

GERMAN-RUSSIAN HERITAGE

STEPPES TO AMERICA

Compiled by
Oklahoma Harvester Chapter
American Historical Society of Germans from Russia
1991

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INTRODUCTION

One of the purposes and goals of American Historical Society of Germans from Russia is to encourage and help members in compiling their own family histories through comprehensive genealogy programs. In keeping with this, various members of the Oklahoma Harvesters Chapter of AHSGR have prepared histories of their families which have been reproduced exactly as submitted, without editing, and combined in this booklet titled, GERMAN-RUSSIAN HERITAGE, STEPPES TO AMERICA. For additional information regarding the family histories that appear in this work, please contact the Oklahoma Harvester Chapter through AHSGR in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Chapter has elected to place a copy of GERMAN-RUSSIAN HERITAGE, STEPPES TO AMERICA, in each of the following libraries:

Kiowa, Kansas
AHSGR, Lincoln, Nebraska
Alva, Oklahoma
Carmen, Oklahoma
Cherokee, Oklahoma
Fairview, Oklahoma

DEDICATED TO RAYMOND GEIS 1911-1990

This work was conceived and is presented here as a memorial to Raymond Geis, one of the organizers and the first president of the Oklahoma Harvester Chapter of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia. After his term as president, he continued his membership, diligently and faithfully serving the organization in many capacities through the years.

Raymond Geis, 79, died Nov. 12 at St. Mary's Hospital in Enid. Services were Nov. 15 at Cherokee's First Baptist Church and burial was in Cherokee Municipal Cemetery.

Geis was born April 1, 1911, north of Cherokee to Henry and Barbara Weigand Geis. He completed an extensive number of courses at Northwestern and taught school at Amorita and Burlington before becoming deputy court clerk and deputy sheriff in Alfalfa County.

In 1942, he became an accountant with Douglas Aircraft in Oklahoma City. Geis then returned to Cherokee, where he worked for Farmers Exchange Bank for 37 years. He retired in 1982 as executive vice-president and was on the board of directors until his death.

Geis and Alyce Elizabeth Hankey were married Sept. 24, 1938.

He was a member of the First Baptist Church, Gideon's International, Rotary Club, the Cherokee School Board, was treasurer of United Way and served with the Tuberculosis Association and CROP.

Geis was named "Citizen of the Year" in Cherokee in 1988 and "Man of the Year" by

the Cherokee Business and Professional Women's Club in 1974. He also received awards from the 4-H and FFA groups in Cherokee. Shortly before his death, Geis helped form the local chapter of American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.

Survivors include his wife, Alyce; a son, Larry of San Francisco, CA; a daughter, Margaret Smith of Cherokee; a brother, Edwin of Cherokee; and three grandchildren.

AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GERMANS FROM RUSSIA

The purpose of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia is to bring together people who are interested in the history of Germans from Russia. Through a better understanding of these people we will also promote a better appreciation of them and a continuation of their culture through their descendants.

Founded in 1968, this society is an international, non-profit, educational organization. Actively engaged in researching the history of all Germans from Russia, the society publishes historical and genealogical materials which are distributed throughout the year to its members. Its dedicated corps of volunteers work on both the local chapter and international level searching for information, translating and developing a storehouse of knowledge that will be useful to many generations to come.

Members are encouraged and helped in compiling their own family histories through comprehensive genealogy programs. Available is an extensive file of family group charts and other pertinent information. The society also has a growing collection of library materials available through interlibrary loan from AHSGR headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska.

For additional information regarding this organization, one may contact American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 631 D Street, Lincoln NE 68502-1199.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF GERMANS FROM RUSSIA

During the mid 1700s, Russia, under the rule of Catherine The Great, found itself in need of foreign immigrants to settle its immense unpopulated areas, mostly in Southern Russia. At the same time in Germany, families suffered under heavy taxes, a shortage of land, compulsory military service, long periods of war, religious persecutions and other difficult conditions. On July 22, 1763, Czarina Catherine II issued a manifesto offering various inducements to attract foreign settlers to her vast domains. Some of these inducements included partial traveling expenses to their new homes, permission to settle in their own closed colonies with general civil administration rights, free land, loans, exemption from taxes for a period of time, complete religious freedom, complete freedom of language and schools, and complete exemption from military service. These privileges were guaranteed in a special imperial decree in perpetuity, which some interpreted as an indefinite period, others for a period of one-hundred years, while others thought it meant "forever". Tradition, however, interpreted it to mean "one-hundred years".

Thousands of families, particularly from Germany, took advantage of these welcome opportunities, and various areas in Russia were settled over a period of time. These areas included regions along the Volga River near Saratov and south near present day Stalingrad; regions around the Dnieper and the Don Rivers in the Ukraine, north of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov; and regions south of St. Petersburg and southeast of Riga. Life was difficult in their new environments and many died of disease and other hardships, but eventually most of these German villages began to grow and prosper. As the villages grew in population, new land was required, creating the establishment of daughter colonies which also grew and prospered.

It was close to 100 years from the time of the Manifesto that the Russian government's policies toward the German colonies began to change. Considered by the greatest part of the colonies to be the most untenable change of policy was the law requiring universal military service. This prompted widespread discontent among the German villages to the point that some even sent representatives to other countries in search of places to immigrate. The United States, Canada, Argentina and Brazil were among the countries considered suitable, and a mass exodus began around 1874, continuing for a number of years. Thousands migrated to the United States, settling in Kansas, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, and Colorado, among other places.

This, then, is the general background to the family stories which appear in this work. Where some have included references to this historical material (with, perhaps, variations), others have not.

THE JOHN BAHM (BOEHM) AND EVA BELTZ BAHM FAMILY

My great-grandparents on my father's side were Konrad and Katherine Bahm of Kutter, Russia. They raised their family there and presumably died and were buried there. I only know of John Boehm as their child. I do not know if there were any other children.

John grew up in Kutter and married Eva Beltz. They were carpenters and weavers in this family. Four children were born:

Phillip - Nov. 24, 1874 - died Oct. 16, 1955

John E. - Jan. 20, 1876 - died Aug 24, 1936 - Farmer

Elizabeth - Sept 29, 1877 - died Jan. 8, 1979 - Housewife

Eva - Jan. 20, 1883 - died May 3, 1947 - Housewife

At this time in history Catharine the Great's promises were being broken. The German language was not being preserved and schools and churches were persecuted. Young men were inducted into the Russian Army after being exempt in Catharine's original agreement.

Rumors from America came to the Bahms, Relatives wrote about land and opportunities for young men. The family began saving their money and with the help of relatives, they finally had enough collected to pay their way out of Russia. (The country allowed Germans to leave if the families could scrape together funds for the passage.)

John, Eva and children left by train. After crossing the English Channel by boat all landed at Liverpool in 1891 (I think.) They crossed the Atlantic Ocean, taking several weeks on a converted freighter. Landing in Philadelphia, Pa., they went by train to La Crosse, KS where

relatives or friends sponsored the family.

Everyone worked on farms or homes except Grandma, Eva and Phillip. (Eva was a child and Phillip was crippled.) Money was always turned over to the parents to distribute for food, clothing and savings.

Life was hard for several years, but after the Cherokee Strip was opened, people became anxious to move to Indian Territory where farms were plentiful. Some homesteaders were already selling places there for one reason or another. Grandpa Bahm bought 160 acres for \$150 and put up a small frame house. He began farming and doing carpenter work.

My father, who was also a farmer, met Rebecca Buckles, whose family homesteaded a neighboring farm. They were married and had two sons-- Gilmer and Clinton. When the boys were quite young, their mother died of typhoid fever. Gilmer Gibson Bahm was born Sept. 1900; Clinton John Bahm on Feb. 4, 1903.

John E. Bahm married a woman whose last name was Schwab--Katie, I think, but their marriage lasted only six months and they were divorced.

He later married Marie K. Houser, a young Catholic who had recently come from Krotzinggan, Baden Baden, Germany, to live with her unmarried brother. Marie was born April 9, 1888 and died Oct. 18, 1945.

Marie and John E. Bahm had 10 children after their Sept. 29, 1909 marriage:

Agnes Marie - b. June 16, 1910 - d. March 31, 1986 - L.P.N.
buried - Cushing Memorial Cem., Cushing, OK

Theodore Joseph - b. Aug. 13, 1912 - farmer

* Elizabeth Catherine - b. Mar. 30, 1914 - clerk

Ralph Albert - b. Dec. 12, 1915 - d. Mar. 13, 1974 - soldier, janitor

(continued on next page)

Agatha Magdeline - b. Sept. 5, 1918 - d. May 1, 1980 - Registered nurse

Clark George - b. June 17, 1919 - Engineer

Carl James - b. May 22, 1922 - Engineer, O.G.&E.

Julius Paul - May 22, 1922 - d. July 27, 1936

Francis Clemet - b. April 12, 1925 - d. June 2, 1987 - Champlin Oil Co.
buried Enid Memorial Park Cem., Enid, OK

Robert Eugene - b. April 22, 1927 - Farmer

I married Carl A. Terry on Oct. 16, 1937. Five children were born to
this union:

Elizabeth Catherine Bahm - Carl A. Terry

1. Mary Louise - b. Aug. 21, 1938 - Reg. nurse
2. Carolyn Bernice - b. Nov. 18, 1940 - Reg. nurse
3. Glenn William - b. Oct. 13, 1945 - d. Oct. 18, 1968 - student
4. Steven Carl - b. Oct 5, 1948 - School principal
5. Norma Kay - b. Nov. 3, 1956 - Farm wife

Grandfather John Bahm changed the spelling of the family name upon
entering America, as there was no "ö" (sound) in the English alphabet.

Grandmother Eva Beltz Bahm was born Dec. 29, 1854 in Kutter, Russia.
She died in Cherokee, OK on March 27, 1940.

Rebecca Buckles was born July 20, 1872 and died Dec. 10, 1906. She
was buried at Rose Hill Cemetery, Hazelton, KS.

