

A History of the Blessig Family

Descendants of P.J. Blessig I and Catharina van Zanten

As mentioned, **P.J. BLESSIG I** of St. Petersburg married as his first wife, **Catharina Van Zanten**, who was born in 1772 and died in 1812 in St. Petersburg.

Children of that marriage were:

(1) Catharina Blessig

Born 1796, died 1821 in St. Petersburg. She married there in 1815, **Friedrich (Feodor Ivanovitch) Forsch**, who was born in 1787 in St. Petersburg and died in 1886 at Dresden.

Their children were:

(i) Catharina (Katinka) Forsch

Born 1816 Petersburg, d.1891 Dresden,

(ii) Jenny Forsch

Born 1818, d.1827 Petersburg,

(iii) Minna Forsch

Born 1820 Petersburg, d.1910 Dresden.



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Friedrich Forsch, who was an Honorary Russian Citizen, was a partner in the Firm of Blessig & Co. in Petersburg from 1814- to 1851.

His sister **Emilie Charlotte Forsch** became the second wife of P.J. Blessig I, and Forsch was thus both son-in-law & brother-in-law, and also nephew through his mother Elisabeth van Zanten, to P.J. Blessig I. In 1849 Friedrich Forsch, then aged 61, decided to retire from Blessig & Co. in Petersburg, as his nephew **Wilhelm I Blessig** wished to become Head of the Firm, but he agreed to leave his capital in the business for two years, until 1851.

His wife being dead, he had no desire to remain in Petersburg on



retirement, and so he left Russia with his two unmarried daughters Forsch had only once previously been out of Russia, on a visit to England as a young man, and on that occasion he had been obliged to return through Sweden and Finland on account of the Napoleonic blockade. Now in 1849, passports to leave Russia were not easy to obtain owing to the revolutionary state of Europe in 1848-9. The reactionary Tsar Nicholas I decreed that passports would be granted to Russian Citizens only on condition that the holders did not return to Russia, and under that proviso Forsch obtained passports for himself and daughters. Although they continued nominally to be Russian Citizens for the remainder of their lives, they never returned to Petersburg. During 1849 they travelled for

several months in Switzerland, Italy, and Germany, and Forsch also paid a brief visit to England to see his nephew P.J. Blessig II, who was then living in bachelor lodgings at Liverpool. During their continental travels Forsch and his daughters were much attracted by Dresden, and they decided to settle there. He rented a large Flat in the Ostra-Allee, and he also bought a pleasant country villa at Hosterwitz, on the river Elbe about 3 miles above the city.

On departure from St. Petersburg, the Forsch family left all their household furniture there; from Dresden they sent for their pictures, silver, and personal effects, and the remainder of their furniture in Petersburg was placed at the disposal of the numerous relatives there. As Forsch had made a considerable fortune in the firm of Blessig & Co, he and his daughters were able to refurnish and live in good style at Dresden. His particular interest lay in collecting good paintings, and he was a benevolent patron of young artists.

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His daughters were devoted to music, and **Minna Forsch** was an excellent pianist. For many years they held musical evenings in their Dresden apartments. The daughters also took up philanthropic work, and had a wide circle of friends, and they kept in touch with their Blessig relatives. Emilie Schinckel nee Blessig, their cousin and school-friend in Petersburg, came every year in summer from Hamburg to stay at Dresden, and Wilhelm Blessig's daughters often came from Petersburg. P.J. Blessig of Liverpool used to visit the Forsch family on his way back from Carlsbad each summer,

Friedrich Forsch was a remarkably vigorous old gentleman, who had hardly a day's illness in his long life, and never used glasses for reading. At the age of 95 he slipped on a parquet floor and broke a collarbone, but even then he made a good recovery and lived four more years. He died at Dresden in 1886, in his 100th year very peacefully smoking his usual after dinner cigar. His daughters did not marry. Katinka Forsch, who had been slightly crippled as a child, died in 1891 aged 75, and her sister Minna died in 1910 aged 90.

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(2) *Wilhelm I Blessig (Vassili Philipovitch)*

Born 1797, died 1862 in St. Petersburg. He became head of the Firm of Blessig & Co. in 1849, after the retirement of his late father's old partners Forsch and Schinckel. He had however less business ability, and under his management the prosperity of the Firm declined considerably, and it reached its lowest point in the years following the Crimean War of 1854/55. But in due course his sons Edward and John Blessig gradually restored the old status of the business, and some fifty years later the annual net profit had risen to about £30,000.

Wilhelm was a Merchant of the 1st Guild and Hereditary Honorary Russian Citizen, and was Consul General for the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg, as his father had been. He was also a member of the Petersburg Exchange Committee, and was a Director of the Lubeck Steamship Co. He was a kindly person and had a large circle of friends in Petersburg, and he was devoted to his large family. He inherited from his father the great house on the English Quay, and he also had a datcha at **Mourino**, on the little river Ochta, 12 miles



NE of Petersburg, where many of the English families had villas, on an estate belonging to Count Vorontsov-Dashkoff; among those families were the Whishaws, Cattleys, Andersons, and Higginbothams, and presumably W. Blessig's villa was owned by the latter family originally. After his death in 1862, the house on the English Quay was sold, and his widow Jane, nee Higginbotham lived thereafter with her son Edward and unmarried daughters Jane and Eugenie in a house in the 10th Line on Vassili Ostrov. Wilhelm Blessig married twice and had altogether 14 children of whom 3 died in infancy. He married firstly, in 1821 at Wissembourg in Alsace, his first cousin **Amalie Heydenreich**, born 1801, daughter of **Frederic Heydenreich**, merchant in Wissembourg, who married in 1792 at Strasbourg, **Guillaumette Frederique**, sister of Wilhelm's father, P.J. Blessig of St. Petersburg. Amalie died in 1833 at Carlsruhe, and by that marriage there were the following children:

(i) **Wilhelm Blessig II (Vassi)**

Born 1822 St. Petersburg, d. in 1901 at Tannhausen in Silesia. He was educated at the Muralt private Academy in Petersburg, and at the

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Commerce School at Lubeck. During 1852-56 he was in the firm of his uncle Alexander Boehlingkh at 9 Rumford Place, Liverpool, and lived in rooms at 18 Canning St. When Boehlingkh & Co, went bankrupt in 1856, he was taken into his uncle P.J. Blessig's Firm at Liverpool, where he remained for about 12 years. Then he returned to Russia, and was given a post in the Railway Administration at Crementchug in Ukraine. Subsequently he was in Livonia, and finally in Silesia, where he died at Tannhausen.

