

Roots, Routes and Recipes

The Family Tree – Contextualising Design

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This study is not about one network; it is about layers of different types of network (Law & Hassard, 1999; The Generations Network (TGN), 2008), overlapping and like filters or gels, each shedding a different light of understanding on the people, places and possessions.

The starting place is a funeral. A daughter sorting out her mother's estate and arranging for her ashes to be buried in a family plot in Spring Grove Cemetery Cincinnati, Ohio, under an obelisk engraved with "Marmet". Who were the Marmets? Amongst her papers was a diagram of the Sallie Marmet plot (Spring Grove, 2006), showing who rested there, so it was decided to draw up a blank family tree based on the information, to allow mourners to share information and memories. (Drake, 1999; Hey, 2002; Waddell, 2004)

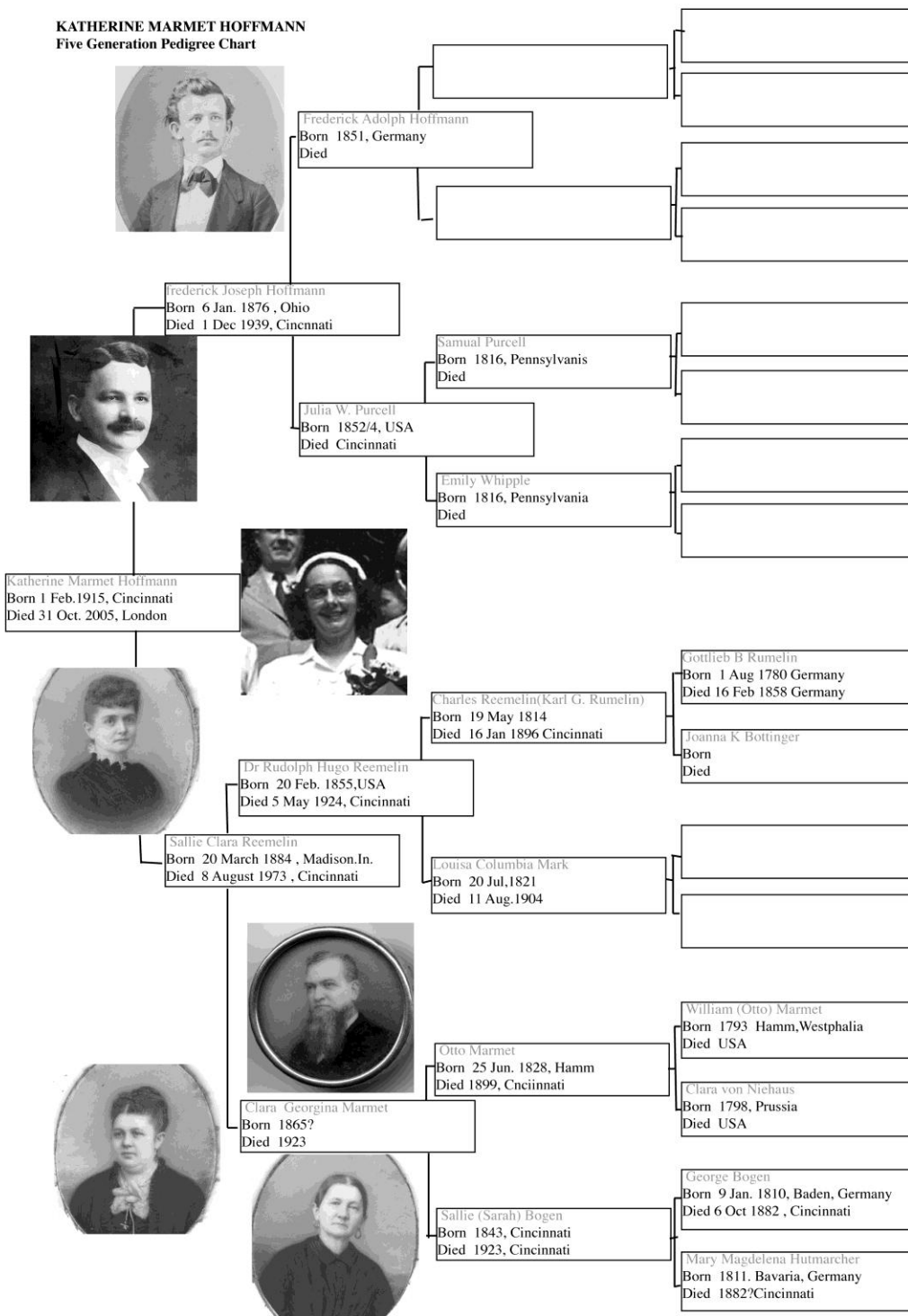
A family tree is a network and one with specific links and actors. The last decade has seen a growth of interest in genealogy, with television programmes like the BBC's *Who Do You Think You Are?* (BBC, 2008; Waddell, 2004) and specialist websites such as *Ancestry* (TGN, 2008) are making genealogical information easily accessible. Genealogy in America has been popular for a longer period. Its television debut was probably *Roots*, based on the research of Alex Haley (Haley, 1977) that encouraged descendants of slaves to trace their ancestors back to Africa. The Mormons have been active in collecting data and in the process they have made parish records accessible for everyone. (Smith, 1820)

