," Minnesota Department of Health, St. Paul. **(Document 7)**

# Family Group Record for Friedrich Mierke

<b>Husband</b>		
<b>Friedrich Mierke</b> <sup>1,2,3</sup>		
Born	C 1849	Prussia <sup>1,2</sup>
Died	28 Aug 1929	Mille Lacs County, Minnesota <sup>3</sup>
Marriage	20 Jul 1879	Chicago, Cook, Illinois <sup>2</sup>
<b>Wife</b>		
<b>Ernestina Kleps</b> <sup>1,2</sup>		
Born	C 1857	Prussia <sup>1,2</sup>
<b>Children</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Max Paul Mierke</b> <sup>1,4,5,6</sup>
Born	30 Oct 1879	Chicago, Cook, Illinois <sup>1,5,6</sup>
Died	28 Dec 1963	Koochiching County, Minnesota <sup>6</sup>

## Source Citations

- 1880 U.S. Census, Cook County, Illinois, population schedule, Chicago, p. 16C (stamped), enumeration district (ED) 156, sheet 31 (penned), dwelling 187, family 279, Fredrick Mearcke household; image, *Ancestry* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 19 August 2020); citing NARA microfilm , roll 197. **(Document 4)**.
- "Illinois, Cook County Marriages, 1871-1920," Cook County, database, Friedrich Mierke-Ernstine Kleps, 20 July 1879; database, *FamilySearch* (<http://familysearch.org> : accessed 19 August 2020); citing FHL microfilm 1030109. **(Document 6)**.
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- Social Security Administration, "U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007," database, *Ancestry* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 19 August 2020), entry for Max Paul Mierke, SS no. 475-10-2092. **(Document 2)**.
- "Illinois, Cook County, Birth Certificates, 1871-1940," certificate no. 8802, Max Mierke, 30 October 1879; database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NQTY-Z51> : accessed 19 August 2020); citing Cook County Clerk, Chicago, FHL microfilm 1287804. **(Document 3)**.
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Note: Copies of documents were provided to the client but are omitted for this sample.