

## **Robert and Friedrich**

### Chapter 1

In 1849, Friedrich, from Germany, and Robert, from Ireland, traveled to America. They booked their passage on the upper deck of a steamship. Their trip took a little over two weeks, and they traveled in relative comfort. Fortunately for them, steamships replaced sailing vessels a decade earlier, dramatically improving conditions for passengers during transatlantic travel. Crossing the Atlantic on a sailing vessel took at least six weeks, but if wind and weather conditions were unfavorable, it could take twice as long. Immigrants brought enough food and supplies for an average trip, so if the journey took longer, they depended on the ship's captain for sustenance, and it came at a very high price, making many captains rich. Eventually, laws were passed requiring shipping companies to provide adequate food and water for their passengers, no matter how long the trip took.

However, because there was very little monitoring, these companies provided poor-quality food items, and immigrants often arrived in America weak and ill. Their water was stored in kegs that previously held other items, including toxic products like turpentine. Also, as many people as possible were packed onto the ship to maximize profits. Of course, this jeopardized everyone on board because the crowded conditions made the trip uncomfortable and unsanitary. It also meant that there were shortages of the provisions necessary for a healthy passage. Eventually, following several horrible disease outbreaks and deaths during voyages, the United States Congress created legislation delineating the minimum required space for each passenger. As a result, shipping companies began building ships with three decks, using the top

two for passengers. Although those on the upper deck were exposed to the weather, those below had very little fresh air, so most preferred the top deck.

By the time Friedrich and Robert booked their passage to the United States, the ships traveling the Atlantic exchanged their sails for steam and crossed the Atlantic in a little over two weeks. However, horror stories continued. Sometimes ships caught fire, and travelers were trapped and died in firestorms or by suffocation. Other times, passengers became ill and passed the illness to others, causing many deaths. A common illness on board the ships was cholera, but typhus was the deadliest disease shared aboard the ships. Robert was familiar with typhus because there was an outbreak of this disease in Ireland during the potato famine, and nearly seven thousand people died en route to America. Consequently, many Irish immigrants were quarantined following their arrival in New York, so Robert chose the Port of New Orleans. Friedrich decided to go through New Orleans because he could easily find passage to his brother's village from there. By 1849 many riverboats traveled up the Mississippi to the Missouri River and then to the bustling Port of St. Louis, where he could take a coach to his brother's little community.

Robert met Friedrich when he arrived in Liverpool. He went into a pub that also rented rooms to travelers to have a pint of ale and inquire about a place to sleep. Friedrich arrived several days earlier and was sleeping in the stable in exchange for cleaning it several times a day. He earned his meals by grooming, feeding, and watering the customer's horses. Friedrich was sitting at the bar eating his meal when Robert entered, sat beside him, and struck up a conversation in English. Friedrich, always happy to practice the English he worked tirelessly to learn for several years before making his trip, quickly engaged in conversation. The English Friedrich learned came from a copy of Grimm's Fairy Tales that his Methodist minister allowed

him to borrow. He compared his German version to the English version, story by story gleaning a working, though imperfect, knowledge of English. Robert quickly realized that Friedrich was a novice English speaker and kindly took the time to help him understand as they navigated through their conversation. He discovered that Friedrich was sleeping and working in the pub stable and asked if he might help out. Fortunately, the pub was very busy with travelers, so the owner quickly gave his permission, and the two began sharing the chores in return for food and a comfortable place to sleep. Thus, both had a roof over their heads and food in their stomachs during the few days before their ship was scheduled to depart. Robert and Friedrich got along well and became inseparable throughout the entire crossing, enjoying one another's company from the time they met in Liverpool, all the way to the port of New Orleans at the mouth of the Mississippi River.

## Chapter 2

Shortly after boarding, they were told about a steamship that left Liverpool with more than four hundred immigrants and was never seen again. It was owned by the same company managing the ship that they were traveling on. It was thought to have sunk, but there was never any sign of its sinking, so the vanishing ship and its passengers remained a mystery. Despite this, Friedrich and Robert were determined to take their chances along with the more than four hundred other immigrants heading to America. Although the steamship was much faster than the sailing ships used in earlier years, taking only two weeks to cross the Atlantic instead of the month's long journeys in sailing vessels, Friedrich and Robert were both so determined to create new lives in the United States, they'd have sailed if that was the only available transportation.

By the time they decided to leave Europe, half of the population of Ireland had already immigrated to the United States, and an equal number of Germans immigrated as well. Like

Friedrich and Robert, most immigrants came to the United States because of civil unrest, severe unemployment, and terrible hardships. Upon arrival, most took any job available, no matter how difficult, dangerous, monotonous, or stress-filled. In fact, much of the United States' infrastructure, such as the railroads, was built on the backs of immigrants. There was a saying that "an immigrant was buried under every railroad tie." Often, the immigrants were mistreated because they were willing to work for meager wages and the nativist feelings in the United States were against them as everyone was struggling to survive. The newly arrived immigrant's willingness to work for less was a threat to the average American's feelings of job security and work availability.

Because of this, all immigrants, and especially those from Ireland like Robert, were singled out and targeted with nativist propaganda. In the cities, signs were posted next to employment advertisements that specifically excluded some immigrants, predominantly the Irish, adding the phrase, "Irish Need Not Apply." Germans were more welcome because they usually moved west rather than remaining in the cities competing for jobs. Before the Irish became targets, Chinese immigrants faced the same nativist sentiments, culminating in a piece of legislation called the "Chinese Exclusion Act." News of these hostilities filtered through Ireland from letters sent by those who immigrated earlier, and so Robert was fully aware of the problems he would face in the cities. However, like Friedrich, Robert was disinterested in city life, hoping to live in the so-called wide-open spaces in the west.