Compiled by Elizabeth Terry
April, 1991

BRINING, JOHANN HEINRICH (HENRY)

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Brining, Sr. and their son Henry, Jr. left Kutter, or Saratov, Russia in April of 1892 arriving in the U.S. at New York in May. After some delay of two weeks they arrived at Otis, Kansas in Rush county, working odd jobs. In July of the same year Henry, Sr. and Henry, Jr. found work at Harper, Kansas following a threshing machine for sixty to ninety days at a dollar a day, working from sun up to dark. Henry, Jr. being a lad of eighteen found the hot weather of Kansas different from the Northern Russian climate, but with determination he managed to survive.

After two seasons of working at odd jobs including another threshing season in the summer of 1894, Grandfather heard that land was available in Indian Territory Oklahoma. Grandmother (Katharina Mary) had remained in Otis with her parents. Grandfather went to Oklahoma and purchased a relinquishment from a man who made the Run in 1893. He purchased 160 acres for \$200.00.

Grandmother was reluctant to come to Oklahoma fearful about the stories she had heard of the Indians scalping the white folks. She finally gave in. They built a sod house and Grandfather plowed about ten acres with a walking plow, planted it to wheat, but the following year the army worms damaged the crop so they barely got their seed back. Grandfather and my father (Henry, Jr.) went back to Harper, Kansas to follow the threshing machine for income to meet family needs.

During that summer while the menfolks were gone to Harper, Grandmother remained on the farm in her sod house. According to the terms of the Homestead Act residence had to be maintained. A flash rain flooded her house as part of it was in the ground. She managed to dip out the water and dry out their small belongings.

After three crop failures they decided to stay one more year. If that year was not successful, they would leave Oklahoma since the land was not capable of any production. The fourth year they had a bumper crop and broke up more ground. In Russia, Grandfather would have to give all his crop to the "nobleman." The freedom to keep his crop, no matter what, was the deciding factor to remain in Oklahoma.

They had very little social and church activity and they were very lonely. In fact they had very little contact with the outside world. My father tells of his neighbor and friend, John Bahm. He and John had walked to Arndt Store, a trading post, on one winter afternoon to shoot the breeze and visit with neighboring young men. After dark they started walking home which was about four miles away. They had been walking for about an hour or more in the tall prairie grass, when father suggested, "I think we are lost," but John maintained he knew exactly where they were. There were no fences or roads and they lived across the way from each other. They decided to separate and each went his own way home. Father said he walked all night and it was not until day break that he saw his little sod house. The irony of it was that the incident was never mentioned again. Father reasoned, "I was lost and I knew John was too."

Written by Herbert E. Brining in 1970

Konrad Brining was the father of Henry Brining, Sr. Konrad had five brothers their names are Adam, Ludwig, John, Henry and George. They were probably born in the decade of 1810's. This is all I know about Konrad.

Henry Brining, Sr. born in Kutter, Russia December 21, 1846. Died at LaCross, Kansas on January 27, 1931. Was married in Kutter, Russia on February 23, 1867 to Katharina Mary Schmidt. Born in Kutter, Russia on March 16, 1847 and died at LaCross, Kansas on February 20, 1920. They had two children. Elizabeth (Brining) Lohry and Henry Brining, Jr.

Henry Brining, Jr. born in Kutter, Russia April 8, 1874 and died Cherokee, Oklahoma October 1, 1953. He married December 24, 1899 to Eva Beltz born in Kutter, Russia March 22, 1878, died April 4, 1945. They had three children: Henry Brining III, born April 30, 1901, died December 12, 1901 in Cherokee, Oklahoma. Herbert E. Brining born in Cherokee, Oklahoma on January 19, 1903 and died in Cherokee, Oklahoma Jan 16, 1981. Raymond B. Brining born in Cherokee, Oklahoma on March 31, 1909 and died in Tonkawa, Oklahoma, November 24, 1966.

Herbert Emmanuel Brining born in Cherokee, Oklahoma on January 19, 1903 and died Cherokee, Oklahoma on January 16, 1981. Married May 12, 1925 in Wichita, Kansas to Clara Elizabeth Geis, born in Okeene, Oklahoma May 21, 1904 and died in Cherokee, Oklahoma, October 25, 1982. Two children: Donald Herbert Brining born Cherokee, Oklahoma, March 14, 1927. Jane (Brining) Oakley, born May 31, 1932.

Donald Herbert Brining born in Cherokee, Oklahoma, on March 14, 1927. Married in Cherokee, Oklahoma on December 17, 1950 to Mary Jane Leeman born April 23, 1929. Two children: Adele (Brining) Hughey born April 30, 1952. Married in Wichita, Kansas, May 27, 1978 to Joseph B. Hughey, born March 3, 1952. Twin daughters, Katherine Jane and Meredith Ann were born in Overland Park, Kansas on April 9, 1985.

George Herbert Brining born in Cherokee, Oklahoma, October 2, 1954. Married in Adair, Oklahoma on May 28, 1982 to Teresa Lynn Webb born in Adair, Oklahoma on November 25, 1957. Two children: Adopted daughter Grace Marie born in New Mexico on February 15, 1986. Micah Charles born in West Plains, Missouri on November 6, 1986.

For about one hundred years the Brinings lived in the Kutter, Russia area and spelled their surname Broning. "Broning" was spelled this way in Germany before they migrated to Russia. When Mr. and Mrs. Henry Brining, Sr. and Henry Brining, Jr. in 1892 got off the ship at Ellis Island, New York, immigration officials stated umlants were not used in America. So the spelling was changed to Brining. A more likely spelling could have been "Broening," however, Mr. and Mrs. Brining, Sr. spelled their last name as "Brenning" on their tombstones in LaCross, Kansas.

There were several little stories by father (Herbert E. Brining) and my grandfather (Henry Brining, Jr.) told me from time to time. One was when his grandfather got his ticket to board the ship to come to America. He was shocked and stunned to find out his ticket accommodations were not first class but in third class, down in the bottom of the ship. He thought the high price of the ticket would be worth more than being put in the bottom of the ship.

My Grandfather (Henry Brining, Jr.) told me about his father after they had been here in this country. The money, earned even after working odd jobs in Rush County and helping with wheat harvest around Harper, Kansas in the summer months, was nearly all gone. After all, the only reason his father Henry, Sr. came to this country was by the insistence of his mother because her parents were already settled in Rush County, Kansas. After much heated discussion he decided he would go back to Russia by himself even though his wife and son said no. At his age in Russia his hard-working days were over and he would have a life of less work. Now in his mid-fifties he had no money and was working to barely exist. One morning he told them good-bye and farewell, took his worldly belongings and started walking to Ingersoll the first part of the trip back to Kutter, Russia. About sundown of the same day my Great Grandmother (Katharina Mary) and my Grandfather (Henry Brining, Jr.) saw him walking back from Ingersoll. His gamble with his families sympathy had failed.

One summer while Henry Brining, Sr. and Henry Brining, Jr. were working in harvest around Harper, Kansas a sudden thunder and rain storm came up. There were of course several wagons and teams. One of the drivers was Jewish and a bolt of lightening struck and killed him. All the other drivers mostly Germans from Russia had it all thought out. Their theory was the good Lord didn't intend for his people to do common labor, so he struck him dead.

The Brinings in Kutter, Russia were spinners and weavers of thread. These jobs were done primarily in winter. In the summer or warm months they did farm work. When they left Kutter, they brought with them one of their old spinning wheels. During one of the winters of the first three years in Oklahoma, they chopped up the old spinning wheel. They needed the wood for warmth and kindling. The only wood or trees in this area were many miles south of their dugout.

One winter they thought they wouldn't have enough food to last them. Across the way from them on the next claim was a civil war veteran. Henry Brining, Sr. and Henry Brining, Jr. heard rumors that he received a small pension. They couldn't decide who should go and ask for the money loan. Neither one wanted to go and beg for the money. Finally Henry, Jr. went and asked for some money. The veteran was very nice and loaned them some money and told them anytime he could help them he would. They immediately went and bought some flour, sugar and coffee.

After three years of crop failure they finally had a good one. After settling some obligations and deciding they were going to stay and farm, Henry, Sr. without saying anything to his wife and son went and bought a nice buggy and team. The reprimanded him for doing this since they had just went through all those lean and hard years. He replied, "It's my money and I will spend it as I please." Sounds like Great-Grandmother needed to demand her equal rights.

Written by Donald H. Brining as told to him by his father (Herbert E. Brining) and his grandfather (Henry Brining, Jr.) 1991.

THE LOUIE BRINING FAMILY

Louie Brining's forefathers immigrated during the reign of Catherine the Great, as a result of a promise of free land, homes, religious freedom and immunity for their sons from serving in the Russian Army forever. This was during the years of 1763 to 1767.

Most of the Germans had been artisans of one kind or another and knew little about agriculture, but once they arrived in Russia. they were forbidden to follow their former trades and were forced to till the land and make it produce, burying the knowledge of the trades they loved. Against all odds they had to survive. Many did not, some did. Years went by slowly and in many cases agonizingly.

In 1874 the Czar, Alexander II, issued a new decree abolishing the special privileges granted by Catherine the Great. The new government was distrustful of the German culture they did not really understand. Again the German families began to move - again uprooting themselves and migrating to a new land with thousands coming to the United States.

As this is an agricultural area, it would be interesting to know their methods of agriculture.

They would go out from their settlements to their small plots of ground where they worked the soil and planted wheat.

When it was harvest, Dad (Louie Brining) would swing the cradle which cut the wheat. My mother, (Mary Katharine Brining), would bind the wheat in bundles by hand, tying each bundle with rope made of green straw.

When the bundles dried and were ready for threshing, they were hauled back to the settlement where the bundles were broken and spread out on the threshing floor. Then the horses were led in and led round and round, tramping out the grain. After that, the straw was sifted and the grain fell to the bottom where it was dropped in the wind, blowing out the chaff. Then the grain was gathered and sacked and hauled back to the settlement, later to be taken to the flour mill to be ground into flour.

The question was asked, "why did the Russians lose the Russo-Japanese war?" They were "bottled up in Murmansk." Their supply lines were cut and the Japanese held them there until they were starving. This caused the troops to eat horse meat in order to survive. My Dad was one of the soldiers who had to eat the horse meat.

