

George C. Wagner Biography

This biography appears on pages 857-858 in "History of South Dakota" by Doane Robinson, Vol. I (1904).

GEORGE C. WAGNER is a western man by birth, training and preference, thoroughly imbued with the progressive spirit which has ever dominated this section of the country and has led to its splendid growth and its marvelous achievements. He was born in Clayton County, Iowa, December 30, 1855. His father, Constant[ine] Wagner, was a native of Germany and in the year 1854 came to the United States, settling in Clayton county, Iowa, where he purchased forty acres of timber land. At once he began to clear away the trees and to improve his land. He was not long permitted to enjoy his new home, however, for his death occurred when the subject of this review was only two years of age. His wife bore the maiden name of Caroline Helfesrider¹, and was also a native of Germany. They have but two children, Constant, the brother of the subject dying when about fourteen years of age.

George C. Wagner attended the public schools and was instructed in both German and English. He pursued his studies until fourteen years of age and then began working upon the old homestead where he remained until eighteen years of age. At that time he started out in life on his own account, being employed as a farm hand until his removal to South Dakota in 1876. Knowing that the government offered good inducements for the settlement of this section of the country and wishing to become the owner of a tract of land, he bought one hundred and sixty acres in Yankton county located seven miles northeast of Utica. For this he paid two and a half dollars per acre. It was entirely wild and unimproved and with characteristic energy he began its development and in course of time he afterward brought one hundred and twenty-five acres, for which he paid thirteen dollars per acre. He now owns and operates two hundred and eighty-five acres and has one of the best farm properties of his locality. He erected a very fine farm residence at a cost of two thousand dollars and his barns and other outbuildings are models of convenience for the commodious shelter for grain and stock. He uses the latest improved machinery in carrying on his farm work and all of the equipments and accessories of the model farm of the twentieth century are found upon his place.

In October, 1880, was celebrated the marriage of Mr. Wagner and Miss Annie Kramer, of Yankton County. They have become the parents of nine children: Katie, who is the wife of Peter Hasker, a well-to-do farmer of Yankton County and a son of one of the pioneer settlers of the state; Theresa, deceased; Josie Lucy and George, who are with their parents; Peter and Joseph, who have also passed away; Rosie, who is yet under the parental roof; and two who died in infancy. With the exception of the eldest, all of the living children are yet under the

¹ Caroline's sister was Europhrensia (Emma Rothmeyer's maternal grandmother). See graphic on next page. Europhrensia married Berthold Wagner. Berthold and Europhrensia were Emma's maternal grandparents. Wagner was probably a common German surname – however, I have looked to see if there is any blood relation between Berthold and his brother-in-law, Constant. I cannot find one but will keep looking. Also, please note, Constantine died when Caroline was about 27. She then married Paul Willman and had 7 children with him.

parental roof.

In religious faith Mr. Wagner is a German Catholic, while in politics he is independent, but while he has never sought or desired office he has ever been deeply interested in measures for the substantial improvement and advancement of his county. He has been connected with the school for many years and what he has done in behalf of education entitles him to the gratitude of the public. His life has ever been an active, industrious and useful one and the strongly marked traits of his character are such as commend him to the good will and respect of those with whom business or social relations have brought him in contact.

Karolina Helfesrieder
1831-1872

Spouse & Children ^

- Constantine Wagner**
- George C. Wagner**
- Constantin Wagner**

Spouse & Children v

Siblings ^

- L Helfesrieder**
- E Helfesrieder**
- M Helfesrieder**
- K Helfesrieder**
- P Helfesrieder**
- B Helfesrieder**
- I Helfesreider**