(ii) Theodor Friedrich Blessig

Born 1823, d.1825 St. Petersburg.

(iii) Alexander Blessig

Born 1824 St. Petersburg, died 1856 in Rome. He was educated at the Muralt private Academy in Petersburg, and then as an artist, going to Rome for further study. He married there in 1855, **Philomena**



Alexander Blessig



Philomela Mercantoni

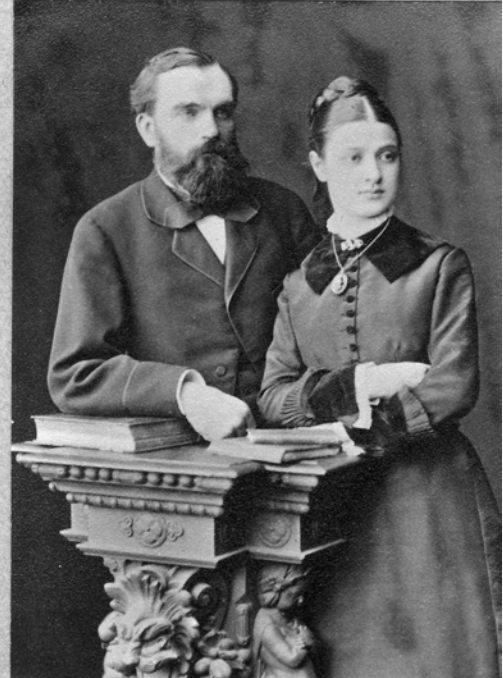
Mercantoni, born 18J9 in Abruzzi province, died 1908 in Rome.

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They had one daughter, **Amalia Clelia Catharine Blessig**, born 1856 in Rome a few months before her father's death. The unusual name **Clelia (Cloelia)** was perhaps given to this child because her mother was the model for a painting by Alex Blessig of the young Roman lady of that name, a heroine of the Etruscan War.



Amalie Clelia Blessig



Amalie Clelia aged 22
with her uncle Edward
Blessig in Petersburg

After Alexander Blessig's early death, his relative Robert Blessig, then a medical student, went from Petersburg to Rome and arranged with the widow that the child Amalia Clelia should be educated by the Blessig family in Petersburg, and some years later Robert and his wife, who had no children, became her guardians. Amalia soon became a great favourite with the family in Petersburg. She married there in 1879, **Carl Reinhold Christian Koch**, born 1841, died 1909 at Reval. He was an eminent Dr (Med.) in St. Petersburg, and became a Russian State Counsellor with the style of Excellency, and was awarded the Orders of St. Stanislaus 1st Class and St. Vladimir Third Class. The Koch family, who originated in Brunswick, had been Hereditary Honorary Russian Citizens for many generations at Reval, and were leading men of business there and owned considerable properties in and near the city. Many members of the family belonged to the Patrician Club which met in the ancient "House of the Black Heads". Dr Carl Koch inherited a small and very pretty estate named Kosch, on the Gulf of Finland near Reval, which, had been in possession of the Koch family from 1790. His marriage with Amalie Clelia Blessig was a very happy one, but after his death she had many sorrows to bear. In 1920 the Kosch estate had to be sold to the newly established

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Estonian Republic. In 1924/25 she lost her three sons very suddenly. Finally, in 1940 all the property-owning families of German origin, however remote, were forcibly transported from Estonia and Latvia to the Wartagau, a new province created by the Hitler regime in western Poland to offset the Russian annexation of eastern Poland and the Baltic States. In the exodus from Reval went the 84-year-old Amalia Koch with her daughters Clara and Dagmar, and they were deposited at Litzmannstadt (Lodz) in the so-called Wartagau of Poland. There the tide of war later rolled over them and they became separated. Amalia Koch died probably about that time somewhere in W. Poland or in E. Germany. Her children were:

(a) **Clara Molly Henrietta Clelia Koch**, b.1879 St. Petersburg. Married (I) in 1906 at Reval, **Georg Woldemar Wulff**, b.1874 died 1918 in St. Petersburg, son of a doctor there. She married (II) in 1920 at Reval, **Baron Georges Eduard Wrangel**, a widower, born 1866 at Ruil, died 1927 at Dorpat. He was a retired Assessor of the Estonian Consistory Court, and then Genealogist of the Estonian Nobility, of which his father was the Head; his mother was Lucie Cecilie, Countess Stenbock. He was a distant relative of Baron Peter Wrangel (1878-1928), the General who led the last White Russian army in the operations against the Bolsheviks in the Crimea in 1920. By her two marriages Clara Koch had no children. In 1940 she went with her mother and sister to the Wartagau in Poland, and at the end of the War was evacuated to Thuringia and thence to Saxony. Having become a Roman Catholic she found refuge in a convent at Goppeln near Dresden, where she remains.

(b) **Andreas Robert Alexander Koch**, b.1882 St. Petersburg, d.1925 at Nomme, a Reval summer-resort. He was a Reval merchant and married at Reval in 1921, **Lucie Petersen**, who was b.1901 in St. Petersburg. They had two daughters, b.1925 and 1925 at Reval.

(c) **Robert. Nicolai Koch**, b.1884 St. Petersburg. He became a Forest Officer, and later worked with a merchant firm, at Reval. On 24th October 1924 he was drowned whilst sailing in the Gulf of Finland with his brother Alexander (below).

(d) **Alexander Carl Koch** (twin), b.1890 St. Petersburg, He was an Ensign In the Reserve of the Semyenov Regiment of Footguards, and worked in a Bank at Reval. He was drowned on 24th October 1924 whilst sailing with his brother Robert (above).