This story was told by Henry Brining, son of Louie Brining. 1985

The German people were in Russia by invitation from Katharine the Great.

She made promises of land allotments.

JOHANN LUDWIG

Mr. and Mrs. Louie Brining were born in Kutter, Russia. They grew up there,

Married and had two children, Marie and Louie. Mrs. Brining's maiden name was Marie Katharina Loos.

Mr. Brining served four years' compulsory military training in the Russian Army. Later he served two years in heavy artillery in Russo-Japanese War.

When Mr. Brining was in compulsory training, the Czar came out before the troops and asked for their support in the present form of government.

Socialism had already become entrenched and they overthrew the Czar.

While living in Kutter, their house, barn and all living quarters were under one straw thatched roof.

When Mr. Brining returned from the Russo-Japanese War, their home was destroyed by fire. All they had left were the clothes on their backs.

Mr. Brining had a brother living in the United States in Garden City, Ks.

He sent Louie Brining \$400.00 so that they might come to the United States.

They came by a freighter ship, landing in Galveston, Tex. after thirty days on the high seas. The first inspection point was Bremen, Germany, where they were examined for various diseases before continuing on their journey to America.

There was a family with five children who failed the examination because of an eye disease and they were turned back.

The women and children were unloaded off the ship in Bremen. The men were kept on board until after the examinations. After they were examined the ship came back to shore and the women and children were put back aboard.

After landing in Galveston they traveled to Garden City, Kansas. The reason that a good deal of the people settled in through this central part of the country was because they had raised wheat near the Volga River and that they understood and loved.

Mr. Brining's first job was in a sugar beet factory, hauling lime rock to the furnaces. Not being able to speak the English language, he sat and watched the other men between loadings' of the furnace. He saw an old man sitting beside him who was chewing something. Louie, being a young healthy man was always hungry. The old man handed him a chunk of something, he smelled of it, tasted it, and it smelled like tobacco but didn't taste like tobacco because it was sweet.

In Russia, there was no chewing tobacco, just snuff and pipe tobacco. He bit off a big chew. By then the men were becoming amused., watching every move he made. He had chewed it pretty fine and swallowed it, giving the men a hearty laugh. He tried to get rid of it by running water in his mouth but to no avail. Years later, his comment on chewing tobacco was that was his first and last chew.

Later they moved to Cherokee where Mr. Brining worked as a day laborer. Henry was born in 1909. When he was 5 years of age they moved west of Cherokee on a farm. John was born in 1911.

Mr. Brining farmed about twnety years and then moved back to Cherokee in 1940. Louie passed away April 21, 1954 and Mrs. Brining passed away October 14, 1958.

FAMILY OF MARGUERITE L. BROWN

Maternal Grandparents

John Jacob Gillig - Farmer

born: October 12, 1840 - Grime or Friendenfeld, Russia

died: Feb. 24, 1917 - Alfalfa Co., Oklahoma

married: Dec. 25, 1875

to

Eliza Margaret Linker - Homemaker

born: Feb. 28, 1853 - Russia

died: Aug. 27, 1925 - Alfalfa County, Oklahoma

Parents

Elizabeth Gillig - Homemaker

born: Dec. 21, 1882 - Russia

died: Sept. 30, 1974 - Kiowa, KS

married: Dec. 21, 1910

to

Albert Vogel - Stone mason - Bricklayer - Farmer

born: Aug. 9, 1866

died: July 5, 1942 - Arkansas City, KS

(Made their home on a a farm in Alfalfa County, Oklahoma)

Me

Marguerite La Faye Vogel - Registered nurse

born: Oct. 8, 1912 - Alfalfa County, Oklahoma

married: Oct. 11, 1934

Marguerite La Faye Vogel married

Kevon James Brown - Sales dept. Apco Oil Co.

on October 11, 1934

Kevon James Brown

born: June 2, 1909 - Fredonia, KS

died: Nov. 5, 1959 - Anthony, KS

Our son

James Clay Brown - Entrepreneur

born: March 4, 1950 - Winfield, KS

married: Dec. 18, 1982

to

Paula Jean Halfast - Teacher

born: Jan 12, 1949 - Muskogee, Oklahoma

Marcine Diel Story

Grandfather George Diel married Mary Hanhart. They came from Russia to LaCrosse, Kansas. Isaac Diel born Jan. 27, 1884 at Albert, Kansas; died Oct. 24, 1975. Married Margret Natalie Wahlaschlegel (Nettie) born April 18, 1888, died Oct. 17, 1914. Isaac was a farmer. Both are buried in Apostolic Cemetery, Burlington, Okla.

Marcine Diel born April 4, 1910 in Harper, Kansas, married Helen I Terhune born Jan 29, 1913 in Balko, OK. Died Dec. 6, 1986, buried in Apostolic Cemetery, Burlington, Ok.

Their children were:

Marcelyn Rae	Jan. 6, 1936	Housewife
Virgil Gene	July 12, 1937	National Guard 21 years and a farmer

Marilyn Lou	Jan. 14, 1940	Housewife
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Nettie Diel passed away and Isaac married Marie Somerholder. Seven children came to this union. They are as listed:

Wilma	1916-1954
Marvin	1918
Vera	1919
Luella	1921
Stella	1923
Oliver	1926-1970
Jake	1927

The story told on Isaac and Nettie: lived west of Cherokee and decided to move to Burlington; they were taking the last load belongings to Burlington in the wagon. It was really over loaded and Isaac decided to throw some of the boxes off. One box contained Nettie's hats. Seeing this happen she calmly got down, went to his side of the wagon, picked up a bucket of his tools and dumped them on the ground. Ike got off the wagon, picked up his tools while Nettie gathered up her hats. They both got back into the buggy and proceeded on to Burlington.

THE HENRY GEIS FAMILY
(Johann Henrich Geis)

Our first ancestor settling in America was George Peter Geis. We do not know when his parents made the journey from Germany to Russia. We are fairly certain, though, that they came from the area around Mainz and Frankfurt - perhaps to the east and maybe north. When my husband and I visited Germany, we observed and listened to the dialects in the different localities and my husband was even more certain of the area at that time.

In the 1760's approximately 27,000 Germans went to Russia to settle along the Volga. The Geis family was among them.

In the first year of the reign of Catherine the Great, she issued a manifesto inviting all nationalities, except Jews, to come to Russia. The enticement was: all expenses paid, freedom of religion, freedom from taxes for 30 years, freedom from military duty for 100 years and the assurance that their area would be governed internally. The German entourage included farmers, artists and craftsmen.

The journey was long and full of deprivations - food was scarce, all suffered from severe cold weather and sickness and deaths did not escape them. Then when they arrived on the "steppes", their disappointment was heartbreaking. They had been promised homes, tools, and conveniences. Instead they found a barren land with a few lean-to buildings or huts. In order to protect themselves from the bitter cold which was sure to come, they built underground huts in the manner of the Tartars. These could house three or four families, although the crowded conditions and lack of ventilation made them far from desirable dwelling places. A point in their favor was the cleanliness of the women and the great industriousness of the men. These things separated them from their Russian neighbors.

In the spring of 1874 mass meetings were called on both sides of the Volga River and fourteen delegates were selected to come to America where they inspected much land in the midwest, principally in the states of Nebraska, Iowa and Kansas. It was then that our ancestors began planning and hoping to come to America.

Geirge Peter Geis and his wife Katharina Elisabeth Geis and their eight children sailed for America in 1887. Because of the loss of records, we do not know the name of the ship on which they came, but we do know it was about a 30-day journey and the family landed on Crystal Gardens. Ellis Island was unknown as yet.

According to the abstract form the Family Records Book of the Evangelical Reformed Congregation at Messer on the Volga, George Peter was married to Katharine Elisabeth Geis, February 16, 1865. George Peter was born September 17, 1843 and they were both confirmed at the age of 15 at Ust Solicha (Messer) in 1858. Their children born in Russia were: Katharina Margaretha, April 22, 1865; Katharina Elisabeth, November 10, 1871; Heinrich Franz, August 18, 1868; Georg Peter, December 26, 1869; Johann Georg, October 25, 1873; Johann Heinrich (OUR ANCESTOR) June 26, 1877; Friedrich, November 1, 1883; and Karl, January 1, 1886. Amelia, August 28, 1888; and Maria, March 7, 1890, were both born in America.

The above extraction is taken from the Parish Document and is substantiated (sub filia patris) with the affixture or the Parish Seal, date 26 February 1887 and signed by Pastor E. T. Dettling.

Our ancestor was eight years of age when he embraced the soil of the new land. The family first settled in Marian County, Kansas, on a farm. George Peter filed his Declaration of Intention to become a citizen of the United States at about the age of 43. He affirmed his bona fide oath to the U.S. and renounced forever all allegiance to Alexander, CZAR of RUSSIA.

Soon the family moved to Loyal, Oklahoma, and he was declared a citizen of the United States December 1st, 1900 in the District Court of Kingfisher County.

Barbara Weigand, born May 4, 1882, was the 3rd child of seven children. She was four years of age when she came with her parents, who had been residents of Messer, Russia, also. Her paternal grandfather, Conrad, was born in 1827 and died about 1902. His wife, Anna Rutzelstein Weigand, was born in October, 1828 and died November 14, 1914. They were married December 25, 1878 in Russia.

Barbara's family members were: Katherine, Anna, Barbara, Leah and Rachel (twins), Eva and Henry. Their parents were Christ and Dillas Lang Weigand.

Johann Heinrich (Henry) Geis and Barbara Weigand were married February 3, 1903 in Loyal, Oklahoma, where Henry's father had filed on a quarter section of land after moving from Durham, Kansas. He returned to Kansas to earn enough money to build a sod house. Immediately after their marriage, Henry & Barbara went to a new country, Hobart, Oklahoma. There they raised cotton and their first two sons were born there. Even the sons remembered the hard work and the non-productive crop in this new country. The family was forced to seek another new beginning and so they left southwest Oklahoma, with their two sons, Edwin Henry, born December 5, 1903, and Earl Lloyd, born April 2, 1906. They located near Okeene, Oklahoma, where Henry farmed and grazed cattle. Walter Vernon was born there on July 16, 1909.