At eighteen, Friedrich was what many would consider stocky. He stood about five feet ten inches tall. He had a strong, broad back with muscular arms and legs. His hair was dark brown, and although his eyes were hazel, they were more on the brownish side than the green side, depending upon the light. He was a very ethical person. Also, like the German community in

Missouri he intended to join, he was committed to his Wesleyan Methodist way of thinking. He was a pacifist and did not believe in war. This was the main reason that he had to leave Germany. His country was involved in European wars, and he knew it was inevitable that he would be forced to participate. His two older brothers immigrated several years earlier for the same reason. When Friedrich came of age, he was in danger of being forced into the Kaiser's wars. His brothers wrote encouraging Friedrich to begin learning English and join them in Missouri.

Understanding and speaking English helped immigrants ease into American society. He took his brother's advice and began learning English using an English translation of Grimm's Fairy Tales and a German translation. In the end, he learned to speak a fragmented but understandable form of English, which helped him tremendously when he entered England. Although he felt he had to immediately escape Germany to avoid being pressed into military service, Friedrich left many loved ones behind, including his parents. But they encouraged him to go, especially because his brothers had already claimed a land grant in Missouri for him. Also, his excellent farming skills, along with several exceptional grape plants he was bringing along to add to those his brother was using in a vineyard he had established in the ideally suited Missouri "Rhineland," were more than welcome. So, Friedrich planned to join the German community located along the Missouri River valley where his brothers lived. Most of those living there were Methodists. Many of these Methodist communities were advertising, encouraging young German men to settle in an area around Saint Louis known as the "German triangle." Once he arrived in Missouri, he planned to work with his brothers and make enough money to develop his own land, build a farmhouse and eventually start his own farm.

### Chapter 3

Robert, at about six feet four inches, was taller than Friedrich. Although he was lean, he was big-boned and very powerfully built. From an early age, laboring in the fields promoted the development of big muscles throughout his torso, especially across his broad back. He had reddish-brown hair and piercing blue eyes, like many others in the county of Wexford and the parish of Hall Burger, Ireland, where he was from. His county and parish were in the Scottish Lowlands of Ulster. As a Scots-Irishman, Robert's life had been filled with poverty for many reasons, including that England had utterly devastated the Island, stripping most of the natural resources from the area. Because Robert had no opportunities to own land in Ireland, and it was depleted of nutrients anyway, he decided he would go to the New World to make a new life.

Because he was used to hard labor, Robert was totally prepared for the kind of life he was facing in the United States. Robert was a survivor and believed that the opportunities available in America combined with his hard work would help him fulfill his dream of owning his own land. At nineteen years of age, he was strong-willed, had a lot of common sense, and was very practical about everything. He was brave, self-reliant, compassionate, and, as Friedrich discovered, a committed friend and ally. Although he had a great sense of humor, he was serious about life. He had a profound understanding and love of animals, which made him a successful horseman, a gift that later would play a critical role in his new life as a cattleman in Texas. He had a strong sense of justice and rebelled against any kind of unfairness or deception. He learned to be thrifty during the potato famine in Ireland when more than seven hundred and fifty thousand people starved. In fact, it was the famine that prompted him to expedite his move to the United States.

The only farming Robert experienced was his attempt to grow potatoes, and in Ireland, this farming failed year after year, so he did not want to be a farmer. However, he was adept at raising livestock and was an exceptionally able horseman. During the crossing, Friedrich introduced Robert to several Germans who planned to go to an area of Texas where a large land grant was offered to Germans for colonization. This so-called German Belt was offered by Stephen Austin, who encouraged colonizing Texas. He wanted the entire area of Texas settled because as it became populated, it also became manageable. As Robert got to know these people, he began thinking about going to Texas himself, especially when he found out many people were raising cattle there. So, when Robert and Friedrich arrived in New Orleans, they each had differing dreams and goals that took them to opposite parts of the United States.

Realizing that it was doubtful that they would ever see one another again, they said their goodbyes. However, as they left the boat at the New Orleans Port, each knew they would never forget the other. As soon as he disembarked and said goodbye to Robert, Friedrich purchased passage on a riverboat that traveled up the Mississippi River, crossed over to the Missouri River bordering the "Rhineland," and docked at the Port of St. Louis. From there, he found land passage to his brothers' community in Missouri. Steamboats were widely used on the Mississippi, and its connecting waterways following Robert Fulton's success using the Steamboat named the *Claremont* on the Hudson River in 1807. By the time Friedrich traveled to the St. Louis Port, it had become one of the most important ports in the United States. St. Louis was a boomtown, with hundreds of steamboats in its port levee coming and going. Other brave adventurers like Friedrich flooded the area, taking advantage of the tremendous opportunities available there. Indeed, Friedrich's German ancestors probably provided him with his predisposition toward travel and adventure.

## Chapter 4

Friedrich, like all Germans, descended from explorers linked to the Northern Megalithic and Indo-European cultures. Indeed, both Robert and Friedrich were likely linked through the same Northern Megalithic people called the Beakers who, thousands of years earlier, were utilizing sophisticated mathematical concepts and organizing themselves to defeat their enemies. Beaker's navigated into Ireland, easily mingling with Ireland's inhabitants. However, Friedrich's earliest ancestors began their nomadic existence after domesticating the horse. Eventually, they adopted the horse-drawn wagon and began expanding from the northern edge of the Caucasus Mountains, down through India, Iran, and eventually, into northern Europe.

