

Gross Family Ancestors of The Bohrman's of Schroon Lake

Henry Gross was born in Westerburg¹, a small town in the Westerwaldkreis in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. The town is named after the castle built on a hill above the mediaeval town centre (*burg* is German for 'castle') There is documentation that Henry's mother and father were from this region. Interestingly, this is the same German province of Hessen-Nassau which was home to the Bohrmann family.



LEFT: Location of Westerburg RIGHT: Westerburg Schloss (castle)

Henry settled in Economy Township, Beaver County, PA, where he is listed in the U.S. Census as early as 1850. Henry married Louisa Hoenig who was born in Pennsylvania. Louisa's parents were of German ancestry, and census records show they were born in Prussia.

We are fortunate to have a local history of the township written by Barbara Kenny Fitzpatrick and Michael Troyan. Here we read:

¹ This birth location is documented in the 1880 U.S. Census of Economy, Beaver, Pennsylvania. In the 1880 Census, the birthplace is listed as Westburg. When I search Google Earth, Westburg is also listed as Westerburg.

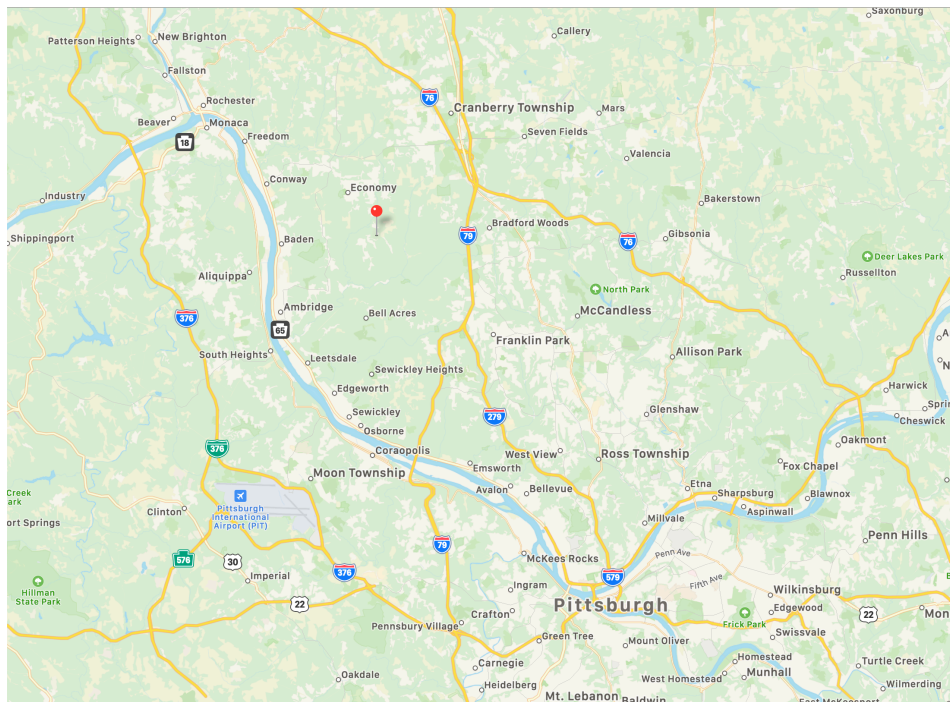
“HENRY GROSS [1825-1900] Henry Gross, one of the founders of the Wallrose area of Economy Township, was born in Wetzler, Prussia², in 1825, was an honor graduate of Heidelberg University. He came to America in 1848 and stayed with the Harmony Society for a year until he purchased a farm in Wallrose, where he also conducted a general store and post office. He did legal work for the residents of the township.

Mr. Gross bought calves from the local farmers and kept them near the store before he drove them to Pittsburgh, so the German people there nicknamed that area "Muckletown." The German word for calf is "muckle." This came about when a woman ran out in front of Henry Gross with his wagon loaded top heavy with products headed for the Pittsburgh Market, yelling, "Mr. Gross, will you take my muckle to the market?" He replied, "Lady, where do you expect me to put it?" So all along the way along the Pittsburgh and Ingomar Plank Road he told of the incident and it became a joke and this area became known as "Muckletown."