So within genealogy there are very visible networks, often with structured formats and database software, (TGN, 2008) which can be used by an individual to draw up their own tree – in this case that of Katherine Marmet Hoffmann. (Thomas/Hoffmann, 2008) Katherine's mother, Sallie Reemelin and sister had started research and left records with the Cincinnati Historical Society (Cincinnati, 1973; J. Strawbridge, personal communication November 20, 1973). The network of the family tree overlaps with the local history of city and its development.

Families leave their descendants records and designed objects they value and dispose of others. (L. Bailey, personal communication, August 7, 2008; J. Strawbridge, personal communication November 20, 1973) The networks of ancestry overlap with design and consumption histories and in particular with the theories of gift exchange (Mauss, 1954) and rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1960).

Probate sales and wills (Styles, 2007), along with registrations of birth, death and marriage and the census, are a vital source of information for the historian. The *Ancestry* website (TGN, 2008) is an accessible network of family trees and official documentation of this kind. Within a few months, a miniature portrait collector in New Zealand, researching a purchase, made inquiries through the *Ancestry* network (American, 2008).

KATHERINE MARMET HOFFMANN
Five Generation Pedigree Chart

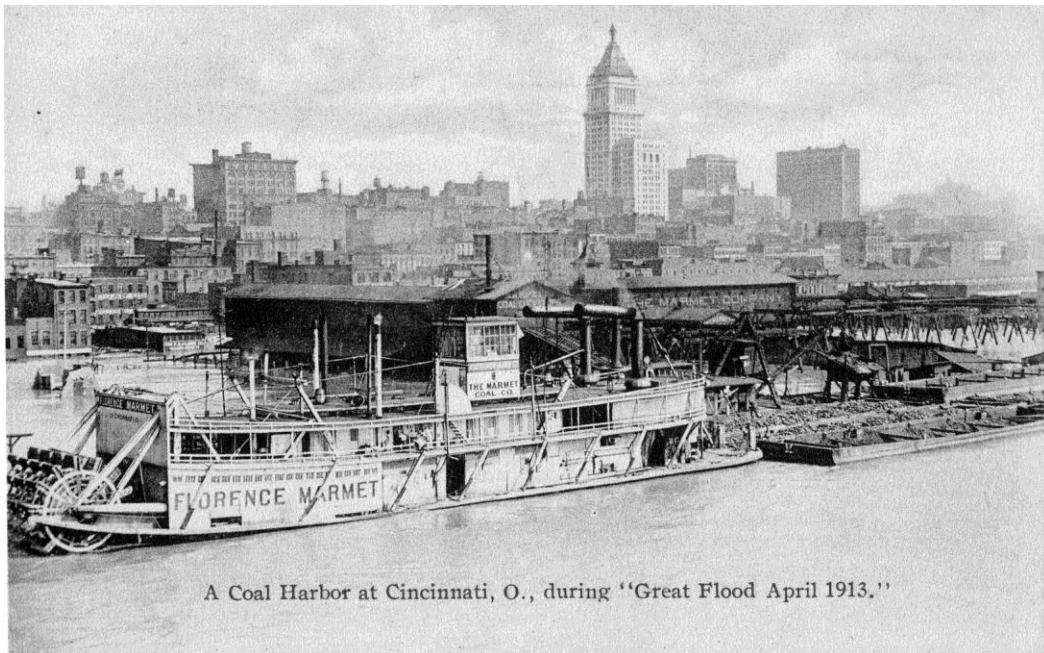


Pedigree Family Tree for Katherine Marmet Hoffmann – Thomas/Hoffman Collection (American, 2008)

He had bought a set of painted ivories, originally sold as photographs on *E-Bay*, of what seemed to be of Katherine's great-grandmother Sallie Marmet and her family. The users of the Internet form another network that puts a different value on the actors and objects. For Don the collector, the Internet has encouraged him to buy named images, which he can research on line. (D. Shelton, personal communication, August 20, 2008) So, the family records are linked to other specialist histories and to networks of exchanges of objects and information over the Internet.

If you search for Sallie Marmet, she is not only one of Katherine's great-grandmothers, a painted face on ivory produced in Dresden (American, 2008), but she is also a paddle steamer on the Ohio River. (Steamboats, 2008) Using a search engine, you will learn how the Marmets made enough money to commission an obelisk. They owned and ran a family business, shipping coal up and down the Ohio River. The genealogical network overlaps with the worlds of the steam enthusiast (Steamboats, 2008) and ephemera collector (Greetings, 2008) on the Internet.