They preferred the forested areas and settled within these spaces, blending with the people residing in Northern Europe, merging their dialects and cultures, finally emerging as Germans, speaking Friedrich's German Language. Restless and adventurous, like Friedrich, these Germanic tribes spread further into the Rhine and other wooded locations in southern Germany. They raised cattle and became expert farmers, eventually creating an organizational structure whose leadership was determined by wealth. However, power primarily emerged from an individual's ability to carry and effectively use weapons. By 600 AD, the German tribes expanded into every corner of Europe, searching for new farmlands. They incorporated many of the cultural and intellectual influences they encountered, including those from Ancient Persia.

Because the Roman Empire was weakening, the Germans began invading until Roman troops eventually stopped them. Over time, as Rome expanded into the Rhine and Danube, they incorporated the Germanic tribal homelands, and the annexed area was called Germania by Roman scholars. While the Germans resisted Roman rule, they sometimes traded and engaged in other cultural exchanges with the Romans and their conquered territories. Over the centuries,

Germans continued migrating, eventually settling large areas of northern Europe where Friedrich lived. Like Friedrich and his brothers, the drive for rich farmland was the primary reason for German expansion, especially into the Rhine and the Danube River valleys. Their tribal structure leadership evolved into warrior kings leading individual "Nations." The tribes' warrior aristocracy was unwilling to subordinate themselves to Roman rule, and they remained a continual threat to the Roman Empire until the Huns became a common enemy.

The Huns came out of Asia attempting to conquer everything within their path and were successful until they faced the Germanic nations of the Visigoths and Ostrogoths. From this point on, there were many years of warfare that marked the beginning of the end of the Roman Empire. The Alamanni tribe was one of the more rebellious German tribes. Their name, meaning All Men, implies that they were probably a conglomeration of various tribal groups who joined to rebel against Rome. Eventually, the Alamanni collided with the Visigoths, who were unstoppable as they spread throughout the Roman Empire. The Visigoths and the Alamanni merged, incorporating the traits and traditions of each and becoming the ancestral lineage of Friedrich. They were wandering adventurers with great strength and endurance. As fierce warriors, they were committed to protecting their territories, providing for their tribe through hunting, gathering, farming, and raising livestock.

This integrated group of Alamanni and Visigoths participated in the invasion of the Roman Empire, gathering more ground and expanding their settlements. Eventually, however, they were pushed back across the Danube River by the Romans. They remained there, growing in power and wealth, eventually becoming Christianized due to their King Reccared's acceptance of Catholicism. When the Huns invaded, they moved back across the Danube and were safe because the Huns lacked the technology to make a wide river crossing with the necessary forces

to defeat them. However, the Romans still controlled this area and demanded that they support Rome militarily in exchange for their expansion into safety. This was the first military impressment into service experienced by Friedrich's ancestors.

## Chapter 5

Over the centuries, the more peaceful part of Friedrich's ancestry, the Alamanni, emerged triumphant over the warlike Visigoth nature, integrating the Christian virtues of peaceful coexistence, kindness, and loving one's neighbor. Pacifism among the group eventually became their ethic, creating an uneasy peace within their realm, but when famine hit and the Romans neglected them, their leader, a dictator named Fritigern, went to war with Rome and won. Their victory meant that they controlled the Balkans. Eventually, Euric became leader and united them into a single kingdom, forcing the Romans to give them complete independence. Their kingdom included the entire Iberian Peninsula, excluding the spaces controlled by the Basques. By the time Euric died, they controlled a mighty and organized kingdom in the western world.

The kingdom flourished until they were overrun by Muslims, whose rulers took control of their area. At this point, those adhering to Christianity and linked more specifically to Friedrich's ancestors broke away and settled in the northern regions. They joined with Charlemagne to protect the Holy Seat of Rome and aligned themselves with his Christian Empire. Charlemagne's kingdom included most of Western Europe and encompassed most of what is now Germany. After his death, his empire was divided into three parts by the Treaty of Verdun. Friedrich's ancestors became part of the duchy of Lorraine. By this time, they were committed Protestant Christians and part of the reformation initiated by Martin Luther, who hoped to cleanse the Roman Catholic Church of corruption.

Later they joined some Christians known as the Pietists. The Pietists remained loyal to the Lutherans but pushed for a revival of purpose and direction within this Protestantism. The German Pietists expanded into the rest of Europe, attempting to awaken the church into a new, more zealous commitment. These people eventually took their movement to Great Britain, and those Pietists were called Moravians. Finally, the movement went full circle, and upon returning to Germany in the 1830s, joined people known as the Methodists. By this time, the Duchy of Lorraine had been inherited by the French crown. Following the Franco-Prussian War, it was merged with Alsace, becoming the province of Alsace-Lorraine in the German Empire.

The name Methodist was attached to any person thought to be excited about Christianity and who followed the teachings of John Wesley. Friedrich's community welcomed the new Methodism that returned to Germany and became a part of the Church that Wesley created, participating in their structure and a church management method that continues to exist today. The founder of Methodism, John Wesley, was an Oxford-educated Anglican priest. He met the Pietists on his way to the New World, where he planned to work as a missionary. Through worshiping with this German group, he had a transforming personal experience that inspired him to convert the world. The Pietists ideals influenced Wesley to a great extent, and when in the 1800s Methodism was introduced to Germany, it was readily accepted.

Friedrich's people, who were already committed Lutheran Pietists, readily integrated Wesley's Methodist ideals. However, those who were practicing Methodism in Germany were persecuted. They could not have their own chapels, and the police monitored their every move. Therefore, many of these German Methodists moved to the United States and created their own little Methodist communities like the one in Missouri, where Friedrich's brothers settled. When the famine hit Germany, Friedrich decided to leave and join his brothers as he had planned all along.

His brothers left earlier because the Kaiser forced men of their age into military service, making their departure urgent. Friedrich was too young at the time but planned to eventually join his brothers. However, when the famine hit, he decided to immigrate without further delay, which was why he found himself traveling up the Mississippi toward the Missouri River Port of St. Louis in 1849.

