

Eduard Schrotsberger and Sophie Stölzner

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Early Years at Meerane and Köthel

Karl Eduard (known as Eduard) and Christiane Sophie (known as Sophie) Schrotsberger were natives of the Zwickau district of Saxony in Germany. That district is in the eastern part of the country a short distance north of the Czech Republic.

Eduard was born on 17 February 1846 in the town of Meerane and baptized in the Lutheran church there five days later. The family surname was usually recorded in Meerane records as Schrootsberger, but Eduard and Sophie's family used the Schrotsberger spelling after leaving Meerane. Eduard's parents were Carl Wilhelm Ludwig Schrootsberger, a master weaver, and Johanna Sophia Storch, a native of Schmölln.¹ Carl was part of Meerane's thriving industry in the manufacture of woolen and mixed cloths.

Sophie was born on 18 November 1836 in the village of Köthel, a little more than five kilometers north of Meerane, and was baptized there six days later. Her parents were Gottlieb Stölzner, a manual worker, and Christine Kürschner, a native of Starkenberg.² On 29 October 1860, at the age of 23, Sophie gave birth out of wedlock to a son named Albin Stölzner.³

Sophie was not Eduard's first wife. He had married Marie Luise Ernst of Glauchau on 22 September 1867.⁴ Eduard and Marie soon had a son named Franz Karl Epimachus Schrootsberger, born on 12 December of the same year.⁵

Marie must have died soon thereafter as Eduard and Sophie were together by some time in 1868 and married on 18 April 1869 at Meerane. Each brought a son into the new relationship – Albin Stölzner and Franz Schrootsberger. They were soon joined by a daughter Marie Luise Schrootsberger born at Meerane on 11 May 1869, only a

¹ Records of the Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirch St. Martin Meerane-Waldsachsen. For photographs of the church see [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Stadtkirche_St._Martin_\(Meerane\)?uselang=de](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Stadtkirche_St._Martin_(Meerane)?uselang=de)

² FamilySearch Family Tree on FamilySearch.org

³ Name search index for entries in the church registers of Kothel and nearby villages at https://www.krause-schoenberg.de/Namenskartei_Schoenberg_Gebrauchsanleitung.htm

⁴ Records of the Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirch St. Martin (both marriages).

⁵ The birth date appears in his marriage record at Altenburg on Ancestry.com

month after her parents wedding, and baptized on 18 May.⁶ Two years later Eduard and Sophie had another daughter, Mathilda Agnes Schrootsberger (known as Agnes), who was born on 26 July 1871 at Meerane.⁷

The Family Moves to Crimmitschau (1872 or 1873)

A year or so after the birth of his second daughter, Eduard moved his family from Meerane to Crimmitschau, about nine kilometers away, where he was employed initially as a fireman and later as a factory worker. According to an 1876 directory, they lived at Leipzigerstrasse 63.

Edward and Sophie's last three daughters were born at Crimmitschau:

- Anna Mathilde, known as Mathilde, born 16 August 1873 and baptized the following day
- Luise Elizabeth, born 28 January 1876 and baptized two days later
- Anna Hulda, twin to Luise, who died 31 January 1876 and was buried three days later.⁸

The Schrotsbergers probably remained in Crimmitschau for several years after 1876, but no address directories for the years 1877 to 1883 are available online for either Crimmitschau or Eisleben. The family does not appear in the 1884 directory of Crimmitscahu.⁹ Were they already in Eisleben or did they spend time in Altenburg or some other town in between?

The Early Years at Eisleben (1885-1890s)

By 1885 we know they were in Eisleben, 150 kilometers northwest of Crimmitschau.¹⁰ It is likely that they moved there due to the copper slate mining boom of the late 19th century because an 1892 directory of Eisleben lists Eduard as a miner. The family was living at Klosterplatz 34, at the intersection of Klosterplatz and Klosterstrasse and across the street from St. Gertrud's Catholic church.¹¹

Although they lived so close to the Catholic church, the Schrotsbergers were Lutherans and attended St. Nicolai Lutheran Church a few blocks away. Eisleben, the

⁶ Both the marriage and Marie's birthdate appear in the Records of Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirch St. Martin.

⁷ The birth date appears in her Berlin marriage and death records on Ancestry.com

⁸ Records of Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirch Crimmitschau

⁹ Saxon State and University Library website. The 1884 directory is at https://digital.slub-dresden.de/werkansicht/dlf/111413/136?tx_dlf_navigation%5Bcontroller%5D=Navigation&cHash=2b7eef6229ba85ff2b6ec7ffb9f4c277

¹⁰ In October 1885 the Schrotsbergers requested that a copy of Luise's Crimmitschau baptism record be sent to them for school purposes.

¹¹ The directory is on <https://meta.genealogy.net/>

hometown of Martin Luther, had multiple Lutheran churches and a single Catholic church. St. Nicolai was the oldest church in Eisleben (construction began in 1420 and the choir was founded in 1426).¹²

The Children Leave Home (1890s)

Over the next few years, most of Eduard and Sophie's children reached adulthood, married, and began leaving Eisleben for work.

