Daniel Schlinke: Barossa Entrepreneur
Presented by Philip Mann on 26 June 2025

Our guest speaker Philip Mann, born in Murray Bridge SA, the 10th of 11 children, has a very large extended family. He was educated there and at Adelaide and Deakin Universities and has used his knowledge in statistics, economics and analysis while working for government and businesses. He has devoted his retirement to researching his vast family history, and has traced a connection with the Schlinke family through Daniel's sister Rosina and her second husband Wilhelm Bradtke. Their daughter Louisa Bradtke is Philip's great grandmother, the wife of Johann Christian Mann, his great grandfather.

It is not possible to report all the details of Philip's talk because he packed it with so many facts. But he does have the complete text of this talk—among 25 articles on his family history—available on his website www.philipmann.com.au. I have chosen to highlight some key points in his presentation.

Johann Daniel Schlinke was born in the village of Cicha Góra, about 5kms from Neutomischel (now Nowy Tomyśl) in Posen on 5 November 1807. His father Johann Gottfried Schlinke was a landowner and perhaps also an innkeeper, and his mother Rosina Dorothea nee Jonett was a registered midwife. Both were German Protestants living among Polish Catholics in Cicha Góra. This village was in a forested area, and the trees were cleared and marshes drained for the growing of hops and wicker (cane for weaving into baskets etc.) on the poor soils. As a consequence the landscape changed drastically. The German settlers who had come many years before also supplemented their livelihood with beekeeping, breeding animals, fishing, crafts, trade, and running inns. Posen was under Prussian rule from 1793 then had been conquered by Napoleon, but after he was defeated in 1815 Posen became part of Prussia again.

In 1830 King Friedrich Wilhelm III enforced a union of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches. Pastor Kavel was against this and in 1835 penned his objections to the King, who later dismissed him from his role as Pastor at Klemzig. Persecution followed, and those who objected to the Union Church sought to emigrate to countries where there was freedom to worship as they wished. Most of those wanting to emigrate with Kavel came from Brandenburg and Silesia, and a smaller number from Posen. Daniel Schlinke was among the emigrants from Posen. They left before they had confirmation that a ship would be at Hamburg to take them to South Australia. George Fife Angas, Chairman of the South Australia Company, provided three ships, the *Prince George*, *Bengalee* and *Zebra*. However there was not enough room for the group from Posen to get on board, and it took a while for Angas to decide to contract a fourth ship to take this group as well to the other side of the world. Angas's agent Charles Flaxman also had trouble finding a ship before the *Catharina* became available. The people from Posen had to wait two months with little money and nowhere to live before they could embark. Quite a few had to rely on charity, and many tried to find any jobs that could to help them pay their way.

In Hamburg Daniel Schlinke used his skill as a baker. He was listed as a 'confectioner', which indicated he probably produced sweet baked goods, and he had a Hamburg address. He was described as a 31 year old and single, and he seemed to be better off than most of the others in the Posen group. There was not much information about passengers on the *Catharina* in 1985 when *Kavel's People* was published and the author David Schubert erroneously stated that Schlinke arrived with a wife, Bertha née Teusler and two children. However Bertha was barely 16 at the time, and her widowed mother, then married to August Fiedler, had wanted both her children from her first marriage to be with her and Fiedler on board the *Prince George*. However Bertha's grandfather Teusler, who had guardianship of both Bertha and her brother Karl Emil, was against them emigrating. He later reluctantly permitted Bertha, but not her brother, to go. By that time presumably the only option for Bertha was to join the group from Posen who left Hamburg on the *Catharina*. Perhaps the 31-year-old Daniel Schlinke met young Bertha while on board the *Catharina*, and at least got to know of her.

When the *Catharina* arrived at Port Misery in January 1839 Bertha's mother had already died. The grieving Bertha was left to look after Fiedler's four children from his first marriage, while Fiedler supervised the transfer of the emigrants and their goods from the Port to the site of their new village of Klemzig. Within a short time trees were felled for timber, bricks were made from local clay, and rushes from the nearby River Torrens gathered for thatching; houses were erected along both sides of a street and a church/school and manse were built in the centre of the village. A long narrow strip of land for each family was laid out, and after rain fell, the soil could be dug or ploughed for vegetables to be grown from seed and crops sown. Johannes Menge, who had arrived in South Australia earlier and had come to understand the soils and seasons of this new country, provided them with advice

Daniel Schlinke's Steam Mill

and seeds. Life in their new village in Klemzig followed the similar pattern to how they had lived back in their homeland.

Soon Bertha Teusler, who was living with her stepfather Fiedler, was being courted by Clamor Schürmann, a young missionary sent here by the Dresden Mission Society to work with the Aborigines. Then Daniel Schlinke started visiting Klemzig, also in pursuit of Bertha. Pastor Kavel gave less regard to Schürmann as he was not part of his community and he did not have authority over him, but he accepted Schlinke as on a par with the other emigrants under his leadership. Perhaps Fiedler thought his stepdaughter would do better with Schlinke who was a business

man with prospects, while Schürmann had a more uncertain future. After much deliberation by the elders, Bertha was persuaded to accept Schlinke, and Kavel married them on 8 July 1840. Bertha was only 17, and Schlinke was almost twice her age.