## Chapter 6

Meanwhile, Robert thought he might try to work for a time in New Orleans, but every help wanted sign he saw in shop windows said, "No Irish Need Apply." He was stunned at the blatant rejection but remained determined to make it despite any nativist sentiment that excluded him because of his origins. After several hours of disappointment, he gave up the idea of finding work and made his way to the government land office, where he discovered that large land grants were available to Irish people wishing to settle in Texas. Therefore, Robert immediately applied for a grant, knowing that he was expected to live and work on his land within the year to retain it. Because the sizeable Irish land grant was not far away from the German Belt, where the people he met during the crossing intended to settle, Robert accompanied them all the way across the Louisiana swampland and into the hills and valleys of Texas where he planned to make his home.

Robert was unaware that he was connected to his traveling companions through a related Germanic people known as the Vikings. They were a seafaring Germanic tribe, traveling well beyond Germany, into the coastal areas around Europe, and finally to Ireland, where they mingled with the Celts who inhabited Ireland at the time. However, thousands of years earlier, the first group to inhabit Ireland was a hunting and gathering group that may have migrated into Ireland from England using a land bridge that is thought to have existed at one time. These

people were hunters and gatherers and migrated during the Ice Age, but they were cut off from England as the ice melted. Because of their isolation, their lifestyle remained virtually unchanged for more than 3000 years. Eventually, however, they were influenced by a new group that arrived in Ireland during the Bronze Age.

The first signs of agriculture became apparent around this time, and elaborate gold and bronze ornaments were found in burial mounds there as well as weapons and tools. Then, the group connected to Friedrich arrived that were named for the pottery they made in the shape of an inverted bell. These so-called Bell Beaker People were those Indo-Europeans linked to the Germans as well. Within this time frame, speakers of the Celtic language arrived in Ireland, possibly in waves, and blended with Ireland's existing groups, creating the Gaelic culture by the 5th Century B.C. Eventually, Kingdoms were created and lasted for several centuries, led by wealthy warriors and educated people, including Druids. While the rest of Europe languished in the Dark Ages due to religious oppression, Ireland experienced a golden age because of its relative isolation. Also, the monks following St. Patrick, who first missionized Ireland, did not suppress enlightened thinking or activities.

This freedom of thought promoted scholarship, art, and philosophy. Irish monasteries became hotbeds of creativity, and this freedom to think creatively set the stage for Ireland's future. Land ownership was linked to marriage and kinship rather than the feudalistic society found in England. Thus, the inhabitants of Ireland managed to remain in isolation and peace until around 700 A.D, when Viking raiders made their way into Ireland. Eventually, they settled throughout the coastal areas of Ireland and Scotland while conquering large parts of England along the way. The Vikings readily mixed with the Celts in Ireland, connecting Friedrich and Robert yet again. By the time the Vikings arrived, Ireland had been threatened by many other invaders, so even

though the Vikings were considered heathens by the Catholic inhabitants, they were welcomed as protectors of Ireland.

They were a powerful seafaring people who fought a sea-based guerilla war against the encroachment by warring kings into their territories. This was especially true during the time of Charlemagne when crusading armies supported by the Catholic church forced the people to pay very high taxes and tithes with the backing of the government. When they began plundering the areas settled by the Vikings, the Vikings began making preemptive strikes against them, launching themselves from the coast of Ireland and then traveling the rivers of Europe. They created complicated sailing ships incorporating amazingly accurate time and distance technologies. Their longships performed well in battles because maneuverability allowed them to sail into shallow waters, hit their target, and get away quickly. Thus, the Vikings fought against the intolerant Christians and their genocidal wars by invading monasteries and taking back what was taken from them.

Though they learned to be effective in river travel, they were mostly known for their sea voyages. They navigated all the way to North Africa and reached Constantinople by following rivers. Several nations, like Russia, for example, were founded by the Vikings. They also founded several cities, including Dublin, Cork, Wexford, and Limerick, all of the largest cities in Ireland. Some of the Vikings even traveled all the way to North America long before Robert made the journey. The only thing that prevented the Vikings from settling further into North America was a mini-ice age lasting several hundred years, making expansion difficult. Eventually, the Viking Age in Ireland ended when all of Ireland, including the Vikings, adopted Christianity, settling into citizenship and obeying the laws. These amazing people were capable

in war and peace. Like Robert, they were willing to travel to the ends of the earth to make a better life for themselves and their descendants.

Thus, Robert emerged from true Viking and Celtic stock. His bloodline came from the Ui Neill tribal grouping, and he was directly descended from Niall of the 9 hostages. During the 4th century, Niall was the High King of Ireland whose ancestry can be traced back to Milesius of Esbain, the King of Spain. Niall conquered all of Ireland and Scotland as well as much of Britain and Wales. He received his nickname because he took a royal hostage from each of the nine kingdoms he conquered. He had twelve sons, eight of whom founded septs. One of these sons, Eoghan, was the head of Robert Brennan's clan. The Brennan Clan connects by marriage to the Irish clan Ó Pronntaigh, a family of scribes and literary men. The Brontë family, some of whom authored very famous works, comes from this clan. Eventually, the Brennans distinguished themselves in the eleventh and twelfth centuries as master horsemen, carpenters, scribes, and professors. Interestingly, Robert's descendants demonstrated innate abilities in all of these areas, including the art of storytelling, transferring them generationally.