(e) **Dagmar (Dagi) Amalie Koch** (twin), b.1890 St. Petersburg. She lived with her mother at Reval until 1926, when she married (m. 18.10.1926 at Dorpat) her distant cousin, Dr (Med.) **Ernst Friedrich Blessig**, who at that time was Professor in Ophthalmology at Dorpat University. He died at Dorpat 23.04.1940. As mentioned above Dagi Blessig accompanied her mother and sister in 1940 to the Wartagau, and at Litzmannstadt she obtained work in a

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zoological Institution. When the Poles re-entered the Province in 1945 she was interned in a forced labour camp and suffered extreme hardships. Later she was evacuated to Thuringia, and thence to Dresden, and finally to Halle in Saxony. There her existence became known to the late Professor Theodor Roemer of Halle University, who was a grandson of Emilie Schinckel nee Blessig, and he obtained some translation work for her, as a linguist in Russian, German, and Swedish. At Halle she remains, in rather poor health and difficult circumstances.

(iv) Amalie Blessig

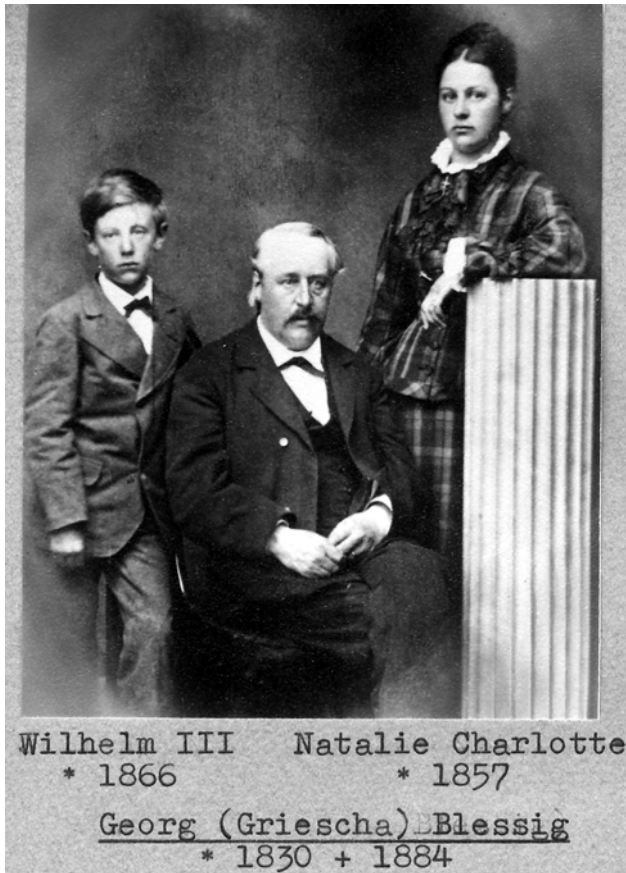
Born 1826, died 1826

(v) Rosalie Blessig

born 1828, died 1828

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(vi) Georg (Griescha) Blessig



Born 1830 St. Petersburg, d.1884 at Ramelshof near Venden in Livonia. He was educated at the Lutheran Church School in Petersburg, and then at a private school near Venden. In 1849-53 he studied Medicine at Dorpat University, and then took up farming at Kaugershof near Volmar in Livonia. In 1858-62 he farmed an estate near Venden, called Jdsel. In 1863 P.J. Blessig of Liverpool purchased for him a farm named Ramelshof, 8 miles SW of Venden, to be held jointly with his uncle Constantin Blessig (p.50), but in later years Griescha became the sole owner of Ramelshof. He was a

Magistrate there, and Assistant Magistrate in the town of Venden, and was a Churchwarden in the village of Arrasch near Ramelshof. He married in 1856, **Cassandra Julie Balding** who was born in 1836 at Kokenhof near Volmar, and died 1918 at Venden. Their children were:

(a) **Natalie Charlotte Amalie Blessig**, b.1857 at Kaugershof, d.1898 at Ramelshof. She married in 1888, **Paul Leonhard Lehmann**, b.1835 at Oberpahlen, d.1919 at Tuckum in Latvia.

(b) **Alexander II Blessig**, b. 1.859 at Jdsel, d.1904 at Ramelshof. He was educated at the Birkenruh private school near Venden in 1872-77, and in 1878-80 he studied Medicine at Dorpat University, but was expelled from there for killing a fellow student in a pistol duel, and was confined in the fortress at Warsaw for 2 years. On his release in 1883, he attended the Tharand Forestry School near Dresden and qualified there in 1884, and in the following year he studied practical forestry at Karkus, 20m. S. of Fellin in Livonia. Then in 1885-6 he was Forest Officer at Adsel-Schwarzhof in the Valk District of Livonia, and in 1886-90 at Kerro, 38m. NE of Pernau. During 1891-3 he was a Forestry Instructor at Kporje and Shabino in the Petersburg Province. Finally, from 1894 until his death in 1904 he was Superintendent of the Staro-Skvorizy Range, belonging to Duke Georg v. Mecklenburg-Strelitz,

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in the Tscheremykino Forest near the southern boundary of the Petersburg Province.

He married in 1894 at St. Petersburg, **Leontine Johanna (Jenny)**



Blessig, daughter of his great-uncle Constantin Blessig (p. 51). She was b.1872 at Kawershof near Valk in Livonia. After the death of her husband in 1904, she lived with her children and mother-in-law on the family property at Ramelshof. In 1920 the Latvian Republic dispossessed them of all but a small portion of that estate, and Jenny Blessig then went to live with her married daughter v. Hansen, and an unmarried daughter, at Schwerin in Brandenburg. In the 1939-45 War they suffered hardship and frequent removals, and about 1946 they obtained a smallholding of agricultural land near Dresden, but later had to leave it. Jenny Blessig died in 1949 near Berlin, and the v. Hansens and the unmarried daughter then went to live with their v. Walter

cousins at Cologne. The children of Alexander II and Jenny Blessig were:

(b i) **Georg Philip Jacob Blessig**, b.1895 at Tscheremykino. He was educated at the Eltz private school in Riga in 1906-7, at Venden in 1907-8, and then at the Birkenruh Landowners School near there, 1909-15. From 1915 he was at Dorpat University studying Medicine. In November 1918 he joined the Baltic Militia at Riga and whilst serving as a Sergeant in operations against the Bolsheviks near Lievenhof, on the river Duna, SE of Riga, he received a severe concussion on 5th October 1919 and died two days later in the hospital at Riga.

(b ii) **Elsbeth (Else) Elfriede Blessig**, b.1897 at Tscheremykino.