It is unclear when Sophie's son Albin and Eduard's son Karl left home, so they may never have moved to Eisleben with the others. Both married in 1890 in Nobitz, a village on the outskirts of Altenburg in Thuringia (about 40 kilometers south of Leipzig and 86 kilometers "as the crow flies" southeast of Eisleben). They spent the rest of their lives in Altenburg and surrounding villages. Each had children born there and eventually died in or near Altenburg.¹³ Although not living near their parents and step-sisters, they were less than two hours apart by train and undoubtedly saw each other periodically.

Marie worked for a while as a maid in Halle, a large city not far from Eisleben.¹⁴ She married in 1897 to a resident of Eisleben – Friedrich Böttcher, a young copper miner who may have worked with her father.¹⁵ She and Friedrich then took up residence a couple of doors from her parents and spent the rest of their lives in Eisleben. All their children were baptized at St. Nicolai Lutheran Church.

Mathilde was living in Bavaria in 1894 when she married Karl Schönung. They had one daughter, moved to the United States in 1903, and lived out their lives in southern Ohio, in or near the city of Cincinnati.¹⁶

Agnes and Luise were expert seamstresses and moved to Berlin where there were more opportunities for employment. There they met and married brothers. Agnes married Richard Wosch in 1897, and Luise married Paul Wosch in 1899. Both couples lived in Berlin for the rest of their lives.¹⁷

¹² Scattered references to the Schrotsbergers appear in the St. Nicolai church records available at Archion.de. St. Nicolai is no longer an active church, but the structure has been preserved and serves as a columbarium and archive center.

¹³ The marriage record and records of their children are all on Ancestry.com. Altenburg and Eisleben were only a couple of hours from each other by train, so Albin and Franz and their families could easily have exchanged visits with their parents and half-siblings.

¹⁴ General Anzeiger für Halle und den Saalkreis [General Advertiser for Halle and the Saalkreis], 23 August 1894 [available at <https://opendata2.uni-halle.de/retrieve/2323befc-949f-4575-8ac2-df4e3871523f/16675228091894082302.pdf>]

¹⁵ The marriage date appears on the 1938 marriage record of their daughter Bertha in Eisleben.

¹⁶ Her marriage record, immigration record, and other information is on Ancestry.com

¹⁷ Their marriage records appear on Ancestry.com

The Later Years at Eisleben (1890s-1910)

By 1900, the only family members still in Eisleben were Eduard, Sophie, and the Böttchers (Friedrich, Marie, and their first daughter Bertha). In that year, the Mansfield Copper Slate Mining Union organized a celebration of the 700th anniversary of Mansfeld copper slate mining in Eisleben (Mansfeld was the name of the district). Friedrich was still an active miner and probably would have participated, but it is not clear whether Eduard was still working in the mines. Even if he wasn't, Eduard would have had a great interest in this event, which included speeches, parades, dinners, and even a brief visit by Kaiser Wilhelm II.¹⁸

The 1904 Eisleben directory shows Friedrich Böttcher as a miner and Eduard Schrotsberger as a wächter (watchman). Eisleben had no tall buildings except its church towers which provided good views in all directions. Since 1712 the city had employed watchmen to occupy these towers, scan for fires or other incidents, and raise an alarm if necessary.¹⁹ Presumably Eduard was doing this work in the tower of St. Gertrud's Catholic Church, across the street from his home. However, in 1908 the city installed thirteen electric fire alarms, making the watchmen unnecessary.

The Schrotsbergers remained at Eisleben until Sophie died on 11 October 1910. Her funeral was held at St. Nicolai Lutheran Church, and she was buried in Eisleben's "new" cemetery on the north side of town.²⁰

Eduard Moves to Berlin and Dies There

After Sophie's death Eduard moved to Berlin, where daughters Agnes and Luise and their families lived. On 15 February 1912, he married again to a widow named Friederike Johanne Maria Schultze Müller, known as Johanna. They lived in Charlottenburg, which was then a town adjacent to Berlin, but in 1920 became a neighborhood within the larger city. Slightly over a month after his wedding, on 21 March 1912, Eduard went for a walk in the Grunewald Forest, which borders part of Charlottenburg. During his walk, he collapsed and died at the age of 66.²¹

¹⁸ For a detailed history of this event see <https://harz-saale.de/die-feier-zum-700-jahrigen-jubilaum-des-mansfelder-kupferschieferbergbaues-im-jahre-1900-in-eisleben-seine-majestat-kaiser-wilhelm-ii-gibt-sich-schweren-herzens-die-ehre/>

¹⁹ In at least one church, the lookout and his family lived in the tower. See <https://www.zentrum-taufe-eisleben.de/petrikirche/tuermer/>

²⁰ Lutherstadt Eisleben (St. Nicolai) Beerdigungen 1873-1910, Bild 193 at www.archion.de (membership required); Eisleben's old cemetery was opened in the 1500s and its new cemetery opened in 1877).

²¹ The marriage and death records appear on Ancestry.com