Otto Marmet (Greve, 1904), Sallie's husband, trained as a lawyer in Hamm, Westphalia, but immigrated from Sedenhorst to the US in 1849, with his father William (Ancestry, 2006; Hans-Dieter Zagefka, personal communication March 19, 2008). Marmet is an unusual name in Germany and maybe French in origin. The same name has been traced back to Huguenots who fled France to Switzerland, although William Marmet and family was Catholic. (G. John Marmet, personal communication December 6, 2006) In 1848, a major revolution swept across Europe, with the aim, in Germany of uniting all the principalities under one democratic state, but the revolution failed. A wave of immigration followed – the Forty-eighters. (Mann, 1996; Tolzmann, 2005) The Marmets left their professional practices and university education to find a new life in the US.



A Coal Harbor at Cincinnati, O., during "Great Flood April 1913."

Marmet Coal Company and Cincinnati Skyline 1913 (From the Collection of The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.)

William Marmet was fifty-one and a doctor but may have also been a chemist with a knowledge of brewing. (C. Hoffmann, personal communication, May 14, 1945) His sons turned to trade, opening up retail and distribution businesses selling produce, hardware and jewellery. Otto and his brother Florence set up a distribution business selling coal. Florence Marmet, patented elevators and conveyors (Women, 2008) for the extracting coal in Raymond City, where they owned mineral rights (Edwards, 2008). Otto Marmet appears more active with managing the shipping business. (Greetings, 2008; Greve, 1904; Ancestry, 1890) There were at least three boats – Sallie, Otto (launched 1897) and Florence – in design they were typical of the vessels of the day shipping goods along the Ohio and down the Mississippi. (Dayton, 1925; Greetings, 2008; Ohio, 2008; Steamboats; 2008; Votolato, 2007) Today Marmet, is now a town near Charleston, West Virginia and a set of locks, (Adkins, 1997) both named after the business activities of the Marmet family.

Sallie Marmet, was born Sarah Bogen and her family were also emigrants from Germany but some twenty-three years earlier. Her father George Bogen emigrated from the Rhine valley near Bad Durkheim. This part of western Germany was annexed by Napoleon in 1797 and suffered economic and political hardship. Sallie's grandfather Jacob Bogen immigrated in 1825 for economic reasons and sent for his family a year later. *Der Bogen Baum* (Bogen, 1969), a published genealogical study, tells us of their journey by horse and cart and shipping records show they arrive on the sailing vessel Howard (Palmer, 2008) and then onwards to Ohio on foot.