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(b iii) **Jenny Sophie Blessig**, b.1898 at Tscheremykino. She married in 1924, **Reinhard v. Hansen**, whose family received Hereditary Russian nobility in 1853. As mentioned above, Jenny and husband accompanied her mother and sister in the transportation of Baltic landowners of German origin, to the Wartagau, and later to Saxony, where they had a small agricultural holding in 1946 near Dresden, and after the old lady's death, the v. Hansens went to Cologne.

daughter: **Hilde Lehmann** b Tammik 1897 (resident at Hamburg)

m. at Wierz, Livonia, 1921 **Sigurd Otto v. Dehn** b. Dorpat 1897 d. 1946 as Russian prisoner of War at Wasselem, Estonia

Children;

(1) **Edith v. Dehn** b. Dorpat 1924 (resident at Hamburg)

m. at Karmelin, Wartheid 1944 **Peter v. Berg b Regensburg**
1921 d Hamburg 1955

(2) **Axel v. Dehn** b. Reval 1926 killed in action 1944 at
Miescheid, Eiffel.

[Adelige Hauser B 1958]

(b iv) **Louise Cassandra Blessig**, b, 1900 at Tscheremykino. Married in 1919, **Casimir v. Weclawowicz**, of Polish-Livonian family.

(b v) **Edith Ursula Blessig**, b.1903 Tscheremykino.

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(c) **Jenny Reinholda Blessig**, b.1860 at Jdsel. She married in 1887, **Hugo Reinhold Lehmann**, b.1857 at Oberpahlen, died 1927 at Pernau, Estonia. Her eldest sister Natalie married his brother Paul.

(d) **Elsbeth (Else) Blessig**, b.1862 at Jdsel, d.1926 at Zittau, Saxony.

(e) **Sophie (Fullie) Blessig**, b.1865 at Ramelshof.



Elsbeth
* 1862 Edith * 1869
Cassandra Blessig nee Balding
* 1836 + 1918

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(f) **Wilhelm III Blessig**, born 1866 at Ramelshof, died 1936 at Gustrow in Mecklenburg. His education began in 1876 at the Muller School in Riga, and was continued in 1877-82 at the Birkenruh private school near Venden, and then at the Birkenruh Landowners' School 1882-84, and at the Riga Classical School 1884-86. Wilhelm Blessig then studied Agriculture at Dorpat University 1886-88 and graduated in that subject. In 1889-91 he learned practical farming at Kawershof near Valk, Livonia, and in 1891-92 he rented a farm, Teilitz, near there, and 1892-96 another farm, Bolva, in Vitebsk Province of Russia. From 1896 to 1906 he was Agent for the estates of Prince Paul Lieven at Smilten, Cremon, and Jurgensburg, in Livonia. Prince Paul, born 1875, was a younger son of the Lieven family, who for several hundred years were great landowners in Livonia and Courland; he was a great-nephew of the well-known letter-writer, Dorothea, Princess Lieven ne'e Beneckendorff, of the mid-19th Century. From 1906 to 1913 Wilhelm Blessig was Agent-General for the St. Petersburg-Tula Land Bank at Venden and Riga. In 1913-18 he was a Riga City Councillor and President of the Riga Estates Committee, and in that office he administered the large communal Forests of Riga. In 1913-17 he was also Chairman of the Riga Economic Bureau. (His uncle John Blessig, then living in London, obtained for him the appointment to Riga City Council in 1913). In the summer of 1918 when his widowed mother died, Wilhelm Blessig took charge of her Ramelshof property in Livonia, but on 1st January 1919 just before the Bolsheviks occupied Riga, he left that city with his family and went to Stolpmunde, Pomerania. During 1920-23 he served with the German Red Cross at the Baltic Refugee camps which had been established at Zittau in Saxony and at Altengrabow and Gustrow in Mecklenburg. He became a Mecklenburg citizen, and in 1923-5 he lived with his wife in a cottage at Siemitz near Gustrow, but in 1925 he was enabled, by a gift of money from his cousin Max v. Schinckel, to purchase a small house in Gustrow. There he became business advisor to the young Baron Franz v. der Kettenburg, at Matgendorf, a few miles from Gustrow. And in 1925-27 he employed his leisure time in compiling very complete biographies of the St. Petersburg members of the Blessig family, descending from P.J. Blessig I, with some details of the earlier generations of the family in Strasbourg. Without those valuable records left by Wilhelm III Blessig, the history of the family here presented would have been incomplete in regard to those branches of the family

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Wilhelm III Blessig married in 1891 at Venden in Livonia, **Louise Ida Pauline (Lully) Gaetgens**, who was born there in 1868, She died in ? at Gustrow. Their nine children were;

(f i) **Edith Cassandra Blessig**, b.1892 at Bolva, d.1897 at Smilten.

(f ii) **Wilhelm IV Peter Blessig**, b.1893 at Bolva, d.1936 in Berlin. He was educated at the German Association School at Venden in 1906-7, and at the Birkenruh Landowners School near there in 1907-12. After matriculating at St. Petersburg University in 1913 he studied chemistry and economy at Dorpat

University in 1913-15. He was then called up for service in the Russian Army as 2nd Lieutenant, and early in 1917 he was a Prisoner of War at Stralsund. After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed in March 1918 the Germans began to clear the Bolsheviks out of the Baltic States, and Wilhelm Peter Blessig accompanied the German army into Latvia as an Intelligence Officer, and was appointed as Administrator at Arrasch, a village near the Ramelshof estate of his deceased grandfather Griescha Blessig. In December 1918, when the German forces began to withdraw he joined the Baltic Militia under Major Alfred Fletcher, a German officer of Scottish descent, and he took part in the recapture of Riga from the Bolsheviks on 22nd May 1919. In Sept. 1919 he was promoted to Captain and commander of a squadron of cavalry in the Baltic Militia, which was then under command of Lt. Col. The Hon., H.R. Alexander (Field Marshal in the 1939-45 war), who was a Staff Officer with the British Military Mission in the Baltic States. In August 1920 when peace was signed between Russia and the Baltic States, the Militia was disbanded, and Wilhelm Peter Blessig then left for Germany and became a Prussian citizen. From May 1921 he was employed by the Mannesmann Steel Tube Works at Dusseldorf.

