

OUR VON PRESSENTIN ANCESTORS IN THE UNITED STATES

Bernhard Friedrich's Five Sons

Bernhard Friedrich's five sons who were all born in Hölkewiese, Pomerania account for all the present von Pressentin descendants in the United States. They are:

1. **Kurt Gottlieb Wilhelm**, b. February 19, 1848. He died in Kalispell, Montana on November 1, 1917 at age 69.
2. **Karl Julius Otto**, b. July 5, 1849. He died of influenza on March 7, 1924 in Sedro-Woolley, Washington, almost 75 years old.
3. **Bernhard Emil Max**, b. February 11, 1856. He died in Spokane, Washington on June 22, 1931, at age 75.
4. **Adalbert Paul Friedrich**, b. June 13, 1858. He died of stomach cancer in Seattle, Washington on November 15, 1922, at age 64.
5. **Otto Wilhelm Rudolph**, b. September 26, 1862. He died in Bellingham on July 18, 1945, at age 82.

Following are brief biographies of each son, taken largely from the *von Pressentin Family History Books I and III* plus contributions from descendants of each of Bernhard Friedrich's five sons.

Kurt Gottlieb Wilhelm von Pressentin

Kurt Gottlieb Wilhelm was born at Höltekewiese on February 19, 1848, attended the *Gymnasium* at Neu-Stettin until fall term 1865. In the fall of 1869, in order to fulfill his service obligation, he joined the [*Leibkompagnie*: colonel's own, first company in a regiment] of the 1st Guard Regiment of Infantry in Potsdam, a sign of his physical stature, and fought in the war of 1870-71, in which on account of proven courage he was decorated with the Iron Cross. Promoted to non-commissioned officer, he was released from military service in the fall of 1872 and went to Alt-Schöneberg [Berlin], the residence of his parents, with whom he immigrated to North America (Wheeling) in February 1873. [at the age of 25]

In April 1874 he visited his brother Karl in Manistee in the state of Michigan and was then employed as overseer and [*Berechner*: accountant?] in felling and processing of trees in the forests of this state. On January 5, 1888 he was married at Cadillac, Michigan Co., to Sadie Christine Belden, who was born on July 1864, daughter of farmer Sylvanus Belden of Carsonville Sanillac, Michigan Co., and Mary Hausinger. In the summer of 1894 he bought a farm in Kalispell, Montana. After Kurt's death on Nov. 1, 1917, Sadie was remarried to farmer Charly Atteberry on February 9, 1928.



Kurt's grandson, Albert Kurt von Pressentin donated land to the State of Montana for a fishing access site, the "Presentine Bar" near Kalispell, MT.

Born to Kurt and Sadie were:

1. A stillborn daughter, born 1888
2. **Karl Sylvanus, 1895-1928**

Karl Julius Otto von Pressentin

Karl Julius Otto was born at Höltekewiese on July 5, 1849. He attended the *gymnasium* [prep school] at Neustettin until Michaelmas term 1865 and then for a short time the University at Rostock. In the summer of 1868 he went ahead of his relations through Hamburg to Quebec on the ship *Liebig*, and on into the United States of North America, first to Milwaukee and then to Racine in the state of Wisconsin, where he stayed until the fall of 1869. Then he settled in the region of Manistee in the state of Michigan, where on May 15, 1871 he married Wilhelmine Johanna May, who was born in the vicinity of Guben, [Germany] on September 13 [15?], 1852. Her mother died there and her father, Wilhelm May, married for a second time. With her parents, she immigrated in 1867 to America and her family settled in Manistee, Michigan. Karl and Wilhelmine lived in Manistee for the next six years, during which time their first three sons, Bernhard, Paul and Otto were born.

In 1877, leaving his family in Michigan, Karl and his brother Bernhard, headed west via railroad to San Francisco and then by sailing vessel to Seattle. They heard glowing accounts of the back country beyond Seattle and decided to explore the Skagit River valley. They purchased lumber at a mill, built their own boat, and sailed it up the west side of Puget Sound looking for the Skagit River. In May of that year, Karl and Bernhard together with Valentine Adam, Fred Ross and another young man scouted out possible home sites in the vicinity of what is now Birdsvew. Some in the party had lived along rivers and cautioned the others to seek out high ground that would be above the river's flood stage. When they came to the high bank on the south side of the river, one mile above Birdsvew, Karl decided to locate there while Bernhard selected a site on the opposite (north) bank of the river.

The brothers took up pre-emption claims and Karl started building a small log house and cleared up a little land. He had no stove at first but cooked over a fire built in the center of the floor in some sand, and he left the door open for the smoke to escape. Soon there was a neighbor 2 1/2 miles away; Birdsey Minkler, for whom Birdsvew is named.

Soon after arriving in Birdsvew, Karl was distracted from the work of building a house for his family by stories of gold in the mountains. He and five other early settlers, Otto Klement, Jack Rowley, Frank Scott, John Duncan and John Sutter set out to look for gold deposits which were rumored to be on the eastern side of the North Cascade Mountains.

Karl and Wilhelmine had six sons.

Those born in Manistee, Michigan:

1. Bernhard VIII Karl, 1871- 1933

2. Paul II Otto Karl, 1874-1964

3. Otto III Karl, 1876-1965

Those born at Birdsvew, Washington Territory:

4. Franz Eugen, 1879-1952

5. Hans Dietrich Georg, 1882-1952

6. Karl X Christian, 1885-1960

Karl Julius Otto von Pressentin

continued

They hired two Indian guides and started off toward the Okanogan country by canoe, following the Skagit up to the Cascade River, then crossing the mountains at Cascade Pass and ending up at Lake Chelan.