## Chapter 7

Leadership in Ireland followed civil rules preventing the feudalistic practice of exchanging land for military service. This fact limited the power of the king, and the Irish people remained fiercely independent. However, eventually, a feudal lord named Conrad claimed Ireland through a letter from Pope Adrian IV, asserting his ownership from the long-ago establishment of a monastery during St. Patrick's time. He landed in Ireland with his army and took it over by brute force, establishing feudal systems in areas previously controlled by barons. However, attempting to centralize and unify Ireland under the English government was difficult because England was involved in the 100 Years War lasting from 1338-1453. As a result, England's power was limited

to Dublin and some of the surrounding areas. The outer territories along the coastline remained outside English rule. Eventually, however, England exerted effective control over parts of Ireland by creating an Anglo-Irish aristocracy, making kinship relationships through marriage, and adopting Ireland's customs and social norms. An Irish parliament was created and modeled after England's parliament.

Various English monarchs unsuccessfully attempted to gain control of Ireland mainly because of religious issues between the Protestant and Catholic churches throughout the years that followed. Then, Scot settlers were encouraged by England to live in Ireland, ensuring the entrenchment of Protestantism. Ireland remained subordinate to England and depended upon England for survival. Several generations later, famine was caused by a blight hitting the potato crop, making them inedible, and people starved to death. The failure of the potato crop was called The Great Famine and lasted from 1845 to 1849. Consequently, millions of Irish immigrated to the United States. Like many other immigrants, Robert lost his loved ones in the famine, and he felt that immigrating to the United States was his only chance.

By the time Robert arrived in Texas in 1849, it had been part of the United States for four years. The largest immigrant groups entering it were Germans and Irishmen. In fact, German speakers had outnumbered both Spanish and English-speaking people in the region for decades. Robert was welcomed among the Germans, working for some of these families to begin buying and raising cattle as soon as he got settled. He used every extra bit of money he earned to buy cattle and graze them on his granted acreage. The acreage where Robert settled was a very hilly, rolling terrain. He and his neighbors used water from the Leone River and its tributaries, including Battle Creek and Sandy Creek. He also used water from the Palo Pinto Creek that was northeast of his homestead. The county was eventually named for this creek.

Abundant water sources also came from the Savannah River in the south and other tributaries linked to the Colorado River. In addition, the land he claimed was filled with other resources, including Post Oak, Shannon Oak, Walnut, Pecans, and Cedar trees. He used these trees to build his little cabin.

His log cabin imitated those in Ireland. A single rectangular room measuring about twenty by twenty-four feet with a doorway in the back and front. Robert built steep stairs leading to a loft at the top for sleeping, and a small window let in light. He built a large open fireplace out of river rocks with a wide hearth to accommodate any sparks that might leap out of the opening. Once the cabin was completed, he set about making his garden. There was adequate rainfall for subsistence farming and a long growing season, averaging nearly nine months out of the year. Five years after Robert's arrival, the Texas state legislature established the area formally, creating fixed boundaries and calling it Palo Pinto County. It was named for Palo Pinto Creek, which flowed through the space. The people who settled there took risks because they lived several miles from other settlers, remaining very isolated and often had trouble with the area Native Americans, who claimed east Texas as a part of their nomadic territory and had used it for centuries.

By the time Robert arrived, the Comanche, forced into East Texas by the westward migration of the United States citizens, had established this space as their nomadic range as well, calling it the Comancheria. Though the Comanche rarely encroached into the Anglo spaces, Native American members of the Shawnee and Choctaw occasionally raided these settlements. This was a huge problem and escalated after Texas joined the south in the Civil War. Texas broke away from the Union despite Sam Houston's refusal to declare allegiance to the southern cause. Led by large plantation owners, Texas decided to secede, committing themselves to fight for the

Confederacy. While men were away fighting for the Confederacy, raiding of homesteads by Native Americans increased. Therefore, some families were forced into towns and area forts, abandoning their land.

## Chapter 8

However, many Texas citizens, including Robert, supported Sam Houston and never went along with the rebellion, refusing to fight alongside those loyal to the south. Their refusal to fight for the south caused resentment, especially among those forced to abandon their land because the male members of their families were off fighting the Civil War. But Robert was steadfast in the face of all resentment and criticism because Robert abhorred slavery. Unlike those supporting the south, he believed in the abolitionist cause and thought John Brown and those fighting with him were heroes. Not surprisingly, groups supporting the union mostly resided in the German Hill Country and mixed throughout Palo Pinto County. In this way, Texans reflected the American society, remaining divided on the issues, particularly the issue of slavery.

Robert was deeply disappointed when Sam Houston was removed from office. The plantation owners in Texas controlled the politics, and they had a huge interest in the outcome of the War because the 182,000 slaves owned by them were valued at 107 million dollars. Robert was appalled when he learned about the large number of slaves that had been brought into Texas. When Robert first settled in Texas, there were fewer than five thousand slaves because Texas had been a part of Mexico, and Mexico did not permit slavery. Some of the settlers, including the Cherokee who were forced out of the east into Texas, brought slaves despite Mexico's ban. However, following the War with Mexico, many more slaves were brought in to labor on large cotton plantations. Men, women, and children were forced to work as field hands on the

plantations, laboring from sunup to sundown, all for the benefit of large plantation owners. Their living conditions were deplorable. Along with having their families sold off and taken away, many were freely punished by the overseers.

While killing or maiming a slave was illegal in Texas, whippings as punishment were a common practice. They were also threatened with being sold to sugar, indigo, and rice plantations in coastal areas, working in swamplands. They knew that these slaves suffered terribly from disease and infections, particularly from continuously standing in swamp water. Eventually, their feet became infected and gangrenous. So, even though the conditions in Palo Pinto were deplorable, no slave wanted to be sold to the rice and indigo plantations. When the slaves were not needed to work on their plantation, they were rented out to settlers for occasional work, representing a substantial income to their owner. Robert was stunned when he learned that the great Thomas Jefferson made most of his income renting slaves out to adjoining farms and homesteads.