Wilhelm Peter Blessig married (I) at Zittau, Saxony, in 1923, **Hedwig Adelheid**, Baroness v. Sass, who was born in 1899 at Hohensee, Livonia younger daughter of Carl, Baron v. Sass and Alexandrine v. Stryk, and granddaughter of Alexandrine, Baroness Pilar v. Pilchau. Her father died at

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Demmin, Pomerania in 1923. His branch of the Sass family, originally from Lower Saxony, settled in the Baltic island of Oesel in 15th Century, and thereafter were landowners and Land Marshals there, and became Barons in the Courland nobility in the 18th Century. Wilhelm Peter Blessig had two children by this marriage:

- (a) **Wilhelm Carl (Sascha) Blessig** b. 1926 at Demmin, Pomerania k. 1943
- (b) **Alexandra Blessig**, b. 1928 at Demmin.

The marriage was dissolved in 1933, and Hedwig Blessig went to live with her widowed mother and married sister at Greifswald in Pomerania. Wilhelm Peter married (II) in 1934 at Dusseldorf, **Brigitte Bannier**, who was born there in 1906. There were no children by this 2nd marriage, and the Gestapo of the Hitler Regime executed him in 1936 in Berlin.

(f iii) **Irmgard, Luise Blessig**, b. 1895 at Bolva. She married in 1916 **Peter v. Pander** who was b. 1886 at Ogershof near Riga. They had a daughter, **Gerda v. Pander**, who became a Deaconess in Berlin. The v. Pander family were ennobled in 1847 as landowners at Ogershof and Ronneburg in Livonia. Irmgard Blessig married 2ndly **Baron v. Wolff**.

(f iv) **Luise Sophie Blessig**, b. 1896 at Smilten, Livonia. She became Secretary to a landowner named **v. Rohr**, near Demmin.

(f v) **Natalie (Tali) Ida Margarete Blessig**, b. 1898 at Smilten. She became a Secretary in the Japanese Embassy in Berlin.

(f vi) **Edith Blessig**, b. 1899 at Smilten. She married in 1922, **Reinhold v. Walter**, who became a Legal Counsellor, and University Lecturer at Cologne. They had 4 sons and 1 daughter. Edith v. Walter died in 1938. The v. Walter family were landowners at Mariendorf in Courland.

(f vii) **Anna Blessig** b. 1902 at Smilten. She went to Johannesburg in South Africa, and has a sheep farm near there,

(f viii) **Alexandra (Alix) Blessig**, b. 1904 at Smilten. She married in 1934 at Gustrow, **Gerdt Jurgen Leo**, Baron Lieven, b. 1908 at Riga. Land Agent and farmer. They have two sons, **Matthias Gerdt** b. 1936 at Gustrow, and **Peter Thomas Alex** b. 1938 at Gustrow.

(f ix) **Friedrich Alexander Blessig**, b. 1909 at Venden, Livonia. He was killed in 1940 at Sedan in France. He left Riga in 1919 with his parents and was educated at the Baltic School, Misdroy, and at Stolp in Pomerania. In 1921 he became a Mecklenburg citizen and was a commercial agent at Gustrow. **He married, and had a son.** His widow lives at Wismar in Mecklenburg. *The son of Friedrich Alexander Blessig, if surviving today, is the last male representative of the entire Blessig family, so far as can be ascertained.*

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Descendants of Wilhelm I Blessig and Jane Higginbotham.

In the preceding pages, have been recorded the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, of **WILHELM I BLESSIG**, born 1797 died 1862 St. Petersburg, by his first wife **AMALIE HEYDENREICH** born 1801 died 1833. In the following pages are descendants of **WILHELM I BLESSIG** by his second wife **JANE HIGGINBOTHAM**, born 1807 died 1874.



In 1836 **Wilhelm I Blessig** married secondly in St. Petersburg, **Jane Higginbotham**, who was born there in 1807 and died in 1874. Her father and brothers were merchants in Petersburg. Her aunt Anna Higginbotham was 2nd wife of Wilhelm's uncle, Johannes Forsch. Jane Higginbotham seems to have been a lady of strong character for it was at her instigation that Wilhelm Blessig asserted his right in 1848 of becoming Head of his late father's firm of Blessig & Co, and that resulted in the voluntary retirement of his father's old partners F. Forsch and P.G. Schinckel. She was a handsome woman, and her children inherited her good looks. Following those of Wilhelm Blessig's first marriage, the children were:

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(vii) Edward William Blessig

Born 1837, died 1909 in St. Petersburg. He was educated at the Commerce School there, at King's College, London, and at the Merchants' School at Lubeck. During 1856-7 he gained his first practical experience of business in the office of his uncle P.J. Blessig at Liverpool, and he always maintained that the thorough grounding received then was of great value to him in his later career, which indeed was a notably successful one.



Edward Blessig

He entered the family Firm in Petersburg in 1858, and consequent on his father's death, he became Head of the Firm from 1st January 1863, at the early age of 26, and he continued as Head of it until his death 45 years later. As has been mentioned earlier, he restored the prosperity of the business, which had declined to a low level in his father's lifetime, and in that his youngest brother John, whom he took as partner, ably assisted him from 1870 to 1905. In addition to his work as head of Blessig & Co, Edward was from 1866 a Director of the First Russian Assurance Company, which had been founded in 1827, and he was later Chairman of that Company. From 1872 he was also a Director of the Russian Cotton Mill, and from 1890 a Director of the Sampson Cotton Mill, From 1888 he was a Director of the St. Petersburg Discount Bank, and a Governor of it in 1905. He was also a Director of the Russian Lloyd during 1890-95. He was a St. Petersburg Commercial Counsellor.

Edward Blessig did not marry, and after his father's house on the

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English Quay was sold about 1863 he lived in the 10th Line on Vassili Ostrov with his widowed mother and sisters Jane and Eugenie. After the death of his uncle Dr Robert Blessig in 1878 he became guardian of the daughter of his late stepbrother Alexander, Amalie Clelia Catharine Blessig. In 1897 he sold the house on Vassili Ostrov to the Firm of Blessig & Co, and he purchased a villa at Peterhof, 18m W. of Petersburg.

He became very stout after middle life and weighed about 17 stone, and he used frequently to visit the Spa at Carlsbad in summer months when his uncle P.J. Blessig of Liverpool was there. He looked after the latter's Russian investments in Petersburg, until they were transferred to Liverpool shortly before his uncle's death in 1904.