They found no gold in the area but they did become the first white men to cross Cascade Pass since the explorer, Alexander Ross, visited the region in 1811. In a second expedition that summer, they ascended the Skagit River all the way to Ruby Creek in the North Cascades where they did find traces of gold but were driven out by bad weather. [I found the account of this adventure, written by Otto Klement, at the Suzzallo Library, University of Washington.]

Later Karl's two youngest brothers, Albert and Otto, followed him to the Skagit River Valley and settled in and near Birdsvew. After Karl had settled in Birdsvew, Wilhelmine and their three sons followed him there on January 12, 1878.

Karl had many and varied occupations in Birdsvew. He ran rafts of lumber from Minkler's mill at Birdsvew to Sterling, Mount Vernon, Avon and LaConner. He sold cordwood to the steamboats plying up and down the river; scaled timber; made ox yokes and branding irons at home and sold them to loggers. At that time oxen were used to haul out the huge logs and the branding irons were used to brand the logs. For many years the von Pressentins ran the ferry by their farm. In later years Karl von Pressentin served as a Justice of the Peace, filing homesteads, proofs of claims, deeds and trying petty offenders. In 1889 Karl was elected probate judge of Skagit County for two years, which included substantial stays in court sessions at Mount Vernon. Later, he served as a United States Land Commissioner. In 1891 he was elected as one of the three Skagit County Commissioners and held this office from 1891 to 1893. In 1913 he visited his sister Agnes Müseler in Germany. During his last years he spent his time farming. He died of influenza on March 7, 1924.

Bernhard Emil Max von Pressentin

Bernhard Emil Max, born on February 11, 1856 at Höltkewiese, was apprenticed to a gunsmith in Berlin in the spring of 1872, but in February 1873 went to America with his parents and joined his brother Karl in Manistee, Michigan.

In 1877 he bought the above-mentioned farm in Birdsvew on the north side of the Skagit River which, however, he gave over to his brother Adalbert for 1,050 dollars.

In February 1887 he traveled to Sardis, Ohio to visit his parents. Here he got to know his later wife Anna Drollinger (born January 30, 1869 at Wheeling), to whom he was married on May 24, 1887.

Returning to Birdsvew, he bought another farm there, which he enlarged in 1889. On August 28, 1896 however, he disposed of this property and moved to Spokane in the state of Washington.

Bernhard died in Spokane on May 28, 1960. This branch of the family has now died out.

Born to Bernhard and Anna at Birdsvew was:

**1. Guy Roger,
b. 1888**

Adalbert Paul Friedrich von Pressentin

Adalbert Paul Friedrich was the fourth son of Bernhard II and was born at Höltkewiese on June 13, 1858. He also immigrated to America with his parents in February, 1873 and was confirmed that summer in Wheeling. Adalbert was married in Muskegon, Michigan Co., on June 13, 1884 to Christine Köhler (born on July 15, 1864), a daughter of Christian Wilhelm Köhler of Marschalkenzimmern in Württemberg and his wife Barbara Anna née Arnold.

In the fall of 1886, as we have seen above, he bought his brother Bernhard's farm in Birdsvew, WA, which, however, he sold again in 1888 for \$3,200. He then bought a property 5 miles farther west, which he also sold on August 8, 1888 for \$8,500. In 1891 he obtained another property near Hamilton, WA for \$8,600 and later set up a profitable mercantile business in Sauk City, where he was a notary. Later he had a store in Seattle.

He died in Seattle of stomach cancer on November 15, 1922.

Adalbert and Christine had six children.

1. **Agnes Margarete, b. 1885** at Muskegon, Michigan.
2. **Wilhelm Max Emil, b. 1887** at Birdsvew, Washington Territory.
3. **Edward I Karl, b. 1889** at Hamilton in Washington State.
4. **Walter I Hermann, b. 1892** at Sauk City, Washington
5. **Olga Marie b. 1894** at Sauk City, Washington State
6. **Adalbert II (Bert) Friedrich, b. 1902** at Rockport, Washington State

Otto Wilhelm Rudolph von Pressentin

Otto Wilhelm Rudolph, the youngest son of Bernhard Friedrich, was born in Hölkewiese in Pomerania on September 26, 1862. In February, 1873 at the age of 11 he immigrated with his parents to Wheeling, West Virginia and later moved with them to Sardis, Ohio.

In May 1887 he journeyed with his brother Bernhard to Grasmere near Birdsvew, Washington Territory, on the upper Skagit River. There he procured a small farm, which he enlarged in 1889.

On February 4, 1891 he married Laura Alice Kerns, who was born in Sardis on September 5, 1867, daughter of Isaak Kerns and his wife Marie nee Ober.

After Otto had lived in his first house for a long time, he built a more modern one. The nearest town to Birdsvew and Grasmere is Concrete, also on the Skagit River, a prettily situated spot with a large cement factory.

Otto died at the hospital in Bellingham on July 18, 1945. Laura died in the hospital in Mount Vernon on July 10, 1945, a few days before her husband.

Otto and Laura had seven children.

1. **Klara May**,
Born at Birdsvew
January 3, 1892
2. **Georg Herbert**,
1893-1956
3. **Karl XI Friedrich**,
b. 1895
4. **Harry Arthur**,
1897-1945
5. **Nellie Geraldine**,
1898-1958
6. **Otto Leonard**,
b. 1900
7. **Mary Emilie**,
1906-