George and his brother George Peter set themselves up as butchers and pork packers. They brought their agricultural knowledge from the German Rhineland. In the 1820's Cincinnati was a frontier town that grew to be called "Porkopolis". *Mechanisation Takes Command* (Giedion, 1948) gives a vivid description of the growth of the city and the pork packing industries. Pigs were driven to the city outskirts, fattened on surplus corn that could not easily be sent east overland. The animals were then slaughtered and disassembled and processed into hams and sausages, ready to be shipped south and the east by paddle steamer. It was a seasonal trade and the Bogen brothers were also involved in truck framing and wine growing north of the City (WB's, 2007). Water routes were key to both businesses. (Tindall, 2008)

By the 1870's, the rail system was having an effect on the way food was produced and distributed. (Giedion, 1948; Tindall, 1988) Chicago started to overshadow Cincinnati as a meatpacking centre. (Condit, 1977). There was also a recession in 1873 caused by a crisis in rail stocks (The History, 2008) and George's family business went into liquidation. He had retired was living with Sallie and Otto Marmet, in their home on Dayton Street, a fashionable address for brewers, meat packers and boat builders. (City, 2007; Tolzmann, 2005) The network overlaying the tree is one of business connections, on the grid plan of the city with its hinterland providing raw materials.

Otto and Sallie Marmet had two daughters, Clara and Lena but no sons to inherit the coal business. So Sallie took over in 1899 and moved into suite at the Alms Hotel (Greve, 1904). Her daughter Lena had married twice. Both she and her husbands seem to have been active in the coal business. According to family history, Lena divorced her first husband Austin Morris Smith, after both had affairs and she married her lover a young stable boy, William Wolfe, who became a salesman in the business. The divorce splits the Otto branch of the family from the Catholic Church. (P. Cass, personal communication, June 20, 2008) Florence rests not at Spring Grove but in the Catholic cemetery under a figure holding a cross (H. Zagefka, personal communication March 19, 2008).

Katherine's Great Aunt Lena became somewhat of a matriarch, having no children, she insured that the wealth generated by the business, was passed on to her nieces and nephew favouring the female line; buying clothes, catering for family dinners at the Alms Hotel, and taking her nieces, nephew and their children in turn, on extensive tours abroad.

Clara Marmet married a doctor, Rudolph Reemelin (Heritage, 1894). He was from a German family. His father Charles Reemelin emigrated as Carl Gustav Rümelin in 1830 from Heilbronn, near Stuttgart. The Reemelin tree has been extensively researched (Rümelin, 2006) and can be accessed on the Internet, but most of the details were found in Katherine's papers along with an edited biography of Charles Reemelin. It traces the male line back to 1440 to Ebingen, Württemberg. The tree was researched by Lutheran minister and shows a long line of civil servants, innkeepers, prominent Lutheran ministers and University staff at Tübingen.

In May 1832 thousands of craftsmen, officials, farmers and young intellectuals gathered at Castle at Hambach to listen to speeches on liberty and reform of in Germany. This resulted in arrests and censorship. In the following few years there was an increase in immigration my young men to avoid military service and look for the freedoms in America. They became known as the Thirtysers. (Fulbrook, 1995; Mann, 1996; Tolzmann, 2005) Carl was one of them and left with his widowed father's blessing and his mother's chest of bridal linens.

He, too, brought mercantile and agricultural skills but in addition a tradition of civic duty. He was certainly a Democrat, where as Otto Marmet is reported to be Republican (Greve, 1904). Charles Reemelin, served as a state senator and worked in civic administration. He encouraged emigration, providing work in his vineyards and sent his son back to Württemberg to study medicine (Cincinnati, 1973). He wrote on politics, wine growing (Reemelin, 1860) and an autobiography. (Ohio, 2007; R. Reemelin, personal communication December 25, 2007) The family tree has illuminated a pattern of immigration with people bring skills and knowledge from their home region and settling with like minded individuals in a new American city.