(viii) Alfred Blessig

Born 1839 St. Petersburg, died about 1868 in Canada. He was educated at the Commerce School in Petersburg and at the Merchants' School at Lubeck. He seems to have been an unsettled person, and in 1863, after his father's death in Petersburg, he worked his passage as a sailor in a ship to Canada. In 1865 he wrote from Toronto to his uncle P.J. Blessig in Liverpool, asking for financial aid to purchase a farm with livestock and implements, but that request apparently was not granted, and he then obtained work from farm owners. After 1868 nothing more was heard of him. When his mother died in 1874 in Petersburg, her Executors caused enquiries to be made. A Mrs. Bell, who had formerly been a governess in Petersburg and friend of his mother, had some relatives named Evans who lived in Toronto. From them it was ascertained that Alfred Blessig had been working on a very remote farm at the time of his disappearance, and that he had been sent one day with money to a Bank in the nearest town, or to another farm, and was never seen again. The owners of the farm where he had been, working considered it probable that he had been set upon, robbed, and killed by a gang who knew that he was carrying the money.

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(ix) Sophia Blessig

Born 1840 St. Petersburg, d.1917 at Cheltenham. She married in Petersburg in 1866, as his 2nd wife, **Bernard Whishaw**, who was b.1821 in Petersburg and d.1900 at Cheltenham.



The Whishaws were a Cheshire family, and their senior branch established a business in Petersburg about 1770 and was among the leading English merchants there. Bernard was a grandson of the founder partner in Messrs. Hills & Whishaw. His first wife was **Isabel Maria Cattley**, b.1829, and d.1863 in Petersburg. (A granddaughter of that marriage was **Stella Zoe Whishaw**, a talented lady who spoke six languages, and who became a notable actress; she married in Petersburg in 1907 **Baron Paul Meyendorff**, Captain in the Horse Guards and ADC to the Tsar, and later Colonel in his Military Secretariat. They had 3 children. In the Revolution they suffered much hardship, lost all their possessions, and were temporarily imprisoned, but through the Baltic Germans Committee they were enabled to leave Petrograd at end of 1918, for Estonia where they lived on a remnant of the family estates near Reval. Stella acted in theatres at Reval and Dorpat, and also in Berlin, in 1921-22, under the name of **Stella Arbenina**. In 1923 she came with her children to London, where she continued acting on stage and in films for some years. Her book, "Through Terror to Freedom" published in 1930, describes her experiences in the Revolution).

By his 2nd wife Sophia Blessig, Bernard Whishaw had eight children. In 1877, with 5 children of that marriage and two unmarried daughters of his 1st marriage, they left Petersburg and settled at Cheltenham, where two more children were born. Bernard Whishaw's parents had previously settled at Cheltenham on leaving St. Petersburg in 1851, and his father had died there

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in 1868; his mother was still living there in 1877, but died soon afterward. Sophy and Bernard Whishaw lived at a house called 'Hereward' in Shurdington Road. After his death in 1900 his widow with three unmarried daughters moved to a smaller house called 'Rockholme' on Leckhampton Hill near Cheltenham. The daughters lost all their fortune, invested in Petersburg, after the Revolution. The children were:

(a) **Bernard John Whishaw**, b.1867 St. Petersburg, died in 1951 at Cheltenham. He was educated at Sherborne, and then went into business in Petersburg. He married there in 1895 a Finnish lady, **Joanna Pesonnen**, who was b.1869, and d.1903 in Petersburg. In later years Bernard John Whishaw lived at Huntley in Gloucestershire. He had two sons:

(a i) **Lt.Col. Wilfrid Bernard Whishaw** OBE, MC, late Royal Engineers, b.1896. He married in 1926, **Joan Frederique Armstrong**, who was b.1899. They live at Cheltenham and have two daughters:

Joan Whishaw b.1928, and **Wanda Whishaw** b.1931.

(a ii) **Harold Alexander Whishaw**, b.1898; Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

(b) **Henry Edward Whishaw**, b.1869 St. Petersburg, d.1926 Keynsham.

(c) **Lt. Col. Edward Richard Whishaw**, b.1871 St. Petersburg. Commissioned in S. Staffs. Regt 1891; Adjutant 1895-98; appointed to Staff of Genl. Kitchener in Egyptian campaign 1898; attached to Egyptian Army from 1899 and commanded Sudanese Bn, retiring as Major in 1912; rejoined Army 1914 as Major in 7th(T) Bn, Manchester Regt; Commandant, L. of C, Palestine; retired as Lt.Col, 1919. Lived at Heliopolis and became an official of the Cairo Race-course. d. 24.1.1939 at Heliopolis.

(d) **Mary Ida Whishaw**, b.1872 St. Petersburg; lived at 'Rockholme', Leckhampton, and worked at Cheltenham Ladies College; d.1953 at Cheltenham.

(e) **James Wilfrid Whishaw**, b, 1874, d.1875, St. Petersburg.

(f) **Lilian Sophy Whishaw**, b.1876 St. Petersburg, d.1942 Cheltenham. She was a VAD nurse at Lady Paget's Save Mala Hospital in Belgrade in the Serbo-Bulgar War of 1913, and at Leckhampton VAD Hospital in 1914-18 War. Later worked as a dispenser in Shropshire, and at Cheltenham Ladies College.

(g) **Alice Adini Whishaw**, b.1877 Cheltenham; lived at 'Rockholme', Leckhampton, and kept Skye terrier kennels there; d. 1952 Cheltenham.

(h) **Winifred Kathleen Whishaw**, b.1884 Cheltenham, d.1952 Cheltenham. She served in the WAAC in 1914-18 War, and then lived in France until 1932 and had dog-breeding kennels there. Later she had the Cotsall Kennel at Leckhampton, breeding bulldogs and wire-haired terriers and winning many championships. She was a well-known judge and steward

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at dog-shows.

(x) Jane Blessig



Jane (Jetuscha) Blessig
Petersburg. 1875.

Born 1841 St. Petersburg, died 1924 at Oxford. She kept house for her brother Edward in Petersburg after her sister Eugenie died in 1901. After Edward's death in 1909 she came to England and lived in Iffley Road, Oxford. She lost much of her fortune, which was invested in Petersburg, after the Revolution,

(xi) Adini Amelia Blessig



Adini Cattley & daughter Nell
Petersburg. 1870.

