

Franz MEINCKE 1835- 1914

Franz Ludwig Rudolph MEINCKE, or Louis as he was known for most of his life, was born and grew up in Schleswig, in Prussia or Denmark, depending on the state of these two warring countries in the 1840s. Louis went to sea at an early age, from the port of Hamburg, and stopped off in Adelaide around 1850. It is thought that Louis jumped ship and stayed in Adelaide, possibly as a consequence of thinking he would likely be conscripted into the military if he returned home. I did find a web page listing him as a deserter many years ago, but did not save the evidence. However, Louis quickly found employment with the Pilot Service in Port Adelaide, operating a light-ship in the Port River, and spoke at least German, Danish and English. He would never have seen his family again.

Franz did quite well in South Australia. He soon married, and had his first child while working on the Port River light-ship. After leaving the harbour service, he was employed as a translator with the German work-gangs on part of the Adelaide to Kapunda railway. As a result, he settled in Kapunda, and became a carrier at Kapunda Railway Station for some years. Franz was a freemason for more than forty years, with the Lodge of Light, and was also a town councillor for one term. He died in Kapunda in 1914, aged 79 years.

Friedrich MEINCKE b c1785

The earliest MEINCKE I have found is Franz' grandparents, although the record in FamilySearch has insufficient (in my view) supporting evidence. Louis's grandfather may be Johann Friedrich MEINEKE and his grandmother is Catharine Margaritha, surname unknown. The Prussian/German spelling is MEINEKE as recorded on Louis' birth certificate. Most record websites, however, use the MEINCKE spelling, and this was the spelling used once Louis arrived in South Australia.

Johanne MEINCKE b c1810

Louis' parents were Johann Friedrich MEINCKE, and his wife Elizabeth Catherine MOLLER. This information is on Franz' birth record, and is also recorded on the Familysearch website, which also claims Johann and Catherine died in South Australia. I can find no local death records to support this, but have not yet tried to verify the Familysearch claims. There is also the daunting task of trying to get further back using German and Danish records. I will research this again, at some stage.

Johan is described as a rates or tax officer on Franz' birth certificate, so he must have been in some sort of Government service.

Louis MEINCKE b1835

We have copies of Louis' birth record, written in German but kindly translated for us. The birth Certificate shows the local parish or location as Huttener parish, although I cannot find that exact name in maps of the time.

Schleswig is in the border region of (then) Prussia and Denmark, and history shows that this area was affected by warring neighbours, changing control of the region a number of times from 1848, while Louis was growing up. However, Louis considered himself Danish, according to family stories. We know very little about Louis' parents, but they would have spent their lives in the Schleswig region. We don't know for sure what brought Louis to Adelaide, but he arrived at Port Adelaide around 1850, as a crew member of an incoming ship, and he stayed. His residency was probably opportunistic, and he was aged just 15 years at this time.

Louis' birth certificate shows his father was the Bailiff of the Huttener Parish Office. I can find no parish or town of Huttener, but Hutten is located at the red symbol on this map. It is about 20km south of Schleswig, in present day Germany, but near the Danish border.



Louis is recorded as a mariner at his marriage with Phillipa BRAY in 1859. She came to Adelaide in 1854 with her mother and siblings after Phillipa's father had died. Louis was working on the lightship on the Port River, Port Adelaide at this time. The family were probably there as well, as their first child, Frederick William, is recorded as being born on the lightship. Louis soon began work as a translator for (mostly German) work gangs building the railway and bridges to Kapunda, where the family subsequently settled.

Louis built up a substantial carrying business moving materials by horse and dray to and from the railway yards. Louis and Phillipa had seven children, from which many descendants exist today. There are several newspaper reports of accidents, etc., that impacted the business over the years. We are interested in the eldest child, Frederick William MEINCKE, who worked in the carrying business with his father, but was also a noted bee breeder.