Genealogy in the Europe and America tends follow the male line and the further one goes back the harder it is to trace wives and daughters as they change their name on marriage. This tree indicates how important family names were and they were often retained as middle names. The vital role of women like Lena could be overlooked (Lucey, 2001) because she had no children of her own, but the overlaying networks of business and consumption highlight, her key role as an actor in production and consumption networks.

Dr. Rudolph Reemelin, (Heritage, 1894) and Clara Marmet are pictured here in about 1910, with their two daughters Sallie and Eleanor and granddaughters - but also with Lena and Sallie Marmet seated. Otto Reemelin, their son (the photographer?), became General Manager of the coal company. (Ancestry, July 4, 2008) Eleanor, seated on the ground, oral history records (P. Cass, personal communication, June 18, 2008) did not approve the materialism of her family and opted to train as a teacher and work with socially deprived children after her marriage. Her husband Clarence Albertson, also a teacher, joined the coal company as an accountant in the depression of the 1930's.



Dr. Rudolph Reemelin and Family c1910 – Thomas/Battle Collection

Many of their possessions that have been passed on to Katherine belonged to her parents. Sallie Reemelin and Frederick Joseph Hoffmann, top left, married in 1906 and many of their possessions typify design and lifestyles at the turn of the century.

The Hoffmann family are harder to trace because the name is a common one. Frederick's, father, Frederick Adolph Hoffman was a pianist. Family history says he came from a long line of Austrian Court musicians (F. Schaber, personal communication, January 28, 2007) and was recruited in Germany specifically to teach music in the Cincinnati. He married Julia Whipple Purcell and it is through his wife that there is a colonial heritage, linking the family to the Declaration of Independence, through the family name of Whipple. (C. Hoffmann, personal communication May 14, 1943)

Frederick Joseph started his career as a child prodigy, following his father he took up teaching. Both travelled back to Vienna to study, Frederick taking a sabbatical year from the College of Music in the 1920's (College, 2007). His students appreciated him and they gave him a Tiffany desk set in American Indian pattern (c.1909) (Carnegie, 2006) an American product in fashionable taste.

It is not known whether he appreciated decorative design but oral history indicates he certainly had a fascination with new technology; the family had an early cats whisker radio and brownie cameras. He bought the first car in the street, a Ford, but he was forced to give it up, the starting handle tended to fly back and might injure his hands (M. Craft, personal communication April 21, 2007) Katherine was left his Hamilton pocket watch, marketed as the Railway Watch because of its accuracy. In 1891 there was a major rail crash in Ohio and the watch was introduced to stop a similar accident occurring. (Renaissance, 2008) Frederick's love of innovation places him and his possessions in a design and technology network.

The coal business, in the age of steam had a role in supplying the railroad, as well as the steam ship. The railways allowed the city to be linked quickly to the markets on the east coast and later west coast. (Condit, 1977). The railway companies invested in ports and shipping lines, so it became much easier for the family to travel. Research on the diaspora and immigration (Braziel, J. E. & Mannur A., 2003; Gabaccia, R., 2006) patterns indicate that people went to and fro between the old and the new. So, during the heat of the continental summer, Sallie and Lena travelled as far as Egypt, India and Ceylon. Lena and her husband went on a world trip including Japan in 1909. They used railways and moved up from packet ships to the new trans-Atlantic liners like the Amerika, of Hamburg-American Line, offering them every luxury. (Bason, 1955; Horton White, 1938; Orthfors, 2007; Smith, 1947)