Since his brother, Charley or Karl, lived near Cherokee, Henry and family moved in 1910 to the John Bahm place now owned by Ronald McMurtrey. Raymond was born there April 1, 1911. All four boys attended Enterprise Rural School, District 44, where they took the county exams and received their certificates to enter High School. While many of their neighbors attended Ingersoll school, they were on the border of the district and so all of them were graduates of Cherokee High School.

Work was hard in this new country for all the family, however little money was needed because of their thriftiness. They raised and butchered all their meat which was cured in smoke-houses and fried and covered with lard so that it was always ready for the table after being warmed. Sauerkraut was tightly packed in stone jars as well as pickled cucumbers and watermelons. Fruit and vegetables were canned from the garden and nearby orchards and all the bread and pastries were baked by the wonderful cook, Barbara. Dad was in demand for butcherings and harvest crews. Barbara cared for the four-room house and entertained many visitors as well as her family of six.

The German Bethel Baptist Church was built in Ingersoll so social and religious life was carried on in this medium. The trip of $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles was made twice each Sunday in a horse-drawn wagon and later a carriage. In cold weather the boys were tucked in straw and were warmed with hot bricks at their feet. Henry served as a deacon in both the Ingersoll and Cherokee Baptist churches.

It was in 1918 that Henry was prepared with knapsack and all the equipment to report for the Armed Services that a general ring came over the telephone line informing all that the Armistice had been signed. The boys remember the rejoicing because now the cave they had been working to finish could be a reality and father could remain with mother who really was too ill to have him leave her with the family to care for and support.

In 1919 the Geises bought a quarter of land four miles west and $3/4$ south of Cherokee. They were proud of their four sons and sacrificed to provide finances for them to graduate from high school and attend NWSTC, Alva, Oklahoma. Edwin chose to work in the clothing store of Mr. Jones in Cherokee. Shortly before his graduation a baby girl, Evelyn Barbara, was born to his parents. She lived only a few months.

Edwin's merchandising career took him to Okeene for a year. When he returned to Cherokee, he was employed by Ray Eastman Clothing Co. and the J. C. Penney Co., where he was assistant manager for 10 years. His employment with Bakers Department Store and the Dixie Store ended his "town career". In 1942 he and his wife, Lola Taylor Geis, moved to a farm 10 miles west of the city where they lived until Lola's death in 1972. Edwin married Paula Holland Hale in 1974. They resided on South Grand until her death in 1987. Since that time Edwin has been a resident of the Cherokee Manor and as of this date, May-1991, is the only living member of his family.

Earl graduated from NWSTC in 1958 and earned his Masters Degree in 1943 from Oklahoma University, Norman. He and his wife, Ruby Rudy Geis, established a home in Amorita, Oklahoma, where he taught and was Superintendent for 10 years. In 1942 they moved to Alva where he retired in 1971. He had been principal and

superintendent there 29 years. Earl died in 1980. His widow is a resident of Golden Oaks Village, Enid.

Walter, also a NWSTC graduate, was associated with Kent Johnson Insurance Agency in Alva before coming to Cherokee. He purchased the Mansfield Agency in 1939 and he and his wife, Lydia Unruh Geis, maintained it as the Walter V. Geis Insurance Company until its sale in 1971. Following his death in 1977 his wife remained in Cherokee.

Raymond completed his teaching certificate at NWSTC and taught in the Amorita and Burlington school systems until 1937. He became deputy Court Clerk of Alfalfa County until his appointment as deputy Sheriff in April, 1942. In 1943 he and his family moved to Oklahoma City where he was employed by Douglas Aircraft as a materials expeditor until World War II ended. At that time Cherokee became his permanent home until his death on November 12, 1990. He began his most satisfactory career with Farmers Exchange Bank and retired after 37 years as Executive Vice-President. His wife lives in Cherokee. The Geis farm continues to be a part of Raymond's and Walter's estates.

Henry and Barbara's grandchildren are: Warren Geis and Gladys Geis Schickedanz, Gloria Geis Cisna and Patricia Geis Ritchie, Larry R. Geis and Margaret Geis Smith. A grandson, Captain Bruce A. Geis, succumbed to cancer in 1983.

- - - Mrs. Raymond Geis

JOHN JACOB GILLIG

My father's name was John Jacob Gillig, and my mother's name was Margaret Eliza Linker Gillig, both born in Grime or Friedenfeld, Russia of German parents. Their parents were descendants of a group of German Colonists invited by Peter the Great to colonize a part of Russia about 200 years ago. My parents were married Dec 25, 1875. Five children were born to them in Russia; James, Leta, Mollie, Fred and Elizabeth. My dad had two sons, Alexander and John from a previous marriage.

The Russian Government was drafting young men into the military at the age of twelve. My mother was especially very intent on coming to America because she had heard that they did not draft young men there. My father had a cousin, Peter Gillig, that lived in Rush Co. Kan. who had also lived in Russia. He came to America earlier and he wrote letters to my folks and recommended that we come to America as he found it much better than Russia. So about 1880, with his influence, my folks decided to sell their stock and take what they could to Kansas. They traveled by ship and rail which took quite some time to reach Rush Co., Kan. His cousin Peter was helpful and took care of them till they were settled on a farm. About a year later another child was born, a girl, Pauline, who died in infancy.

They struggled along farming. Equipment was hard to get and I remember my older brothers and sisters said they had a yoke of oxen to work the ground. Everything was about the same for several years, except that two more baby girls, Mildred and Eva, arrived to increase our little flock. Then my father heard there was land to be opened for settlement in Glorietta, New Mex. Thinking this was an opportunity, they again drove in a covered wagon to New Mexico. The land was very rough and rocky and hard to till and clear, so again they packed up and drove in the mover wagon back to Rush Co. They farmed there for several years, another

sister and brother, Minnie and Samuel were born.

A few years after that came the opening of the Cherokee Strip in Oklahoma, and there my father saw another opportunity to get some land. He made the run from Caldwell and staked a claim, and so did another man on the same claim. Rather than contest it, my father let him have the land. Now back to Rush Co. again in 1895. In Oct. of 1895, I Hannah, the writer of this article was born. Our family had grown to ten children. Soon afterwards, my folks heard of a farm for sale in Oklahoma. It was three and one-half miles southwest of Kiowa, one half mile across the line into Alfalfa Co. They took some of the stock, and chickens, and some household goods. My brother, Fred, and one sister stayed there while they went back and got the rest of their possessions and family. They traveled again in a covered wagon and settled on the farm where I was raised. I was then a little less than one year old.

I remember we lived in a sod house and later built one room which we used to sleep in. Our quarters were crowded but no one seemed to mind. As pioneers we were equal to the hardships.

Then in another two and one half years our last baby girl was born. We named her Lillian. Things were going much better then. We made enough to build a two story home which to me seemed like a mansion. We tore down the old sod house. Our mode of travel was in a lumber wagon which took us to town and church and Sunday School.

Sadness came again, and our baby Lillian and brother, Samuel, became ill. We had doctors from Kiowa, but they didn't have the medical facilities to help, and they both died a short time apart. This left us sad and lonely.

I remember clearly I helped gather huge stacks of surface coal (or

cow chips), which we used for heating and cooking.

My brothers and sisters and I attended the Mulberry Center School, a country school. We walked two and one half miles to school. Some of us went to the Kiowa High School. The two boys, James and Fred, followed in our father's footsteps and became farmers. We younger girls went to college at Northwestern at Alva, and got teachers certificates and taught.

Our family belonged to the Lutheran Church. Our mother was converted at the age of 14 in Russia. Since there was no Lutheran Church in the Kiowa area, families met in homes in the neighborhood. My dad spoke fluent German and Russian, and a broken English. When he came to America he had to learn English and spent many hours the rest of his life studying English and writing. My mother spoke German fluently and did not want to lose that part of her heritage, so German was the language used in our home. She wanted her family to use German, she did know many English words, but couldn't carry on a good conversation in English. Our family became naturalized American citizens. My dad was a farmer, enterprising, industrious, frugal, provident and a consistent Christian gentleman. My parents lived on their farm until their respective deaths. The old homestead now belongs to my nephew, Howard Gillig. The memories of our childhood days, both sad and happy ones, still linger there, although it has been some time since we lived there.

Hannah Gillig Hill

JOHN JACOB GILLIG
b. 12 October, 1840
w. Grime, Russia
d. 24 February, 1917
w. Kiowa, Kansas

—Son of John Jacob Gillig from previous marriage ALEXAN-
DER GILLIG

b. February 1867—Russia
d. September 1909—LaCrosse, Kansas

—JAMES A. GILLIG

b. 6 January, 1876—Saratov, Russia
d. 2 February, 1948—Buried, Kiowa, Kansas

—LETA (LYDIA) GILLIG KEATING

—MOLLIE (AMELIA) GILLIG MAHONEY

b. 20 February, 1879—Russia
d. November 1969—Buried, Kiowa, Kansas

—GEORGE (FRIEDRICH) FREDERICK GILLIG

b. 22 November, 1880—Russia
d. 11 September 1948—Kiowa, Kansas

—ELIZABETH GILLIG VOGEL

b. 21 December, 1882—Russia
d. 30 September, 1974—Kiowa, Kansas

—PAULINE GILLIG

b. Rush County, Kansas
d. Rush County, Kansas

—MILDRED GILLIG LATHAM

b. 8 June, 1887—Bison, Kansas
d. 11 May, 1951—Cherokee, Oklahoma

—EVA GILLIG LITTELL

b. 24 January, 1889—Bison, Kansas d. 8 January, 1937
—Kiowa, Kansas

—MINNIE (WILHELMINA) GILLIG RICH PERKERSON

b. 15 January, 1891—LaCrosse, Kansas

—SAMUEL GILLIG

b. 1 January, 1893—LaCrosse, Kansas
d. 18 January, 1901—Kiowa, Kansas

—HANNAH (JOHANNAH) GILLIG HILL

b. 12 October, 1895—LaCrosse, Kansas

—LILLIAN GILLIG

b. 28 March, 1898—Kiowa, Kansas
d. 7 March, 1901—Kiowa, Kansas

Married: 25 December, 1875

ELIZA MARGARET LINKER GILLIG
b. 28 February, 1853
w. Russia
d. 27 August, 1925
w. Kiowa, Kansas

THE CHRISTIAN HAAS FAMILY

(The following family biography is included in the German-Russian collection since Christian Haas was married to Katharina [Katy] Beltz, from Kutter, Russia.)