Frederick MEINCKE b1859

Frederick was born in 1859, a bit too soon after his parents wedding, as the first child of the couple. He married twice, to Mary Anne WILLIAMS in 1882, and they had four children. Mary Anne died in 1889, and Fred then married Jane WILSON in 1896, producing a further six children. The third child of the first marriage was Ernest Gordon MEINCKE, born in 1886 at Kapunda, Anne's grandfather. Frederick was noted as having hobbies of bee-keeping and photography and he excelled in both. He was widely recognised as having made significant contributions to Australia's bee-keeping knowledge. It also seems the proliferation of old family photographs is down to him.

Frederick made a very important contribution to bee-keeping in South Australia and Australia, and was regarded as the premier keeper in the district. He entered and won prizes at many local shows, and also spoke on bee-keeping and honey at meetings and gatherings.

The following article from 1895 tells something of his skills, and of a devastating fire that destroyed all his equipment:

“{FIRE AT MR. F. MEINCKE'S APIARY.

As an exhibitor of the product of bees and of bee-keeping appliances Mr. F. Meincke, of Adelaide-road, Kapunda, will be known to all who have attended the shows of agricultural societies in this and adjoining districts during the past eight years. His exhibit has always commanded the admiration of all, and the enthusiastic and genial manner in which he described his exhibit always gathered around him a crowd of interested listeners. They will regret to hear that the result of Mr. Meincke's eight years' study, manual labour, and financial outlay was on Friday afternoon swept away in a few minutes by fire.

All that now remains of the perfect machinery, the daintily-labelled cans and

transparent jars of delicious honey, and the piles of indented wax called "foundation," are the charred remains. Where once stood a room which was an object lesson to all who entered it, are found blackened posts frowning over piles of burnt and twisted tin and iron and charcoal, which once formed the machinery and appliances so highly prized by their owner, and which had excited the admiration of hundreds of people on many occasions.

Mr. Meincke had probably one of the most complete beekeeping plants in the colony. Several of the appliances were of his own design, while others he had imported directly from America and were of the very latest improvement. Not a single article was saved, not even the "foundation" mill, which Mr. Meincke always kept on a bench near the door where he thought it would be easily rescued should fire occur. When Mr. Meincke opened the door to attempt to save what was near at hand, he found that it was too late, the room being full of fire. The burning honey and wax ran in all directions, and the heat was intense. Some of the bee-hives near by, which had bags on



them, caught fire, but were not badly burnt. Fortunately the weather was cold and damp, so that the bees were not very troublesome owing to the heat and being shifted about.

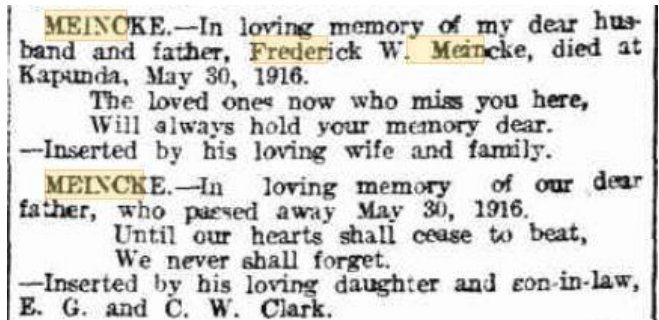
Mr. Meincke estimates his loss at quite £100, but to this is to be added the loss which occurs through his not being able to supply his customers with their requisites and having to send to America for new appliances, which cannot reach him for six months. There was a ton of extracted honey and 400 lbs. of comb-honey in the building, besides £20 worth of wax, and spare hives and combs, two foundation mills, extractors, stove, wax-boiler, dipping vats, and a large quantity of sundries. The origin of the fire is a mystery, except there is some explanation in the fact that the train had passed by a few minutes before the fire was seen. The structure was of timber, roofed with iron, and lined with canvas. The dry weather had shrunk the timber, and as the fire was at the back, or west side, of the structure when first noticed, it may be that a spark from the engine funnel found its way into the canvas. There was a stove in the house, but it had not been used for some time. On the previous day a smoker had been used in the room because the bees had been troublesome, but it had not been used that morning. The property was not insured."