The year before her wedding, it was Sallie's turn to travel and she left a small album of her trip on the Cedric (White Star Line built at Harland and Wolff in 1903) (Smith, 1947) captured on a box brownie. Her world at echoes the Gibson (Pitz, 1969) illustrations of era, the writings of Henry James (James, 1983; Moore, 1974) and offers a case study for Veblen's (1899) analysis conspicuous consumption and leisure. She went to England, then Paris stopping long enough to be fitted for a trousseau gown, that has been passed down to her granddaughters. It is labelled Drecoll - Wein and Paris. Drecoll was started in Vienna in 1902 by Baron Christoff von Drecoll to serve the Austrian Court. In 1905 he opened a Paris showroom managed by a Belgium couple Monsieur and Madame Besancon de Wagner. (Designer, 2008; Dr Miles Lambert, Personnel Communication, July 7, 2008; Steele, 1988; Thieme, 1993) Did they choose the firm because of the Viennese connections? She traveled onto Rome, Florence, Venice, Milan, then the Italian Lakes and up through Switzerland, before leaving on the Kaiser Wilhelm de Grosse. It was a cultural trip.

She may have traveled on German ships but many of her possessions were American or reflect a tourist's gaze. The family spoke German at home and taught their children the language until the out break of the First World War. Katherine born in 1915 - knew only English. They may have draft dodged the Prussian army but these families volunteered in the Civil War and were drafted in World War One to fight for their new country.

Many of the things that they have left can be linked to events marked on the tree (Mauss, 1950). Even the souvenirs mark rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1960). In 1906 the wedding gifts included; a damask tablecloth and napkins in Viennese Art Nouveau style; cut crystal then at the height of fashionable taste (Blaszczyk, 2000) and silver such as tea and coffee services. Silver was considered a valuable and appropriate gift in the nineteenth century for all sorts of family occasions. (Rainwater, 1975, Thomas, 1984) Otto's brother, Fritz Marmet worked as a jewellery retailer and it maybe that his firm supplied the family (Ancestry, 1870).



Otto Marmet Family Napkin Rings – Thomas/Battle Collection

The oldest silver items Katherine inherited seem to be silver napkin rings bought from a local Cincinnati silversmith, Duhme & Co, and date from the 1860's (Online, 2008; Rainwater, 1975). All of the silver items are of American manufacture, functional and most relate to dining and entertaining.

Food preferences and recipes, like horticultural skills, seem to have been passed from generation to generation and across the Atlantic divide. German knowledge was valued. When Katherine Hoffmann married she was given two books by her mother- one *Ideal Marriage Its Physiology and Technique* – a sex manual written by a doctor (Van de Velde, 1930) and translated from German and the other German American classic book- *The Joy of Cooking* by Rombauer Becker (Becker, 1963), a native of Cincinnati.

Katherine's infancy is recorded in a baby book. Her first steps noted "Katherine turned from couch and walked two steps to Morris chair" (S. Hoffmann, personal communication January 16, 1916). Like the Tiffany desk set, they owned examples of the designer products of their era. On her first Christmas Eve in 1915, she was given some toys and silver, knife, fork and spoon set (Towle patent 1912); she could then join the family for a traditional meal, of ham and German potato salad, flavored with white wine vinegar and bacon.

In conclusion, it is clear that genealogical process provides a valuable framework because it is grounded in fixed dates and individuals. It allows us to look at wider social groups (Hofstede, 2001) and to notions of culture, class and caste, as over several generations and two continents, this family seem to have remained part of a professional and mercantile class.

Studies in social anthropology (Lewis, 1976) show that each culture chooses different ways of recording and valuing ancestry, the family tree is a social construct, and for example, in other cultures it is the maternal line that is important. In this family, women actors have been important and efforts have been to record their contributions.

Genealogy seems to give a much wider vision than biography; it seems to inform us about the nature and the nurture of individuals. We have learnt about Katherine's background but not what she did in her life - that is another story. Interesting findings may result if a similar process was used to research designers rather than consumers.

The 'roots' are mainly in Germany but that past informs the growth of nineteenth century America and its transport 'routes' and industrial development. The 'recipes' are the ways knowledge and skills were transferred through the family and education. These networks help us understand their consumption patterns and the design of the possessions that they have left - memorials, watches, gowns and napkin rings, are all better understood, through interconnected layers, across generations, oceans and the internet.

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