Christian Haas was born March 2, 1873, in Dettingen, on the Erms River, Wurttemberg, Germany. He was the 5th child of Johann Jakob Haas and Elisabeth Beck. His mother died in childbirth with his younger brother, Johann (called John). After a time Father Johann married Dorathea Schrade and started another family. In 1882, the two oldest girls were sent to America to live with an aunt and uncle.

Maria Agnes (Mary) and Maria Barbara (Barbara) must have been terrified to travel across the ocean to a land so strange. In her older years, Mary spoke of a train ride to Nickerson, Kansas--not knowing any English to understand the conductor's instructions during the long journey. The girls worked for two years sending money to the remaining family in Germany. It was through these brave children that money was saved for the family exodus to Kansas.

Each child was given a particular responsibility on the trip. Even though Christian was young, he carried the long iron. As it was described later to his children, the iron was very long and heavy, similar to those used in laundries in those days.

The family settled in Plevna, Reno County, Kansas and began a meager existence farming about 20 acres. Christian grew to manhood there, learning many skills from his father and brothers.

In 1894, at the age of 21, Christian came to Oklahoma Territory with three friends: Erion, Muths, and Arndt were their last names. Christian had borrowed \$250.00 from a brother-in-law, a cousin and his father to purchase land in the Cherokee Outlet. They came by train to Alva and evidently drifted east until they came to a thriving little new town called "Ingersoll". Christian worked for the railroad saving enough money to buy some land on the west side of town. He lived in a sod house on the land until he married Katharina Beltz, a German-Russian who had come to America with her family in 1882. He and Katy were married on May 19, 1897 (as recorded in Woods Co. records) and they moved into a clapboard house on the site that later became a chickenhouse.

The couple had nine children in a succession of structures in and around what was to become the final three-story home that still stands today. Christian was a man of vision who not only had ideas, but anxiously put them in action. He started a butcher shop to provide meat for the railroad men, but soon competition made it unprofitable so he tore down the shop and used the lumber to start his barn. He planted an orchard; he and Katy had a large garden; he built a dam for a pond to the north as a source of water for his trees and garden, running tile to irrigate it; he built a concrete watertower near his windmill to provide running water for his home; he bought a horse from Europe for breeding purposes; he attended the St. Louis World's Fair to see new farm machinery and methods demonstrated. In short, he was a progressive farmer for early-day Oklahoma. As his family grew so did his ownership of the land around him. Herman, Sam and Bismark (Bick)

were 10, 8, and 7 when tragedy struck.

While in the last stages of building the mansion, a wagonload of plaster and lime were still out in the open when a storm came up and the men rushed to get the wagon into the shed. For some reason, the horses balked at pulling the load so Christian hopped on the wagon to drive them inside. A clap of thunder startled the team causing the horses to bolt. Christian was unprepared to duck under the eaves and transom door. He was caught at the back of the neck, throwing him between the horses. The wagon ride to Wichita must have been excruciating. After the doctors had given up all hope, Christian was brought home to die. Not being able to be comfortable lying down or sitting, a special harness-swing was made for him on the front porch. He died at home after several weeks. Seven little children mourned him--Lena, Herman, Bick, Sam, Clara, Helen, and Wilma who was only two months old.

Katy had the responsibility for managing the farms. The house was still not finished. Plastering was done hurriedly (rumor has it that plaster always fell in this house because of this fact.) No one could doubt that Katy was a good manager. She finished the house and saw to it that five of her children attended college. Farm work was hired out until the boys were old enough to take care of chores.

Christian and Katy were among the founders of the Bethel Baptist Church in Ingersoll. The services were in German at first but English was gradually introduced as the children grew in number.

Christian died in 1910 and was buried in the Stella Cemetery, but later moved to the Cherokee Cemetery. He was only 37 when he died but

* was becoming a prominent farmer in the area.

Katy remarried on June 6, 1919 to Joseph Frey. When Joe died, she moved to Cherokee and lived there for the rest of her life. In later years, she married her sister's widower, Henry Brining, and also survived him until her death on April 19, 1957.

The Haas farm is still in the family, being farmed by Chris and Bonnie Haas. They live in the big, white, three-story home on the west edge of Ingersoll which has been in the family since it was built in 1908-10.

Christian and Katy have two children surviving--Helen Haas Berry of Stillwater and Wilma Haas of Alva, Oklahoma.

Bonnie Haas, through the
recollections of Lena Haas,
Plevna, KS; Henry Weber,
Cherokee; and Helen Haas
Berry, Stillwater.

KATY BELTZ HAAS

Katharina Beltz Haas was born in Kutter, Russia on January 4, 1875. She was very proud of the fact that she was a German, even though her family lived in Russia for many years due to a proclamation by Catherine-the-Great. Farmers were promised parcels of land along the Volga, and Katharina's ancestors took advantage of the opportunity.

Life in Russia was hard. The weather showed no mercy. There were few weeks that the ground could be seen through heavy snow.

The church was the life of all villagers with all belonging to the same church in each separate village. The pastor was also the school teacher and he was very strict. He always carried a long stick and with only one good whack, could keep the children in line.

The villagers were all frugal and all things were valuable. Katy remembered breaking a bottle of homemade ink. Her mother gave her a hard scolding because things were hard to replace and very precious. The clothing worn on Sunday was always carefully folded and put away in a trunk until the ne next Sunday's use.

All children had responsibility--a certain chore they had to perform. Katy was in charge of the family's flock of geese which she had to herd down to the "back" or stream located just north of the church. In the summer they would sometimes go west of the village where the creek ran into the Karamisch River which flowed north of the village until it joined the great Volga, near Saratov.

All the farmers lived within the village, but raised their crops out from their neat homes. In the evening, after a day's work, the family would help with some home industry. The Beltz family would spin wool or flax and weave the cloth to be made into clothing for the family or profit.

Some family member would start a tune and then they would all join in singing. Linen made from the locally grown flax would be spread on the wet grass to be bleached by the sun. On very cold winter nights the family slept huddled around and on top of the large, lowslung, brick oven and fireplace.

Katy brought to America a love for cooking the dishes that were common in Kutter and probably brought a hundred years earlier from Germany. The village was in a fertile area where many kinds of crops and fruits were grown. Abundant livestock provided meat, milk and leather. She cooked Kercha (cherries), Apfel (apples), and Zwiebl Kuchen. Rokka Brot (rye bread), Pickled Watermelon, Kraut, and Dill Gommeren (cucumbers), Leberwurst, Schnitz Suz and Kartoffels were favorite dishes, too.

The 100 year agreement had lapsed and the new rulers of Russia had invasion plans to conquer neighboring lands. The boys were being looked over by the Russians. The church was harassed, and the taxes imposed, and the Russian language was required in the schools. Life was becoming oppressive. Among the families that decided to come to America was the Beltz family. Katy's father, George Heinrich and her mother, Elizabeth Weigandt had been blessed with Frederich, Katherina, Eva and Maria.

The two older boys, Adam and Heinrich, came to Kansas first. The railroads had acquired much land from the government and were building railroads to Dodge City and other terminals for shipping beef east.

Because Adam was of draft age, he had taken Frederich's passport visa while Heinrich had his own. The boys worked for the railroad, raising passage money for the family to come over.

There was one BIG problem. Frederich now had no passport! Grandmother Magdalena Schmidt Beltz was too old to make the voyage, so Frederich was

dressed as an old lady so he could use her passport. He kept this disguise all the way to America by pretending to be somewhat adled and not able to speak. Whenever he would gorget and stand up straight, his mother would remind him--"Mach du kline!" (Make yourself smaller!)

The family left Kutter in Nov. 1881, arriving in Baltimore, January 1892. They settled in La Crosse, KS, where they lived for three years. The two oldest girls, Katharine and Eva, worked as domestics in homes and a hotel. In 1894, the whole family moved to Oklahoma Territory to the thriving little town of Ingersoll.

Katharina married Christian Haas in 1897, as recorded in Woods County. Seven children were born to this union before Christian Haas died at age 37 from injuries suffered in an accident. The children became Lena Haas Meyer, Herman, Bismark, Sam, Clara Haas Cornelius, Helen Haas Berry, and Wilma Haas. Katy was widowed two more times (Joe Frey and Henry Brining) before she died in Cherokee in 1957.

In 1991, only two of Katy's children survive--Helen Berry of Stillwater and Wilma Haas of Alva. Wilma has made her home in Alva for the last 20 years.

Compiled by Helen Berry

HAGEN FAMILY HISTORY

- I MARGARETHA (HAGEN) SEIBEL¹
- II WILHELM HAGEN²
- III GEORGE JOHANN HAGEN³
- IV CHRISTIAN HAGEN⁴

Konrad and Maria (KAFFTAN) HAGEN were the parents of Margaretha, Wilhelm, and George. Proof of Christian's parents has not been found, however, it appears that he was related in some manner. All were born in Russia and were of German ancestry. Margaretha, Wilhelm, George and Christian, with their respective families, journeyed to Hamburg, Germany, from their Russian villages, and embarked on the *S.S. Wieland*, 14 June 1876, en route to New York, where they arrived 14 days later on 28 June. From New York, these four families made their way, most likely by train, to Marion County, Kansas, where they settled.

I MARGARETHA (HAGEN) SEIBEL¹

Margaretha was born 15 November 1830, 15 December 1831, or 15 December 1833, in the village of Kalshinofka⁵, Russia, either that village in the Province of Chernigov (northeast of Kiev), or the one in the Grunau/Mariupol colonies (just north of the Sea of Azov which is north of the Black Sea in Southern Russia). She was married to George SEIBEL, 12 October or December 1850, by Pastor HALTFRÖTER, probably in the Grunau area where this Lutheran minister served from 1831 to 1872. George SEIBEL was the son of Johann and Sophia (SCHWARZ) SEIBEL and was born 12 or 15 December 1828 or 15 December 1829, in Russia. His obituary states he was born "in the Village of Bilagwesch from where his parents with him moved to the Marienpoler Plan. Here he was brought up in the new Belagwesch Creed."