Sadly, slavery was an integral part of the Southern economy and was problematic to the United States Government from the framing of the Constitution. Obviously, the cause of slavery was important to the politically powerful within Texas. Soon after the Texas secession, militia groups began seizing federal military installations. This really benefited the Confederacy because they captured forts and the San Antonio arsenal, gaining weapons and military gear desperately needed by the south. However, Texas had a tough time during the Civil War because it was also fighting off encroaching Native Americans without the help of the United States military. Also, their supply lines were cut once the Union forces gained control of the Mississippi River. Surprisingly, however, Texans continued their trade with Mexico, bringing their cotton to the border while circumventing the Union's naval blockade.

Through Mexico, Texas plantation owners continued to trade their cotton, sugar, rice, and indigo with Europe. The state's major contribution to the Confederacy was supplying food, clothing, and weapons and supporting the cause by trading in cotton. The growth of the slave system in Texas ended with the defeat of the Confederacy. However, even after the defeat of the South, slaves continued working on the plantations until the occupying forces of the Federal Government entered Texas and informed the slaves that they were free. Following the war, Texans turned to cattle to promote their individual economies.

## Chapter 9

Several years following the war, the Transcontinental Railroad was finished. It became possible to herd cattle from Texas to Kansas to be shipped north. Thus, the cattle industry became a huge boom to the failing Texas economy. As the cattle industry grew, so did the tourist industry in Palo Pinto. This was because of a discovery by a man named Lynch, who dug a well and found mineral water that he believed contained healing properties. Soon travelers from all around the country began visiting the area to bathe, drink and otherwise utilize the healing waters. Eventually, that place became known as Mineral Wells, Texas.

Although he was grazing his own cattle, Robert began to join cattle drives to make extra money and, in doing so, was able to take his own cattle to market along with those he herded. At that time, these cattle were being driven to stockyards in Kansas. After Texas joined the Union, Texas cattle were driven northward over the Shawnee trail and ultimately distributed to Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, and Ohio. Early on, Robert joined some other ranchers and helped herd one thousand head of cattle from Texas to Ohio. He continued working as a drover until both the Missouri and Kansas Legislatures began to quarantine Texas cattle, preventing them from coming into their area due to an unknown affliction they carried called cattle sickness.

During this time, Robert focused on developing his ranch and finally began to do a little farming. Then, following the Civil War, cattle driving started up again, and Joseph McCoy, an area rancher, wanted to begin driving cattle from Texas to Abilene, Kansas, and asked Robert to be his first drover because of his capabilities and experience. Abilene, Kansas, was near the center of the uninhabited Great Plains. McCoy believed it was a perfect spot to support large groups of Texas cattle because of its vast swaths of grass available for grazing. As a result, the cattle could fatten up as they waited for transport to the cities that demanded the beef. The Kansas Pacific Railroad executives provided facilities to ship the cattle, which ended up in the Chicago, Illinois, and Kansas City, Missouri stockyards.

During each trip, Robert drove as many as three thousand head of cattle and employed at least eleven people. Most of the people he worked with were Irish cowboys who ranged from ages twelve to eighteen years old, and the rest were a diverse group composed of blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans. They all did this as seasonal work. Robert was the drover, and as the drover, he was the boss or the ramrod. They traveled with a chuck wagon, which was equipped for cooking and filled with food. They created campsites where the cattle were driven. They drove the cattle all day long and then would stop to rest and eat, and then they would start up again in the morning, doing the same thing day after day until they reached their destination. Robert positioned his workers very precisely to guide the cattle.

Two of them were placed in the front, two at the sides and two at the very back, called the drag position. The drag position was the worst because it was dusty and filled with unpleasant smells and sights. The cowboys filling this position were often the greenhorns or newcomers. As the drover, sometimes Robert assigned cowboys to the rear because they got in trouble for one reason or another. The rest filled positions in between as needed. His group drove the cattle

from ten to fifteen miles a day, allowing them to graze along the way. It took about six weeks to go from Texas all the way to Abilene, Kansas. The work was tedious and boring and followed the same pattern day after day. They periodically faced violent weather like tornadoes that they could see coming from miles away. However, they could not get out of the way and could only prepare to face the consequences. Occasionally, the cattle stampeded because of the accidental firing of a weapon or a lightning strike. When that happened, it was impossible to stop them and very difficult to keep up. Sometimes they faced hazardous river crossings because the best places were amid Native American territories.

They were always concerned about potential attacks by hostile Natives. Despite the dangers and difficulties, Robert continued as a drover with McCoy's group until 1873, when McCoy ended his drives. Eventually, a prominent ranching entrepreneur named Oliver Loving, who settled in Palo Pinto, solicited Robert's experience and expertise to help create his own drive. Robert met with Loving at his ranch to discuss the terms of the drive. Loving invited Robert to come along as a paid participant on a short cattle drive to Ft. Worth so that they could further discuss Loving's ideas. So, Robert agreed to come along, joining Loving and a spindly kid named Gerald, who, to Robert's surprise, expertly handled the cattle and was a master rider and roper, despite his small size.

## Chapter 10

At the end of the day, they stopped to camp. He and Loving were sitting at the campfire discussing business when Gerald approached them while pulling off the oversized cowboy hat. As the hat came off, out tumbled a waist-long mane of curly, bright reddish-orange hair that cascaded down the back. Gerald, Robert discovered, was actually short for Geraldine, the name of Loving's oldest daughter. She stood 5'2" and was tough as nails. Robert looked forward to

seeing her from then on, always hoping she would participate in the drives Loving and Robert went on together. Eventually, the two fell in love, and with her father's blessing, Geraldine became Robert's partner, managing the Brennan cattle and the ranch with equivalent skills and ability. They had two sons, Michael and John. Eventually, the cattle drives ended because the railroad became available to ship the cattle directly from Texas, and barbed wire prevented long cattle drives.

