

Collection #
P 0838

**JACOB BREINIG FAMILY PHOTOGRAPH
CA. 1890**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Professor Jacob Breinig was a musician and music teacher who lived in Vincennes and Terre Haute, Indiana. He taught violin, piano, and flute. It was reported that he met a French priest whom he taught to play the church organ. In 1877 he became the leader of the newly formed Ringgold Band and Orchestra in Terre Haute, which became widely known. He and his wife, Katherine, had nine children, eight of whom lived to adulthood.

Jacob married Katherine Speicher in Germany in 1851. He was born in May 1832, and she was born in April 1832. Their birthplace is identified in various ways, including Alsace-Lorraine (the region was given that name about forty years after Jacob and Katherine were born), Prussia, and Germany. After Jacob graduated from the University of Leipzig in Germany, where he studied music, he and Katherine immigrated to the United States in 1853, where he joined the Pittsburg Orchestra in Pennsylvania. The couple moved to Indiana around 1860. (Katherine's name is spelled several different ways in various records.)

Of their eight known children, the first two, Henry and Kate, were born in Pennsylvania. Henry was born 20 April 1856. He married Catherine E. Fendrich (1858–1932) in April 1877 in Vincennes. Their children included three sons—Charles, George, and Harry—and two daughters—Mae (May) and Edith. Henry did a variety of work, in the millinery, publishing, and furniture businesses. Later in life, he and Catherine and Edith moved to Rockford, Illinois. Henry died there on 22 April 1938.

Kathryn “Kate” Breinig was born 4 January 1859. She married Adolph Rosenburg (ca. 1856–1897) in October 1883 in Terre Haute. She was a young widow, whose children included three daughters and a son: Marie, Helen, Dorothy Claire (Clara), and Karl. By 1930 she had moved from Terre Haute and was living with her son in Evanston, Illinois. Later she moved to Asheville, North Carolina, where she lived with her daughter, Helen. Kate died in Asheville on 4 August 1962. (Kathryn's name is also spelled inconsistently in different records.)

Frank A. Breinig was the first of the children born in Indiana, on 4 January 1861, on his sister Kate's second birthday. Frank married Katherine M. Fox Bischoff (1862–1926) in August 1896 in Terre Haute; she had a son, August, from a previous marriage. Frank was a musician, playing and teaching flute, but also sometimes worked with his brother Henry's furniture business. Frank died in Terre Haute on 5 November 1923.

Anna Breinig was born 26 July 1864. She married Harlan “Harley” August Pritchett (1861–1963) in January 1885 in Terre Haute. They had a son named George Raymond. Anna died 29 October 1958 in Terre Haute.

Peter J. Breinig was born 6 December 1866 in Vincennes. He married Alice Maud Walker (1869–1950) in September 1891 in Terre Haute. Their children were Robert F. (died at age 16) and Marguerite Catherine. Peter played and taught violin. He died on 9 December 1943 in Terre Haute.

Mary “Mollie” Breinig was born 25 July 1869. She married Irish immigrant Thomas J. Dailey (1865–1940) in June 1893 in Terre Haute. Their children were John, Helen, Mary Jane, and another daughter who died in infancy. Mollie died on 31 December 1961 in Indianapolis.

Cecelia C. Breinig was born 9 January 1871. She married Alfred C. Ohlendorf (1869–1962) in June 1891 in Terre Haute. They had three daughters: Ruth, Helen, and Gertrude. Cecelia died in Indianapolis on 16 September 1961.

Ottillia “Tillie” Barbara Breinig was born on 18 December 1873. Her first husband was Carl Wittenberg (1871–1907). They married in November 1892 in Terre Haute, and had two children, Charlotte and Richard Joseph. Carl was killed in a railroad accident while the family was living in Chicago. Tillie returned to Terre Haute. She married her second husband, Charles Louis Carter (1857–1937) around 1910. She had one son with him, named Charles Louis Carter, Jr. Tillie died on 31 May 1959 in Wheeling, Cook County, Illinois.

Jacob served as Principal Musician with the 24th and 91st regiments of the Indiana Infantry during the Civil War. The 24th was under the command of Colonel Alvin P. Hovey, who later would become governor of Indiana.

An 1866 newspaper notice announced a grand ball at West Baden Springs in Orange County, at which Beall & Breinig’s String Band would be playing. In 1876 or 1877 Jacob moved his family from Vincennes to Terre Haute to help organize and become leader of the Ringgold Band. Sons Henry, Frank, and Peter were all original members of the band. Its first performance was at the Naylor Opera House in Terre Haute. Newspaper accounts reveal that Professor Breinig and the Ringgold Band participated in band tournaments in the late 1870s and 1880s and played at many other events.

Jacob and Katherine celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on 14 January 1901, with a family dinner at which forty-four people were present, including twenty grandchildren. After the dinner there was a dance and reception at Germania Hall under the auspices of the Maennerchor Society in Terre Haute.

Jacob Breinig died on 2 December 1905 in Terre Haute. Several years before, he had prepared all the music to be played at his own funeral. He was interred in full uniform. Leaders and members of Illinois and Indiana bands attended his funeral. Condolences arrived from throughout the United States and from Europe.

After Jacob died, his son Peter took over leadership of the Ringgold Band. Katherine Speicher Breinig died on 8 February 1907 in Terre Haute.

Sources:

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of one mounted group portrait of Jacob Breinig, his wife Katherine, and their eight children, taken ca. 1890, most likely in Terre Haute, Indiana, where they lived at that time.

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Group portrait of the Breinig family [ca. 1890]:

Front row, left to right: daughter Kathryn (Kate),
mother Katherine, Jacob, Anna

Middle: Ottillia

Back row, left to right: Peter, Cecelia, Henry, Mary
(Mollie), Frank

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