Born 1843 St. Petersburg, died 1928 Winchester. She married in 1866 in Petersburg, **Frederick Thomas Cattley**, who was born there in 1825 and died in 1893 at Ramsgate. He was a flax broker, and belonged to a Yorkshire family which had long been settled in Petersburg and whose numerous members were among the leading English merchants there. Adini and Frederick Cattley left Petersburg about 1880 and settled at Ramsgate. After the death of her husband, Adini Cattley lived in Upper Norwood and neighbouring parts of London, and during the last years of her life she lived near her brother John Blessig at St. Cross,

Winchester. Children:

(a) **Helen Adini Cattley**, b.1867 St. Petersburg d. 1955 at Tunbridge Wells near Sevenoaks.

(b) **Frederick Henry Cattley**, b.1868 St. Petersburg, died in 1947 at Eastbourne; he was with Blessig, Braun & Co, in Liverpool from 1889 to 1895, and then in business in Petersburg; he was hon. secretary of the small English Golf Club at Mourino, 12m. NE of the city. He married in Petersburg, **Anna**, who was b.1889; she died in 1949 at Eastbourne. Children:

(b i) **Alan Richard Cattley**, schoolmaster. Oxford.

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(b ii) **Dorothy Adini Cattley**; m. 1938, **Walter G. Hamilton-Hunt**.

(b iv) **Isabel Harriet Cattley**, b.1870 St. Petersburg, died in 1951 at Blackburn, Lancs. She married at Ramsgate in 1894, the Reverend **Henry Gardner Hills** MA, b.1866, son of John and Caroline Hills of Regent's Park, London. He was educated at Marlborough and Keble and was ordained 1890. Curate at Ramsgate 1890-93, and at Christ Ch. East Greenwich 1893-96, and Curate-in-Charge there 1896-1902. Vicar of St. Andrew with St. Michael, Greenwich 1902-05 of All Saints, Battersea Park 1905-14, of Holy Trinity, Bromley, 1914-17, and of St. Thomas's, Portman Square, 1917-30. On retirement he lived at Bryn Eglwys, Criccieth, and died there 1945. Children:

(i) **John, David Hills**, b.1895 Greenwich. Educated at Merchant Taylors School and at Lincoln College, Oxford. MA. Served in 1914-18 War in 5th Bn. Leicestershire Regt; Lt. Col, MC and bar, Croix de Guerre, & Despatches. Assistant Master, Eton. College to 1921-39, Head Master of Bradfield College, Berks, from 1939 to 1955 Married in 1932, **Lady Rosemary Baring**, elder daughter of 2nd Earl of Cromer. Children:

(a) **Jean Adini Hills**, b.1933 Eton, m 1955 **The Hon Christopher Willoughby** d 1932 Lieut. Coldstream Guards. (son of 11th Baron Middleton): 2 daughters Willoughby

(c) **Margaret Ruby Hills**, b.1934 Eton.

(d) **John Evelyn Hills**, b.1939 Eton.

(ii) **Caroline Adini Hills**, b.1897 Greenwich; married in 1919 **Frederick Maynard Cams -Wilson**, b, 1888, Children:

(a) **Adini Anne Cams-Wilson**, b.1920; m. 1951, Rev. J.G. Grimwade.

(b) **David William Maynard Cams-Wilson**, b. 1923; 2/Lieut, KRRC, k.i.a, Italy, 1944.

(iii) **Andrew Cattley Hills**, b.1901 Greenwich; educated Shrewsbury. Bank of England Principal; married 1928, **Vera Key**. Children:

Peter John Hills, b. 1929; Captain, Coldstream Guards. **Vera Patricia Hills**, b.1931 **Michael Andrew Hills**, b.1934.

(iv) **Mary Steorra Haynes Hills**, b.1908 Battersea; married 1935, **Leonard Dawson Collier**, schoolmaster, Blackburn, Lancs.

(v) **Thomas Henry Hills**, b.1909 Battersea; educated at Uppingham. Chief Radiologist, Guy's Hospital. Married (I) **J. Edmonson**. Children:

Virginia Hills, **John Gardner Hills**, **Thomas Hills**, d.

He married (II) 1950, **Nina Packer**; da **Carolyn Anne Hills**.

Charles Robert (Robin) Cattley, b.1871 St. Petersburg, d.1952 nr. Winnipeg, Canada. He emigrated to Canada in 1893; served in the Winnipeg Rifles in 1914-18 War, and was severely wounded.

(e) **John Hubert Cattley**, b, 1873 St. Petersburg; he was in Ceylon during 1895-98 and later emigrated to Winnipeg, Canada, where he married

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Flora Donkin. Children:

Evelyn Elizabeth Cattley, d. **Thomas Robert Cattley**, b.1912. **Enid Muriel Cattley**, b.1913. **Helen Francis Cattley**, b,1916, d. **Margaret Joan Cattley**, b.1919. **John Edward Cattley**, b.1921.

Thomas Frank Cattley, b.1874 St. Petersburg. Educated at Repton and Hertford College, Oxford. MA. Assoc. football Blue. He was Assistant Master at Eton College from 1899, and House Master 1914-1930. From 1942 he became School Librarian. d. 2. 8.1958 Eton College

Kenneth Moberly Cattley, b.1876 St. Petersburg, d.1953 Croydon. Educated at Repton. He was Secretary of a Golf Club at Cuckfield, Sussex, for some years. Served as Lieut, in 4th Bn. H. Sussex Regt, and also in RFC Balloon Sect, in 1916-19. He married (I) 1910, **Mary Gertrude Mens**.

Children:

Colin Thomas Moberly Cattley, b.1911; m.1932, **Pamela A. Butcher**. **Roland John Cattley**, b.1914; m.1936, **Virginia Broadway**. **Anthony Miles Cattley**, b.1916, d. Dec. 1934. **Kenneth Cattley** m. (II) 1936, **Mrs. Phyllis Drabble**, nee Fleming.