Consequently, Robert's family moved further into cattle breeding and farming. Robert and Geraldine Brennen did very well in Texas, maintaining the original land grant he had applied for and received when he immigrated to the United States. He gave his two sons, Michael and John, each a large tract of his land and helped them build their own farmhouses, including corrals and stables necessary for their livestock. Of course, while Robert Brennen was a supporter of the Union during and after the Civil War, his ranch was in the middle of many others who supported the Confederacy. This created a problem with some of his neighbors. On January 15th, 1882, Robert Brennen, age fifty-two, was ambushed and killed by unknown assailants. His family believed that this was a direct result of Robert's commitment to the Union during the Civil War. However, despite the loss of Robert, his descendants remained committed to the land he acquired. Some also proved to be as adventurous as Robert, as demonstrated by his grandson Donald Brennen who eventually migrated to the Colorado border. Robert's adventurous legacy extended across the continent of Europe, the Atlantic Ocean to the port of New Orleans, and finally, across the continental United States, through to the Colorado border.

Meanwhile, Friedrich and Homer became increasingly convicted that they should not participate in anything requiring the work of slaves or contributing to the creation of alcohol. They legally divided their lands because they disagreed with their brother, Conrad, about these

basic farming activities and the accompanying compromises, especially slave-owning. Homer and Friedrich refused to have anything more to do with grapes and moved away from grape growing altogether, while Conrad continued with grape farming and harvesting. Homer and Friedrich switched their focus to raising cattle and began growing their own cattle feed. When they found out that new stockyards were being built in Kansas City and Chicago, they increased their plantings and sold their yield each season. As he matured, Friedrich became ardently committed to the antislavery movement, so much so that his farm became a haven for those promoting the abolitionist cause. Homer did not go that far with his antislavery sentiments but remained committed to his Wesleyan ideals.

However, Conrad increased his proslavery attitudes, depending more and more on his slave-intensive grape growing. Therefore, the brothers became diametrically opposed to one another philosophically, reflecting the larger schism occurring inside Christian churches in the United States over the issue of slavery. So, when the Methodists met at their annual conference to determine their formal position regarding the issue of slavery that was creating a great division in the United States, their participants were equally divided. They spoke against one another and, in the end, formalized their opposition, creating a schism that permanently divided the Methodist Church into those Methodists opposing the owning of human beings and those Methodists who remained proslavery. These proslavery members began calling themselves Southern Methodists, and Conrad Gertner, along with his family, joined this group, breaking from the Methodists who remained committed to Wesley's ideals without compromise.

## Chapter 11

The divisions festered between the brothers, reflecting the divisions within the country, and when war broke out between the states, the rift between the family was finalized. During this time, however, Friedrich became much more than a committed Methodist. He became an antislavery activist. Friedrich remained totally committed to the abolitionist ideals, becoming an active participant, fighting slavery by any means possible. He went so far as to help John Brown and his followers from Kansas by providing shelter to some of their members who raided area farms and helped slaves escape from Missouri into Kansas. Friedrich found out that some farmers created spaces within their own homes or outbuildings to hide runaway slaves until it was possible for them to move on across the Missouri River into the Kansas territory, where the "Free-Soilers" guided them into Canada.

Eventually, Friedrich designed and built his farm home, and when he did, he created partitions to hide runaways. He did this by building extra walls with spaces for people to hide in between. Over time, his farm became a permanent station along the Underground Railroad. As a known stop for escaped slaves, his land was perfectly placed for resting before the eventual crossing of the Missouri River into Kansas. The runaways were picked up from his farm and taken to the Kansas border by wagon. Friedrich was surprised to discover that his friend, Henry Graham, who owned the vineyard next to Conrad, hauled the runaways in his wagon to the Kansas border. He was under the impression that all the vineyard owners were proslavery but happy to see he was wrong. Although Friedrich wanted to marry, he avoided becoming involved with the area's women because of his commitment to the Abolitionist Movement, even though several eligible young ladies belonged to his little Methodist church.

However, things changed for him when he traveled to St. Louis to meet with other participants in the Underground Railroad. There Friedrich met a young woman from St. Louis who was like-minded. He was gathered with others in a meeting house to listen to an important Abolitionist leader, speaker, and author when his eyes fell on a short little woman with a small white cloth bonnet tied under her chin. When she saw him looking, she quickly turned away, blushing as she did. She wore a dark gray dress with a high neck and long sleeves. Then, when they introduced Miss Emma, the speaker, the little woman stood and walked to the lectern to Friedrich's astonishment. On the outside, Miss Emma appeared meek and mild, but when she opened her mouth and spoke to the group, she became a powerful orator promoting the abolitionist cause through fiery exultations. By the time she finished speaking, there was no doubt that slavery was evil, and it was the God-given duty of every Christian to disrupt and destroy the institution by every possible means.

Friedrich was smitten, and at the end of the meeting, approached her and asked if he could see her the next day. With her father's permission, she agreed. Thus, Friedrich began courting Emma, and within a few months, they were married. By this time, Friedrich was twenty-eight years old, and Emma was twenty-seven. Within a year, they had a baby boy that they named Jacob. Together Friedrich and Emma helped many men, women, and children escape the bonds of slavery. Runaways would rest by day in their space behind the wall and travel by night. Friedrich's young son, Jacob, never knew that his parents helped runaways. Later in his life, Jacob told his son Gregory that people often entered the farmhouse before the sun came up, but they disappeared. He knew they came in because he heard footsteps go up the wooden stairs at the back of the house, and he also heard quiet talking from different voices that did not belong to his mother or father.