They and their seven children, with their son-in-law Carl GROSE and grandson Jacob GROSE, started their journey to America 18 May 1876, according to George's obituary. Records of the Ebenfeld Mennonite Brethren Church where they became members indicate that they immigrated to the United States from the colony Belochwesh in Russia, however the Hamburg passenger list shows the former residence of this family as Catharinaslafsky, Russia. This could possibly refer to the Gouvernement (province) Ekaterinoslaw, wherein the village of Belochwesh (the one in the Grunau/Mariupol area) was located. The district is now called Saporoshje.

In Marion County, this family purchased and lived on a 160 acre farm in Liberty Township (southwest quarter of section 23 20 2) which was one-half mile west of the Ebenfeld Church. This farm was sold to George and Margaritha's son Christian, the south half on 21 December 1882, and the north half on 11 November 1884.

Margaretha died 18 February 1906, and is buried in Ebenfeld

Cemetery south of Hillsboro. Her husband George, who died 22 October 1916, is buried beside her. A head stone marks the place.

They had twelve children; their seven known children were:

- 1) Elizabeth, 2) Christian, 3) Wilhelmina, 4) Johann G.,
- 5) Carolina, 6) Conrad, and 7) David.

- 1) Elizabeth was born 25 October 1851, in the village of Bellagwesch, Gouvernement Ekaterinoslaw, Russia; married Karl GROSE, 16 November 1872, in Russia; had thirteen known children, of which seven are named here: Jacob 1875*, Elizabeth, Jacob 1879, Carolina 1881, Mary, Charlie 1884, and David 1889; after Karl's death 28 August 1914, married Wilhelm STUCKLE, 3 February 1924; died 19 March 1927, at Herbert, Saskatchewan, Canada.
- 2) Christian was born 22 August 1858, in Bellegwich village, Russia; married Justina SCHALE, 19 December 1880; they had nine known children of which four sons died in infancy, the five daughters being: Helen 1883, Justina 1886, Carrie 1888, Mary 1891, and Anna 1893; after Justina's death 13 December 1893, married Carolina DELK, 5 November 1895; had sixteen known children: Martha 1896, Jacob 1897, Louise 1900, Samuel 1901, Edward 1903, Sarah 1906, Agnes 1908, Solomon 1909, Rachel 1910, Walter 1912, Erna 1915, Christian 1917, Evelyn 1920, Stella*, Jona*, and Christian*; died 9 January 1934, and is buried in the Ebenfeld Cemetery.
- 3) Wilhelmina was born 15 September 1860, in Belagwesch Colony, South Russia; married Wilhelm P. LITKE, 17 August 1879; their thirteen known children: Minnie* 1880, Carrie 1882, Agunda 1883, John 1885, Mary 1887, George 1888, William 1890, David* 1891, Elizabeth* 1892, David 1894, Elizabeth 1896, Martha 1898, and Bertha 1900; died 6 March 1929.
- 4) Johann G. was born 10 March 1865, in Bellegwich village, South Russia; married Elizabeth Maria HAGEN, daughter of George and Margaretha (OLLENBURGER) HAGEN, 6 October 1887; their twelve known children {which also are listed under III GEORGE JOHANN HAGEN, 4) Elizabeth Maria (HAGEN) and Johann G. SEIBEL}: Mary 1889, John* 1891, Lydia 1892, George* 1894, David 1896, Emmanuel, John 1901, Abraham 1902, Thomas 1904, Esther 1907, Edna 1908, and Peter* 1913; died 22 January 1950.
- 5) Carolina was born 21 April 1870, in Russia; married George REIMCHE, 13 September 1889; their eleven known children: George 1890, John* 1892, Martha 1893, Thomas 1895, David 1897, Minnie 1899, Herbert 1901, Arthur* 1903, Theodore 1906, Lillian 1906, and John 1911; died 24 April 1911.

- 6) Conrad was born 6 December 1873, in Russia; died 20 July 1876, probably in Marion County, Kansas.
- 7) David was born 27 February 1876, in the Colony of Belagwesch, South Russia; married Lydia HODEL, 26 April 1900; their nine known children: Anna 1901, Herbert* 1902, Bertha 1905, Albert 1909, Arthur 1910, Lydia 1913, David, Adena 1920, and Leo*; died 27 January 1925.

II WILHELM HAGEN²

Wilhelm was born sometime between the beginning of 1830 and the end of 1833, in Russia. He married Catherine Margaretha BAUMBACH who was born 15 April 1836, and whose parents were Conn and Catherine (SWARTZ) BAUMBACH. All were born in Russia of German ancestry.

Wilhelm, his wife, and seven of their children (six started out, then a daughter was born six days out of the port of New York and entered on the ship's list as Oceana Wilanda HAGEN) arrived in America after a two week voyage. The Hamburg ship's list, dated 14 June 1876, (when they started the voyage), indicates the former residence of this family as Orlinski, Russia. This is possibly the village of Orlinskoje in the Grunau/Mariupol colonies north of the Sea of Azov in Southern Russia.

An eighty acre farm in Liberty Township was purchased by Wilhelm on 30 September 1879, and sold on 26 June 1880, described as the east one-half of the northeast quarter of section 35 20 2, (this was in the same section where his brother George purchased land in 1876). It was in Liberty Township where he and his family were living when they were listed in the 1880 United States census, the first of June. He purchased another eighty acres in Risley Township on 1 October 1881, and sold that on or before 1 March 1882, described as the east one-half of the southeast quarter of section 36 19 2, and in Grant Township, he purchased 160 acres on 1 February 1882, described as the northwest quarter of section 14 19 5.

Sometime between the 1882 purchase and the 1885 Kansas State Census, Wilhelm died. According to family oral history, he died in a fall from a horse which occurred southwest of Marion, and he was buried on the farm that was owned by his brother-in-law George SEIBEL (later owned by Chris SEIBEL), located one-half mile west of the Ebenfeld Mennonite Brethren Church. Wilhelm's wife died 1 February 1925, in Summit Township, and was buried in the cemetery at Ebenfeld Church. There are no markers for either Wilhelm or his wife Catherine Margaretha.

*died young

The 1900 U.S. census, Marion County, Kansas, lists Katherine HAGEN, and states she was 63 years old and the mother of eighteen children, with seven living children. Their eight known children were: 1) Wilhelm, 2) Philip, 3) Elizabeth, 4) Charlotte, 5) George Adam, 6) John, 7) Catherine Anna, and 8) Conrad.

- 1) Wilhelm was born in 1855 or 1856, in Russia, and married Jennie, whose last name is not known. No additional information is known regarding Wilhelm or Jennie, but he was apparently deceased by the 1900 U.S. census.
- 2) Philip was born 28 December 1858, in Russia; married Mary DILGER, 16 January 1882, in Marion; had twelve known children: Philip* c.1885, Mary 1886, John 1887, William 1889, Elizabeth 1890, Anna 1894, George 1896, Dave 1898, Jacob 1901, Martha 1904, Dan 1906, and Henry 1909; died 5 November 1942, in Marion, and was buried in the cemetery at Ebenfeld Church. There is no marker.
- 3) Elizabeth was born 4 April 1864, in Southern Russia; married William Albert OLLENBERGER, 16 December 1882, in Marion; had seven known children: William 1890, Elizabeth 1891, Edith 1893, Henry 1897, Stella 1899, Mary 1902, and Irene 1904; died 21 July 1939, in Marion, and was buried in the cemetery in Marion.
- 4) Charlotte was born 12 February 1868, in Russia; married William SEIBEL (nephew to George SEIBEL) in 1886; had three known children: Lydia 1887, William Walter 1891, and Anna Clara 1893; died 30 May 1895, and was buried in the cemetery at Ebenfeld Church.
- 5) George Adam was born 10 May 1869, in Russia; married Eva Catherine STEBENS, 31 December 1888, in Marion County; had seven known children: George William 1889, Ida Mae 1890, Jacob 1893, John* 1895, Mary* 1896, Marion* 1898, and Bertha^{ab} 1901; died 25 March 1938, in Cherokee, Oklahoma, and was buried in the cemetery in Carmen, Oklahoma.
- 6) John was born 18 December 1870, in Orlinska, (Orlinskoje?) Russia; married Mary HERGERT, 24 January 1891, in Hillsboro; had one known child: Harry 1895; died 28 January 1948, and was buried in the cemetery in Coy, Woods County, Oklahoma.
- 7) Catherine Anna was born 22 June 1876, on the *S.S. Wieland*, on the Atlantic Ocean, six days out of the Port of New York, en route from Hamburg, Germany, and La Havre, France, to the United States; married Rudolph SKIBBIE, 22 June 1897, in Marion County; had one known child: Clarence* 1898; died 26 January 1960, in Kingfisher, Oklahoma, and was buried in the cemetery in Marion.

*died young

- 8) Conrad was born 5 August 1877, in Marion; married Katherine HOMAN, 5 August 1907; had eight known children: Irine 1908, William 1910, Alice 1910, Alvin 1914, Evelyn 1917, Esther Marie 1920, Bernice 1922, and Eldina 1926; died 29 August 1940, in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, where he was buried.

III GEORGE JOHANN HAGEN³

George Johann was born 15 December 1835, in Russia, probably in one of the Grunau/Mariupol villages in Southern Russia, north of the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea. He was married to Margaretha OLLENBURGER, 15 October 1853, by Pastor HALTFRÖTER, probably in the Grunau area where this Lutheran minister served from 1831 to 1872. Margaretha OLLENBURGER was the daughter of Konrad and Katherina (KNUR) OLLENBURGER, and was born 3 April 1836.