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(xii) Mary Blessig

Born in 1845 at St. Petersburg, died 1896 at Surbiton. She married in 1868 in Petersburg, **Francis Cayley Bennett**. He was b.1842, and was 6th son of



Rev. Henry Bennett of Sparkford Hall, near Bath, who married in 1821 Emily Moberly of Petersburg. One of Frank Bennett's sisters married Rev. R.W. Church who became Dean of St. Paul's, and another sister married Rev. E.G. Church who was Sub-Dean of Wells. Mary and Frank Bennett had no children. They left St. Petersburg about 1890 for London, and lived at Shalston Villas on Surbiton Hill, near his elder brother George Bennett. Mary Bennett visited her uncle P.J. Blessig at Liverpool several times during her few years of residence in England. After her death, Frank Bennett married in 1898 at Maidstone, **Helen Drayton Hailey**, b.1856, and they lived at Roehampton. He died in 1919 at Veryan in Cornwall.

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(xiii) Eugenie Blessig

Born 1847, died 1901, in St. Petersburg. She kept house there for her brother Edward for about 30 years, and made frequent visits to England. In 1894 the English ladies in St. Petersburg presented a clock to Princess Alix of Hesse on the occasion of her marriage to Tsar Nicholas II, and Mrs. Meade, Mrs. Hubbard and Eugenie Blessig were chosen to make that presentation

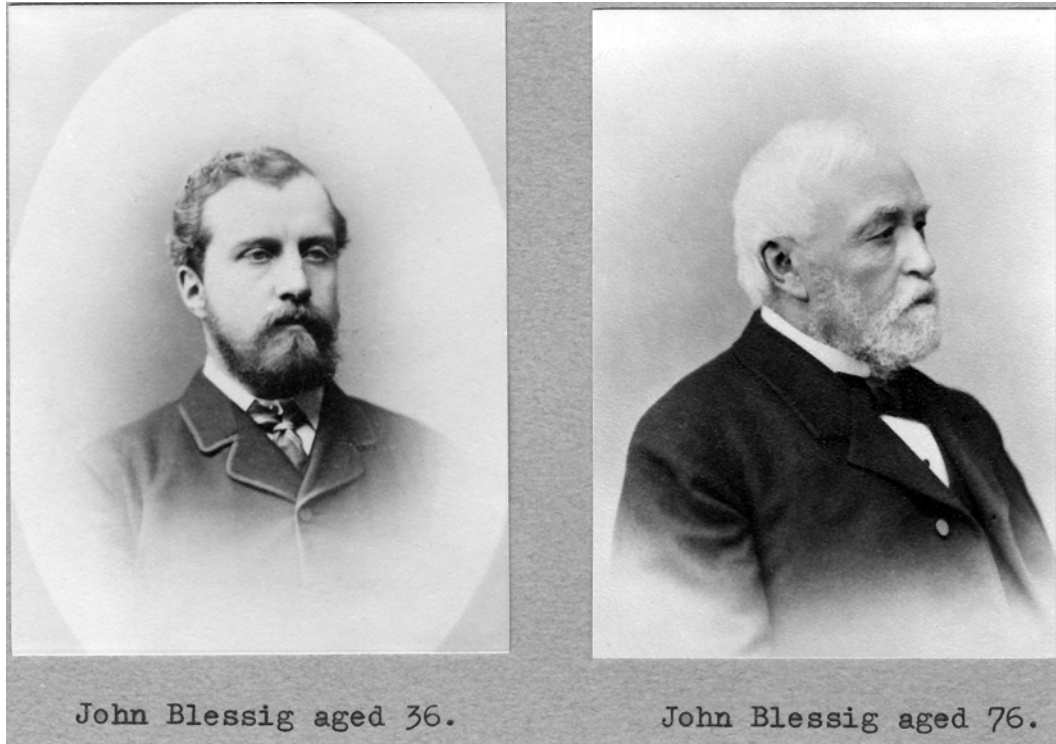


Eugenie Blessig. 1875.

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(xiv) John Philip Blessig

Born in 1849 at St. Petersburg, died 1927 at Winchester.



He was educated at C. May's private school in Petersburg. During 1856-65- In 1866-68 he was in the office of Hills and Whishaw there, and during 1868-70 in Blessig, Braun & Co. at Liverpool. In 1870 he entered the firm of Blessig & Co. in St. Petersburg, and became a partner with his brother Edward from 1874. During 1890-92 he was on the Board of the J.F. Gunzberg Bank, and from 1893 he was a Director of the New Cotton Mill in Petersburg. In 1892 he worked for some months as a member of the Famine Relief Committee at Saratov on the Volga, where there was an epidemic of famine typhus. From 1898 he was a Director of the Russian Lloyd. He was a member of the English Church Council in Petersburg, and was its Treasurer for 9 years. From 1883 he had been a member of the English Benevolent Society, and was its Treasurer for 13 years. He was one of the founders of the Marie Home for Sailors in Petersburg, and during 1897-1905 he was Treasurer of that also.

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J.P. Blessig married in St. Petersburg in 1878, **Helen Anderson** who was born there in 1857.



She was a daughter of **Robert Alexis Anderson** and **Harriet Cattley**, and was one of 14 children. Three of her sisters married Whishaw brothers. John and Nellie had no children, and they adopted as daughter, **Mary Isabel Lambert**, who subsequently married **Baron Adrian Cesar v. Duben**. (Sweden)

John and Nellie Blessig left St. Petersburg for London in 1905 and became British Subjects. They purchased No. 28 Hans Rd, Knightsbridge. When his brother Edward died in 1909 John Blessig went back there as his Executor, and wound up the Firm of Blessig & Co, and sold the house on Vassili Ostrov, and Edward's villa at Peterhof. **The Firm of Blessig & Co, in St. Petersburg thus came to an end after an existence of nearly 110 years from the date of its founding by Philip Jacob I Blessig.** In 1925 John and Nellie sold their London house, finding it too expensive to keep up, and they purchased a small house called 'Meadway1 at St. Cross, Winchester, taking with them their old butler **Sergei Trohlaieff**, who had been with them for more than 30 years, and his wife as a cook. John Blessig died at 'Meadway' in Nov. 1927 aged 78, and his wife died in March 1928, aged 71. John's sister Adini Cattley, who lived near them at St. Cross, also died in 1928; aged 85, and all are buried at Winchester.

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The last two children of Catharina van Zanten ere:

(3) Philip Blessig.

born and died. 1801 in St. Petersburg.

(4) George Heinrich Blessig

Born 1806 in St. Petersburg, died 1834 at Carlsruhe. In 1828 he went from St. Petersburg on a tour of Switzerland and Alsace, and then to Paris, where he studied to become an artist. His health was poor and he died at the early age of 28.