Transcribed from the Kapunda Herald (SA:1878-1951) Fri 26 Apr 1895, Page 3 .

Image on previous page – Frederick's apiary equipment and display. With his family.

Currency comparison – £100 in 1890 = \$16,000, approx., today.

Frederick MEINCKE's notices of his death, from The Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867-1922); Thursday 30 May 1918. (Sourced from Trove 24 May 2020).



MEINCKE.—In loving memory of my dear husband and father, Frederick W. Meincke, died at Kapunda, May 30, 1916.
The loved ones now who miss you here,
Will always hold your memory dear.
—Inserted by his loving wife and family.

MEINCKE.—In loving memory of our dear father, who passed away May 30, 1916.
Until our hearts shall cease to beat,
We never shall forget.
—Inserted by his loving daughter and son-in-law,
E. G. and C. W. Clark.

I have not found any of this family enlisting for WW1, but most of the family changed their name to LANGDON in 1915. The LANGDON name was from Louis' wife Phillipa BRAY's maternal grandmother's maiden name.

Gordon MEINCKE b1886

Ernest Gordon was born in 1886, at Kapunda, and he went to sea as a fourteen-year-old. It is understood that when Gordon's father remarried, there was not enough room in the house when more children came along, so Gordon stayed with dad's unmarried sister Edith, but just across the road. Gordon did not get along with Edith, so he left home to spend around ten years as a cabin boy and mariner, including twice around Cape Horne. We have many postcards from Europe to describe his ships and travels. He gave up his sea life and married Effie BARRETT in 1911, and they settled in Adelaide. It is recorded that Gordon was a motorman and drove trams for a time. One important event for Gordon is that he drove the first tram over the tramline viaduct at Lockleys, on the new line to Henley Beach. I remember seeing the viaduct in the 1950's, as several hundred metres of trestle track that ran beside Henley Beach Road, a couple of metres above the then swampy ground. All traces of the track have long since disappeared. The swamp has been filled with rubble and is now dense housing.

Gordon and Effie LANGDON had two children, Jack and Joan. Jack was seven years older than Joan, and was a printer with an Adelaide daily paper. Jack married Sarah PENN, who had spent some of her youth growing up in India. Her father and grandfather had business interests in India, and were exporting jam to Delhi at this time.

From left; Frederick, Louis, Gordon, and baby Jack MEINCKE.
Photo taken about 1913.



Joan LANGDON b1919

Dorothy Joan LANGDON was born in 1919 in South Terrace, Adelaide. She was known by her middle name, Joan, for most of her life, a 'tradition' followed by a few other family members. Joan's father (Gordon) was caretaker at Charles Birks & Co, later David Jones, and probably facilitated Joan being apprenticed as a seamstress with the Company. Joan was 14 years old, and unusually, attended one year of technical college before starting work. She stayed with Birks until she married Ray in 1944, when she was expected to stop working. Joan had met Ray KEIGHTLEY at a local dance, and they became an item. Unfortunately for Joan, Ray had enlisted in 1942. He arranged leave in 1944 and returned to Adelaide to marry, but she had to wait till he returned from military service in early 1946 before they could start their life together.

Joan and Ray built a house in Wattle Park and moved there in 1948. Joan was busy raising four children, Anne, Barbara, Paul and Pamela, but found time to be involved with Sunday School at Kensington Gardens Congregational Church, Meals on Wheels, the Red Cross, the Adelaide Plains Camelia Society, and several other clubs and groups with Ray. Ray died in 1998, and Joan in 2014.