When George, Margaretha and their four children left Hamburg, Germany, 14 June 1876, en route to the United States, the Hamburg passenger list indicated their former residence was Nuerosenburg, Russia. The records of the Ebenfeld Mennonite Brethren Church, where they became members, indicated that they were from col. Eichenfeld, Russia. This was possibly the Grunau/ Mariupol village called Eigenfeld, with the Russian name of Orlinskoje, which was northeast of Mariupol (now called Zhdanov, a port city on the Sea of Azov).

In Marion County, George purchased a farm in Liberty Township, 320 acres, described as the west one-half of section 35 20 2, on 8 August 1876. The well and farm house were located, according to oral history, a little to the west-northwest of the center of section 35. On 18 November 1879, he purchased another 80 acres in the same section, described as the west one-half of the northeast quarter. The southeast portion of this 80 acres, next to the east property line, was the site used for several graves, according to oral history. Since these graves were apparently not marked, the exact location has been lost, as well as the names and numbers of those buried there. It was in Liberty Township on 1 June, that this family was listed as living when the 1880 United States census was taken.

George Johann died 19 August 1880, as he was standing in his house when it was struck by lightning, according to family oral history. The following text from a newspaper article supports the oral history: the *Marion Co. Record*, for Friday, August 27, 1880, on the third page, states, "The lightning which accompanied the rain storm, Thursday night of last week, proved to be quite a serious visitation to this section. The house of Geo. Hoggen, a Russian living in Liberty township, was struck and igniting was burned up, Mr. Hoggen being killed and partly consumed by the flames. It is not known whether he was killed by the electric current or simply stunned and then burned to death." It is also not known where he was buried. Perhaps he was buried on his farm where he died, or perhaps he was buried on the farm of his brother-in-law, George

SEIBEL, one-half mile west of the Ebenfeld Church, since the Ebenfeld cemetery had not been established, or perhaps the Gard Cemetery. Also unknown is when or where his wife Margaretha died and where she was buried.

Their four known children were: 1) Maria Katherine, 2) Johann J., 3) George G., and 4) Mary Elizabeth.

- 1) Maria Katherine was born 1 October 1857, in Kallschnofka, South Russia; married Leonhard REISWICH, 18 May 1876, by Pastor STRAUS in Russia; had eight known children: Jacob 1878, Leonard 1880, George 1882, John 1883, Lydia Gladys 1887, Mary Elma 1885, Ida 1889, and Clifford 1901*; died 1 Oct 1924, and was buried in Ebenfeld Cemetery with her husband.
- 2) Johann J. was born 8 October 1859, in Russia; married Susanna BERITT, 2 November 1879, by Peter Ekkert; had six known children: Johann*, Johann 1881, Mary 1884, Jacob B. 1883, George J., and William B.; married Margaret LORENZ; had two known children: Martha and David; died 25 May 1908.
- 3) George G. was born 21 July 1861, in Kallschofka (Kaltschinowka?), South Russia; married Helena Schöl, 18 September 1881, by Abr. Cornelsen; had twelve known children: George 1884, Mary 1885, John¹⁸⁸⁵ 1888, Henry 1891, Helena 1893, Samuel 1895, Anna 1897, Simon 1898, Thomas 1900, Jacob 1907, and two sons who died in infancy; died 28 April 1913.
- 4) Mary Elizabeth was born 2 February 1871, in Orlitzke, South Russia, (this is possibly a different spelling for the village of Orlinskoje, also known as Eigenfeld, northwest of Mariupol); married Johann G. SEIBEL, son of George and Margaretha (HAGEN) SEIBEL, 6 October 1887; had twelve known children {also listed under I MARGARETHA (HAGEN) SEIBEL, 4) Johann G. and Mary Elizabeth (HAGEN) SEIBEL}: Mary 1889, John* 1891, Lydia 1892, George* 1894, David 1896, Emmanuel, John 1901, Abraham 1902, Thomas 1904, Esther 1907, Edna 1908, and Peter* 1913; died 6 April 1935.

IV CHRISTIAN HAGEN*

Christian was born 14 May 1839, in Russia, (although the 1880 United States census for Marion County, Clear Creek Township, indicates he was born in Seradof, Russia, it appears that this may be incorrect). He married Charlotte DAHL, in Russia and they had two known children: Charlotte and Caroline. After his first wife's death, he married Elizabeth SEIBEL, who was born 14 October 1844, in Russia. They had four children before starting their journey to America. Christian and Elizabeth, with their four children, and the two children by his previous marriage, were

*died young

listed on the Hamburg passenger list for 14 June 1876, their former residence as Orlinski, Russia, the same as Wilhelm HAGEN and family.

In Clear Creek Township, Marion County, Christian purchased an eighty acre farm, the description being the north one-half of the southeast quarter of section 4 19 4. He sold this 17 January 1880.

Sometime around the 1885 Kansas State census, Christian and his family apparently moved to Washington State. Then they eventually moved to North Dakota, where Christian died in Heaton, sometime after the 1910 census which listed him on 10 May. He is buried in the cemetery of the South Bowdon 7th Day Adventist Church, Bowdon, North Dakota. There is no marker. His wife Elizabeth died 25 November 1923, at College Place, Washington, and is buried in the Mt. Hope Cemetery, College Place, Washington.

The two known children of Christian and Charlotte (DAHL) HAGEN:
1) Charlotte, and 2) Caroline.

- 1) Charlotte was born 22 August 1862, in Russia; married Peter ASCHENBRENNER; had five known children: Joseph, Peter E., Hanna (Anna), C.M. (Katie?), and a baby (Clara E.?).
- 2) Caroline was born 3 May 1863, in Russia; married David SNYDER, then Mr. EDERSTROM; her six known children: Sam, Dave, Marie, Esther, Bert, and Mattie.

The eleven known children of Christian and Elizabeth (SEIBEL) HAGEN: 1) Catherine, 2) John Christian, 3) Sophia, 4) Conrad, 5) Elizabeth, 6) Mary, 7) Nattie, 8) Minnie, 9) Daniel, 10) Lydia, and 11) Lettie.

- 1) Catherine was born 26 February 1869, in Russia; married Simon HEUTHER; they raised seventeen foster children.
- 2) John Christian was born 31 January 1871, in Russia; married Caroline^{ed} DELL, in South Dakota; had thirteen known children: Feona C. 1895, Aldena^{ed} 1897, Lillian 1898, John Samuel 1900, Edward Dell 1902, Arthur Walter 1904, Bertha Ella 1906, Leo Gilbert 1908, Edna Blanche 1908, Emil Henry 1911, Clifford Royal 1913, Norma 1915, and Mamie 1918; married again after Caroline's death and had two more children: Goldie (Doris), and Evelyn; died 10 December 1938 and was buried in the Mt. Hope Cemetery, College Place, Washington.
- 3) Sophia was born c.1873, in Russia.
- 4) Conrad was born c.1875, in Russia.
- 5) Elizabeth was born in October 1876, in Kansas; married Emanuel KRUEGER; their five known children: Gideon, Clara, Albert, Elmer, and Arnold; died 8 April 1969.

- 6) Mary was born 17 March 1878, in Kansas; married Christian or Conrad REISWIG; at unknown time moved to Canada; had three known children: Bertha and two sons; died 11 June 1955.
- 7) Nattie was born 22 November 1879, in Peabody, Kansas; married Charles REMBOLDT, 22 March 1899; had two known natural children plus two adopted children: Katherine^(a), Woodrow, Edith (adopted), and Alfred (adopted); died 14 December 1974, in Bowdon, North Dakota.
- 8) Minnie was born 27 September 1881, in Kansas; married Gustave REXINE; had more than the two children named here: Danny and Rachel; died in 1930.
- 9) Daniel was born 5 December 1883, in Kansas; married and lived on a farm in Berlin Township near Bowdon, North Dakota, until his wife died, then moved to Lodi, California.
- 10) Lydia was born 13 October 1885, in Kansas; married Fred BIETZ, in 1902; had four known children: Alvina, Jonathan, Freddie*, and Velma; died 18 April 1970.
- 11) Lettie.

*died young

1 Lucille REISWIG BARNETT (granddaughter of Minnie(a) LITKE HEINRICHS), Kingsburg, California, assisted in supplying information on George and Margaretha (HAGEN) SEIBEL.

2 This section on Wilhelm HAGEN was first prepared 6 February 1990, revised 13 January 1991, and now appears here, revised again and combined with the accompanying sections. (The compiler is the son of Bertha(b) HAGEN MOSER).

3 Karen SUDERMAN PENNER (granddaughter of John(c) HAGEN), Newton, Kansas, assisted in supplying information on George Johann HAGEN.

4 Eldora DELL SCHAUBERT (niece of Caroline(d) DELL), Carrington, North Dakota; Aldena(e) HAGEN WILLS, College Place, Washington; Robert HAGEN (nephew of Aldena(e)), Walla Walla, Washington; and Katherine(f) REMBOLDT THORSTENSON, Bismarck, North Dakota; assisted in supplying information on Christian HAGEN.

5 Spelling variations occur in most of the Russian and German place names, depending on their sources, e.g. Kaltschniowka, Belowesch, Orlinskaja, etc.

[Compiled by Leland E. Moser, 8 February, 1991, revised 21 June 1991. Box 202, Carmen, Oklahoma 73726. Telephone (405) 987-2383]

CHRISTINA MARIE (MORT) HONER

The AHSGR Chapter of Alva, Oklahoma, has only one charter member who was actually born in Russia. This is her story as recorded October 11, 1988.

* * *

Christina Marie (Mort) Honer was born April 8, 1902 in Lauwe, Russia, along the Volga River. Her parents were John Henry Mort and Maria Christina (Goeringer) Mort.

Five Mort children were born in Russia--Pete, Marie and Christina survived and two died in infancy. Even though she was only two when the family immigrated to the United States, Christina remembers her mother's description of life in the old country: "Life was hard. Extended families lived together in cramped quarters with nothing but dirt floors. There was no insulation for the bitter cold."

Christina's father was a wagon maker and farmer. Gardening helped the family income by providing precious vegetables and fruits. Mother Mort made watermelon syrup for a sweetner.

Harvests were done the "old-fashioned way". Women worked just like the men, in the fields. Horses helped to thresh the crops and vegetables, too.