Schlinke was certainly ambitious and energetic. He established a bakery in Grenfell Street, had an interest in Albert Mill near Nairne in the Adelaide Hills, and then bought 135 acres of land near Bethany in the Barossa. There he had a water-mill built which was near a waterfall in what became known as Schlinke's Gully. Unfortunately water supply from the Tanunda Creek was not always reliable, sometimes not enough or too much. After seven years a sudden flood destroyed the wooden channel which brought the stream to the waterwheel, and the well-built two-storey stone building was rendered useless. Schlinke went on to have a steam-driven mill in Tanunda, on land in Jane Street near the junction with Murray Street donated by Kavel. Schlinke had originally donated land for the church and cemetery. Schlinke was a member of the Langmeil Church, the first trustee, and also overseer of the adjacent cemetery.

At first Bertha and her husband Daniel Schlinke lived at Bethany. They had seven children. She died at the age of 30 on 10 December 1852 as a result of the birth of her last child, a daughter who died on the day she was born.
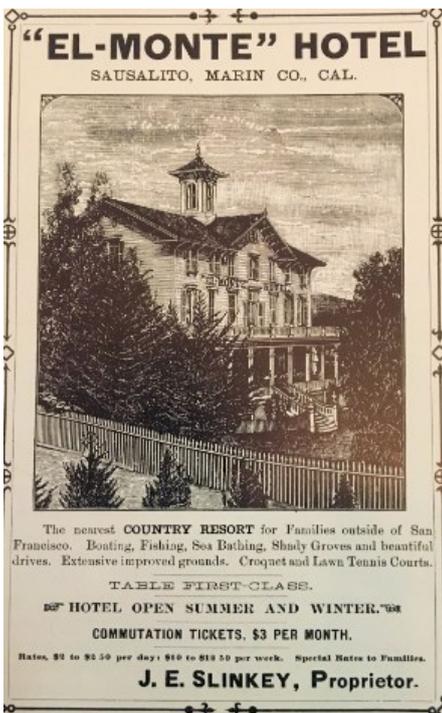
On 9 March 1854, within two years of his first wife's death, Schlinke married Ottilie Louise Maria Laura von Hoffmann and they had three children together, a son and two daughters. The marriage was sometimes contentious. On 31 Dec 1874, after over 20 years of marriage, Schlinke put an advertisement in local papers stating that he would not pay debts his wife contracted in his name.

Daniel Schlinke died on 13 August 1878. He was buried in the Langmeil cemetery next to the grave of his first wife Bertha née Teusler. He left an estate that amounted to about $600,000 in today's currency according to Philip Mann's calculation. The estate included the steam mill.

There is still much to tell about the first two sons of Daniel Schlinke and Bertha who were each brought before Adelaide courts before they fled separately to California. Philip Mann learnt about the lives of those sons after he contacted his fourth cousin Stephen LaBounty, a US citizen and a long-time resident of the state of California.

The first son Johann Daniel (as he was named in his father's will, or Daniel Joseph as he called himself) was born in August 1841. The second son Johann Emil was born on 3 November 1842. He was only 10 when his mother died. Both of these sons attended St Peter's College in Adelaide. Emil was a cricketer and footballer, and was secretary of the St Peter's Old Scholars' Association for a time. He could also play the piano. He was 23 years old when he was declared insolvent in March 1866, and embezzled money from his employer to finance his abrupt escape to California. He used the name 'Saunders' while he was a passenger on the barque *Anna* which left from Port Melbourne for San Francisco. According to an account which appeared in the Adelaide Observer on 17 March, a private detective in Melbourne had been hired to find him, but the ship left before he could obtain a warrant to arrest the fugitive. As well as running up debts and stealing from his employer, Emil was named as the father of a daughter who had been born several months after his departure from Australia.

Emil's brother, Daniel, was also declared insolvent, and decided to follow Emil to California. He worked as a bartender at his brother's hotel, and later as a pound-keeper, that is looking after lost or stray animals for a local authority. He never showed as much ambition or drive as his brother, but then he did not have his brother's spectacular failures either.

Emil's dishonest behaviour continued throughout his life in California, without getting penalised for it. He bought a business which burned down, and was successful in claiming the insurance. He repeated that scenario several times. In 1873 he anglicised his name to John E. Slinkey and was known henceforth as John; he became a naturalised American citizen, and bought a large hotel on an elevated site overlooking the bay at Sausalito, which he renovated and a few years later renamed El-Monte. Sausalito is not far from San Francisco. He ran the hotel for some time, but it also was a failure. He tried other ventures which also failed, experiencing losses due to the disastrous 1906 earthquake. He died in San Francisco in 1920.

After Philip contacted his cousin Stephen 'Woody' LaBounty, who researched this story, he presented a paper on the Schlinke family at the San Diego Genealogy Society in 2023. Woody LaBounty is CEO of San Francisco Heritage and has been involved in preserving historical buildings and educating people by talking about history in an entertaining way.

Ottilie Schlinke's Gravestone

After Daniel sen. died in 1878 in Tanunda his second wife Ottilie and one of her daughters joined her step-sons in California. She lived a long life, dying in San Francisco at 93. She is buried in a cemetery not far from Sausalito.

Daniel Schlinke lived a varied life seizing every opportunity, and developing skills in milling, buying land, and being very involved in church and community life. He was generous in donating land to Langmeil Lutheran Church, and for the Tanunda Institute, as well as stone from his own land for the building—a good effort for someone who started out as a 'confectioner'.

Helen Schubert