The story continues in the KEIGHTLEY narrative, available at
<https://jansquire.com/tng/showmedia.php?mediaID=79&medialinkID=79>

Facebook Summary

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Franz did quite well in South Australia. He soon married, and had his first child while working on the Port River light-ship. After leaving the harbour service, he was employed as a translator with the German work-gangs on part of the Adelaide to Kapunda railway. As a result, he settled in Kapunda, and became a carrier at Kapunda Railway Station for some years. Franz was a freemason for more than forty years, with the Lodge of Light, and also was a town councillor for one term. He died in Kapunda in 1914, aged 79 years.

Franz was Anne's 2 x great grandfather.

You can see Franz' page at <https://jansquire.com/tng/getperson.php?personID=I16&tree=squire>.




Franz Ludwig Rudolph MEINCKE

♂ 1835 - 1914 (78 years)

Generation: 1

[Less detail](#)

1.  Franz Ludwig Rudolph MEINCKE was born on 7 Oct 1835 in Schleswig, Germany (son of Johann Friedrich MEINCKE and Elisabeth Catherine MOLLER); died on 11 Aug 1914 in Kapunda, South Australia, Australia.

Notes:

Died:

Obituary:

Mr. Fred Meincke, who has been associated with him in the carrying trade, was born on the old lightship. When the railway authorities were building the bridge over the Light to carry the railway to Kapunda, Mr. Meincke was sent up as interpreter for the gangs of German workmen employed, and the result was that he settled in Kapunda as carrier for the railway. Excepting for one term as Councillor for West Ward Mr. Meincke did not enter much into the public life of the town, but he was of a charitable disposition and no-one ever appealed to him in vain. He was a subscribing member of Lodge of Light for 43 years, and was a past master of the lodge. His second son (Mr. Julius Meincke) is at present the immediate past master of the lodge. In addition to the widow, there survive six children? Mrs. Evan James and Miss Edith Meincke (Kapunda), Mr. Fred Meincke (Kapunda), Mr. Julius Meincke (Anlaby), Mrs. F. Groth (Boken Hill), and Mrs. Hambly (Mile-End); 27 grandchildren, and 6 great-grandchildren.
Source: The Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929), Thu 13 Aug 1914, Page 11. <https://trove.nla.gov.au>

Franz married Phillipa BRAY on 18 Apr 1859 in Adelaide, South Australia, Australia. Phillipa (daughter of William BRAY and Catharine KNIGHT) was born on 7 Nov 1835 in St Austell, Cornwall, England; was christened on 6 Dec 1835 in St Austell, Cornwall, England; died on 4 Aug 1920 in Kapunda, South Australia, Australia. [Group Sheet] [Family Chart]

Children:

- i. Frederick William MEINCKE was born on 28 Dec 1859 in Lightship, Port Adelaide, South Australia, Australia; died on 30 May 1916 in Kapunda, South Australia, Australia; was buried in Kapunda, South Australia, Australia.
- ii. Elizabeth MEINCKE was born on 14 Mar 1861 in Kapunda, South Australia, Australia; died on 3 Sep 1925 in Kapunda, South Australia, Australia.
- iii. Phillipa MEINCKE was born on 8 Apr 1865 in Kapunda, South Australia, Australia; died on 15 Aug 1926 in Hilton, South Australia, Australia.
- iv. Louis MEINCKE was born on 27 Sep 1866 in Kapunda, South Australia, Australia; died on 2 Sep 1880 in Kapunda, South Australia, Australia.
- v. Florence MEINCKE was born on 14 Apr 1868 in Kapunda, South Australia, Australia; died on 20 Feb 1956 in Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia.
- vi. Edith MEINCKE was born on 11 Mar 1870 in Kapunda, South Australia, Australia; died on 3 Jun 1952 in Hilton, South Australia, Australia.
- vii. Julius MEINCKE was born on 31 May 1871 in Kapunda, South Australia, Australia; died on 2 Nov 1942 in North Adelaide, South Australia, Australia.

Generation: 2

2. Johann Friedrich MEINCKE

Johann married Elisabeth Catherine MOLLER. [Group Sheet] [Family Chart]

3. Elisabeth Catherine MOLLER

Children:

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