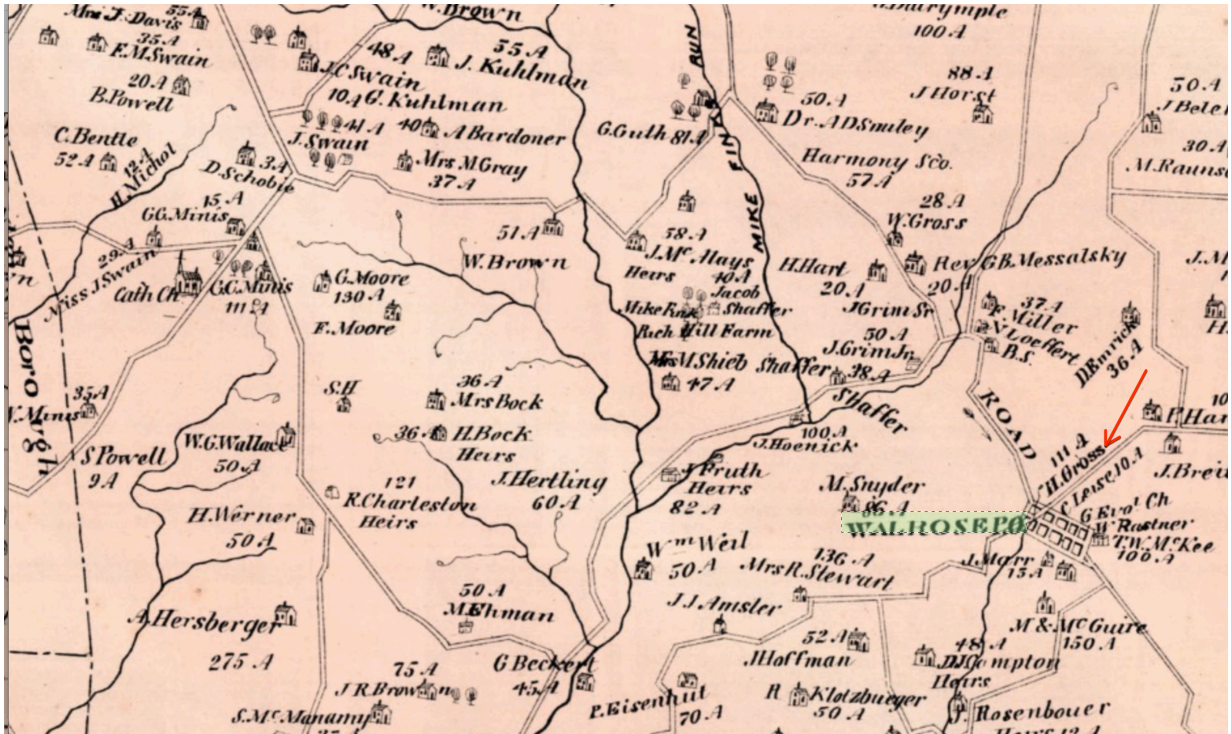
Mr. Gross was also responsible for the name "Wallrose." As Gross was completing the building of a dry wall in front of his store to prevent the sliding of dirt onto Pittsburgh-Rochester Road, a neighbor said to him, "Henry, that is a mighty fine wall and if it were mine, I would plant roses on it." Henry answered, "Yes, I'll plant a wall rose on it, and I'll also change the name of this area to Wallrose."

Henry Gross and his wife, Louisa Hoenig Gross (1831-1905) are buried at St. Matthew's Cemetery."

Economy Township, Beaver County, PA is marked on a modern Pennsylvania map shown below. It is located east of the Ohio River and northwest of Pittsburgh. On the next page is an [historic map of Economy Township](#) published in 1876. The

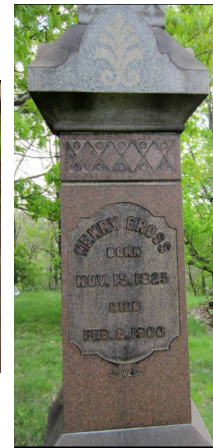


² Henry self reported his birthplace in the 1880 census; the birthplace reported in this story Wetzler, Prussia is about 25 miles from Westburg. The Prussian empire did control Hesse in its heyday. I see no conflict between these two reports.



Economy Township, Beaver County, PA from an 1876 map of the township.

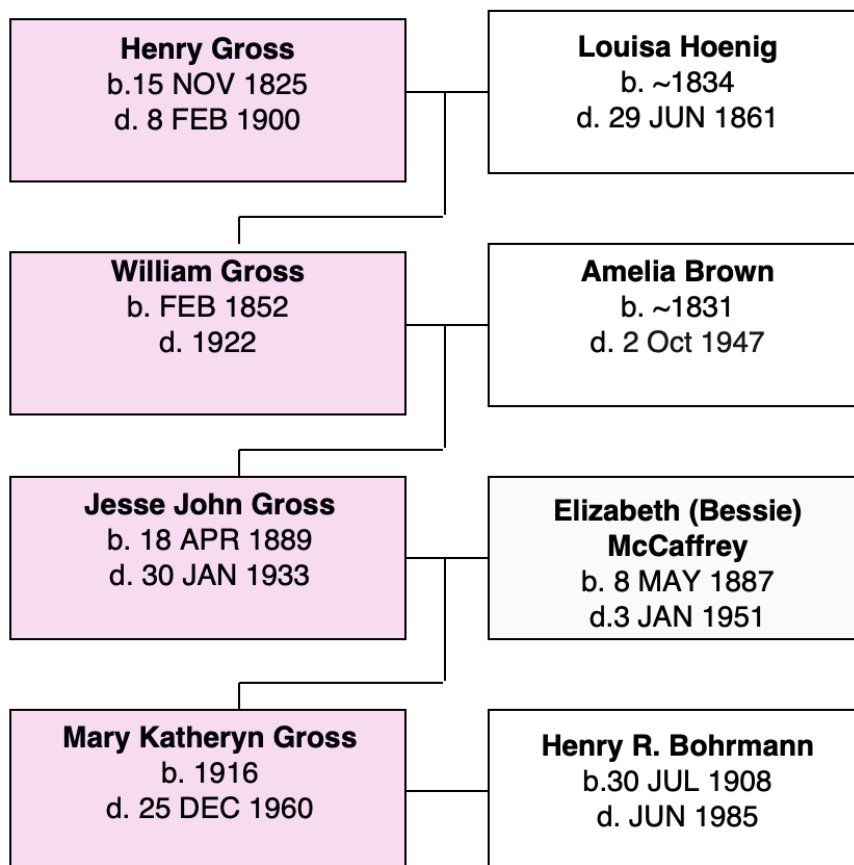
Walrose post office is highlighted and the residence of Henry Gross is marked with a red arrow.



LEFT: Historic St. Matthews Church CENTER: Landmark plaque RIGHT: Henry Gross Tombstone in St. Matthew's Churchyard

At the age of 37, Henry Gross enlisted in the Union Army to fight in the Civil War. Henry and his wife Louisa are interred in Saint Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church Cemetery, Economy Borough, Beaver County, Pennsylvania. Henry was a founding member of St. Matthews, which closed its doors in 2013 after serving the community for 175 years.

The Gross family resided in Beaver County, PA for the next four generations.



Line of descent to Henry R. Bohrmann
of Schroon Lake