One morning, when he got older, he decided to find out what was happening in his house in the early morning hours that no one ever talked about. One of these early mornings, he awoke to the voices and the quiet footsteps, and he crept out into the hallway and followed the sounds up into the attic room. He watched as an old walnut wardrobe was moved to the side, exposing a narrow open doorway, and three Negroes entered the space. His mother gave them a basket that he assumed contained food and drink because she always used it to carry food to the church. Jacob's family never discussed this in the open, not even years after the South lost the Civil War and the slaves were freed.

## Chapter 12

Friedrich and Emma were risking everything by helping runaways because, by 1850, the Fugitive Slave Law was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President to pacify Southern slave owners. United States citizens were required by Federal Law to report runaways and return these slaves to their owners. Slaves were considered part of the property and wealth of farm and plantation owners, and this so-called property represented a significant monetary loss to those who were the "owners." Missouri slave owners did not have large numbers of slaves, but those they owned were valuable, and abolitionists were their enemies. That is because abolitionists encouraged slaves to run away and continued to help them despite the Fugitive Slave Law. However, when some of the earlier participators realized that they could lose their farm for assisting runaways, many became too afraid to continue.

They realized that this new law could destroy them financially if they were discovered. Nevertheless, Friedrich and Emma decided to continue engaging in abolitionism despite the risks. Their farmhouse was ideally situated as a stop before moving runaways into Kansas, where the radical abolitionist John Brown and other antislavery activists had settled. Following the

passage of the Kansas-Nebraska act, John Brown and his followers moved to Kansas to prevent it from becoming a slave state. As a so-called "Free-Soiler," John Brown took the lead, fighting slavery in every way possible. This struggle between those who wanted slavery and those opposed to it was a massive problem from the framing of the Constitution. It emerged from an attempt to maintain a balance of power between the northern and southern states. However, maintaining this power balance was impossible and eventually led to the Civil War. Many of the abolitionists worked with John Brown. They brought the runaway slaves in from Missouri to Lawrence, Kansas, using the Gertner home as the first station and the only station left in Missouri on the way to Lawrence, Kansas.

Runaways were welcomed and hidden. The Gertner's provided rest, food, and instructions for the next phase of their journey. Runaway slaves were taken by wagon from the Gertner station to the Missouri River. They crossed into Lawrence, Kansas, traveled up to Topeka, then to Iowa, and, finally, Canada. The Gertner station lasted from 1853 when Friedrich completed his house, all the way through to the end of the Civil War. By 1864 Friedrich's station was much less in demand because runaway slaves began to congregate in Missouri without fear from the government. By this time, Missouri was home to over a hundred thousand slaves due to increased labor-intensive farming methods. These slaves had already asserted their freedom, and the Union military supported their claim. Therefore, Friedrich's Station was no longer necessary as the runaways simply traveled to the Union troops quartering in the area and began to work for them.

Finally, with Lee's surrender to Grant at the Appomattox Courthouse, the War ended, and so did slavery, but the Methodist Church Schism and the Gertner family division remained unhealed. Friedrich gave his son Jacob a significant amount of land from his original holdings in

the lush Missouri River Valley when he came of age. Jacob had two sons named Fritz and Gregory, who he provided with land from his own holdings and those of his father when he died. Fritz was drafted into WWI and returned unable to fulfill his responsibilities, so Gregory continued to care for Fritz's property as he had when he was away at war with Germany. Ironically, Gregory's son named James also participated in a war against Germany and amazingly met and married Robert's descendant, but that is another story for another time.

Following the Civil War and the freedom of all the slaves in Missouri, alcohol production continued to create problems for families. Stone Hill Winery was built near Conrad's vineyard and became one of the largest wineries in the United States. Its wines were prized around the world and won many awards. By the 1880s, when the Temperance Movement was on the rise, Conrad Gertner's vineyards provided many bushels of grapes to produce Stone Hill wine. However, there was widespread alcohol abuse in the area, particularly in St Louis, considered the Gateway to the West. This abuse destroyed families, so preachers, especially Methodist preachers, were very concerned and trying desperately to resolve the issue.

They began to preach against the growing of grapes because the grapes grown in the area were used to make wine. Moreover, because the vineyards were once tended by slaves, they were thought to carry a curse that impacted the community. They pointed to drunkenness, which led to gambling, fighting, and general disorder in their communities. Eventually, radical Prohibitionists and members of the Temperance Movement came through the Missouri valley vineyards, pulling up all the vines. Not only were Conrad's vineyards destroyed, but so was all the wine in the Stone Hill winery. While Friedrich and Homer felt sorry for Conrad's choices, they believed he reaped the destruction he sowed. Although they offered him help, he refused everything they offered, and the family division continued.

Of course, Prohibition failed, but the winemaking that once thrived there never returned, primarily due to destroying the irreplaceable grapevines transported from Germany. Also, Stone Hill never recovered from the loss of its inventory, and the area shifted to planting other cash crops. Friedrich passed away before Prohibition failed in the United States. However, the breach between the Gertner brothers was passed on through their offspring. The breach between their families was tragic because their journey began with devotion to one another as they left Germany and made a new life for themselves and their descendants.

Both Robert and Friedrich were adventurous, brave, resilient, and capable of facing whatever came their way. They both came from ancestors who, having very little, accomplished great things because they were also brave and adventurous. But neither was aware how much more connected they were or would be. Amazingly, several generations later, Robert's descendant Christine met and married Friedrich's descendant, James. Neither imagined that these two young people would unite their families within decades following their crossing from Europe to the United States. But then, neither realized how closely they were connected through ancestry long before they ever met.