Houses were small and crowded with relatives. For these hardy people Russian winters had no mercy for the unprepared. Wool was a staple for every family. The women wore heavy wool skirts and wool stockings. Mrs. Mort spun the wool into yarn, herself. Cloth was woven, also to provide the familiar babushkas (wool scarves) for the ladies of the household.

When the Mort family decided to make the trek to the United States several facts were considered. There was political unrest in Russia and with a young man

near the age of inducement the family was uneasy. (A year after the Horts came to Oklahoma, Russia went to war with Japan) An Aunt and uncle in Alva helped to sponsor the travelers.

The family brought only the articles they could wrap up in a sheet. There were very few personal items--a little clothing, a Bible, a German-Russian song book. (Christina still has the song book.) For years Mrs. Hort kept an old woold skirt from Russia. When it got to be full of holes, the children accidentally burned it with the trash, not knowing that it was a keepsake.

In July of 1904 the Horts came to American on the White Star. They left Sarataw, Russia, and traveled to Hamburg, Germany and then to Liverpool, England. It took three weeks to come across the ocean. Christina's mother was very scared when she saw icebergs in the water. They landed in New York and were processed at Ellis Island. Next was the long train ride to Oklahoma--a frightening experience since they knew no English. Mrs. Hort ^{ate} was her first banana and thought it very curious.

In Alva, Mr. Hort helped brother-in-law George Meixner at a bakery until the family moved to Colorado where he worked in the irrigated beet fields and also for the railroad. While in Colorado, Christina's mother finally went by train to visit her sister, in Wyoming. The trip was in 1924 so it had been a long time of separation.

In 1918, World War I was in full force. The Horts moved back to the Alva area (10 miles SE of Alva) for two years. Finally, they located $1\frac{1}{2}$ mi. east of Alva and farmed there for 18 years. In 1945, Mr. Hort retired and moved into Alva.

The Horts attended the Luthern Church in Alva. Services were conducted in German until World War I when parishioners were encouraged to abandon the German language. Christina can still understand German but doesn't speak it anymore.

As was common with immigrant families, German was always spoken in the home. Christina's mother didn't ever learn much English. Her father didn't speak English very well, either and wondered why no one could understand when he peppered all his comments with German words!

Nine children were born to this family. Those born later were: Henry, Jr., John Peter, Anna, Laura and Herman. Marie passed away at the age of 14.

Brother Pete worked in restaurants at the age of fifteen, learning the trade until he could own his own business. After having a restaurant in Cherokee and then another at a hotel, he moved to Alva in 1940 and was in business there. Pete had three children--Margie, who married Dean Webber; Carl, a minister in MN; and Jack, of Wichita, KS.

Henry John and wife, Vera (Warnick) lived in Alva where he was school teacher and football coach. He served in World War II and the Korean War, also. They had three children--John Henry III, a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army; Evelyn (Lescenski), a nurse whose husband is a doctor in Oxford, MD; and Marilyn (Vernon) who is a nurse in Midwest City, OK.

Anna married Bill Holding and they made a home in Cherokee for many years, finally retiring in Woodward. They adopted Judy and Darrel.

Laura married Carl Wheaton and taught in Ingersoll and Anthony, KS. After being a widow, she married Dean Frazier and they live in Manchester, OK.

Herman married Ida LuEttie Rogers and they had three children--Guy Henry, deceased; Mary Lou (Mullberry) of Laverne, OK and Larry. After teaching for 40 years Herman still lives in Laverne.

Pete remembers that his grandparents in Russia couldn't write. It seems sad that letters were rare because of this. Christina says, "A few letters were sent, translated by Loren Korell's grandfather but this was before World War I.

No one remembers any correspondence after that time. Mama did find a cousin at Clinton, one time, and the AMSGR traced a relative in California in recent years."

Christina remembers her mother's fine knitting. She knit sweaters and sox for soldiers during World War I. Christina did not inherit her mother's talent as she admits she "only knit one washrag, and that was it!"

Around Christmas time, people would hunt up German families. "One family came from Carmen by buggy to see us. We didn't know them, but they heard about us and were homesick. They spent Christmas with us and we all slept on the floor. We all had a good time, since we didn't have much family close, either."

Mrs. Hort cooked many of the traditional German-Russian dishes. Her specialties were noodles and angelfood cakes. Her angelfood cakes were baked in a coal oil stove with no recipe and no temperature. Amazingly, they "always came out real nice."

"Mama made good bread and syrup, too. We lived on that. She took in washings. Dad got lung fever from working in the irrigation fields in CO. We needed treatments frequently and was under the care of Dr. Clark in Cherokee."

The pastor would take her parents to the train. The old train station was at Dailey, OK (south and west of Cherokee). It only came once a day, so it was always an overnight trip.

Christina's husband, Paul, passed away in 1939, leaving her with three children--Edna Meyer, who graduated at OSU; Dean, who graduated OSU and Paul who preferred to remain in Alva, farming.

Mother Hort died in May, 1947, at the age of 75. Christina took care of her father until he died at 92.

Christina has 10 grandchildren. She raised two grandchildren herself and is proud of all eleven great-grandchildren.

In later years, Christina has made three trips to California, but her journeys were more comfortable than the one her parents made so many years ago. Her hobbies include her flowers and gardens. She was active in the Ladies Aid until it disbanded. Now, she babysits her great-grandchildren sometimes, commenting about her new great-granddaughter, "She's a pleasure."

Christina remains active in AMSGR, adding her talent of fine cooking to the German-Russian dinners. The membership enjoys her cheerful attitude and willing participation. The Chapter is proud to have her as a charter member.

- THE ELIZABETH REIFSCHNEIDER GOEKEN STORY -

In a small Russian village of some eight hundred German people, lived Henry Reifschneider and his wife Elizabeth in an adobe brick house with a straw roof and a dirt floor. The house consisted of one large room (used for sleeping) and a smaller one for kitchen and living room. There was also a kind of cellar, called the "small house". There were no flies, so the doors and windows could be left open in the summer. The houses were warm in winter.

The large room which was used for sleeping, was occupied with a canopied bed (four postered with curtains around it) that Henry and Elizabeth slept in. There was another bed in the room and a trundle bed which slipped under that bed when not in use. The boys slept in the small house. This was also used when members of the family had mumps, measles, whooping cough or other illnesses. Lizzie remembers when she and Lydia had the mumps and they played store on the bed using dried apples and prunes for money.

Henry owned two acres of land outside of the village where the family's fruit and vegetables were grown. They were carefully preserved by drying or putting down in brine. Cabbage was made into kraut.

They had a few chickens which produced eggs for them in the summer. They kept pigs for their meat, and a cow which was taken to pasture each day by the village herder. The cow provided them with milk, butter and cheese.

For fuel, they used some wood, Russian thistles, and cow chips. The girls gathered in the fuel and worked in the field as there were only two boys in

the family. One, John, by Henry's former marriage, and Jake. Jake worked gathering potatoes for 5c per day.

Henry worked as a carpenter and the women wove cloth which was sold in the city to buy other necessities of life for a family which had now grown to eleven. Henry's mother and father needed care, and there was also three children of Henry's by a previous marriage and the six born to Henry and Elizabeth. Six others had been born, but died as doctors were scarce and midwives could not save all the babies.

One of the necessities was sugar which was bought in the shape of a cone and slivered off as needed. Other sweetening was made by boiling down sugar beets to a syrup. Tea was the usual drink, but coffee was bought for a Sunday treat. Another Sunday treat was a variety of white breads which took the place of the usual rye brown bread.

The children attended school; the older ones in the mornings, and the younger ones in the afternoons. The school master was also the preacher except once a month when an ordained preacher came.

They had a beautiful church where they worshiped in the summer, but they worshiped in the school house in the winter as the church was too hard to heat. The church was controlled by the state and was a union of Lutherans and Reformed. There was little difference in their beliefs and customs; one being that in taking Communion, the Lutherans stood while the Reformed knelt. Young people did not take communion until they were confirmed at about 15 years of age.

Time passed and Henry's daughter, Katie, married David Beltz (one of the village boys). David had an uncle living in America who had been writing letters encouraging him to come to Oklahoma. One day, David

and Katie packed up their belongings and started by ship and train on the long journey that ended in Ingersoll, Oklahoma. From Ingersoll, they wrote such glowing accounts of the advantages in the new state that John and Jake decided to join them.

Now, with three of their own children in the new world, Henry and Elizabeth began to toy with the idea of striking out for a new life for themselves. Did they dare do it? What would it mean to their children, Lizzie (sixteen), Lydia (seven), Marie (six), Henry (four), and Eva (two and one-half), to be up rooted and set down in a strange land?

Perhaps they would not have had the courage to make the move if a letter had not reached them that a ticket would be sent to them covering all the expenses if they would come.

After days and nights of wondering and praying, they decided this was God's will and they began to make preparations to go.

This was no little task as their property must be disposed of; their clothes, linens, feather beds and pillows packed for the long journey; and farewells said to their neighbors and friends. They would be greatly missed as Henry was the song leader for their Church and funeral services.

They would take the train at Saratov where fortunately, they had an uncle. The Reifschneiders left the village April 1, 1908 by sled since the Volga river (which they must cross) was frozen.

At the uncle's home, the children had a great treat as he was a baker. They had their first taste of baker's bread. Here, they took the train to Bremenhoffen where they would board the ship for Galveston, Texas.

At Bremenhoffen, they were given tests and vaccinations. Some infection was found in Lizzie's eyes and there was some doubt about her getting to sail. Elizabeth refused to sail without her, and fortunately, medication cleared up the trouble and they were ready to leave.

Now came the most exciting day of all - Hearing the whistle blow, crossing the gang plank, and pulling away from the pier was a never forgotten experience.

There was much settling in to do, but Elizabeth had it all taken care of when suddenly (about five o'clock) a dense fog had settled in and another ship rammed into their ship making a big hole in the side. Everything was in a state of confusion as the ship began to list and everyone had to be taken off. Ropes were tied about them, and they went down the side on a rope ladder. This frightening experience was shown by Lydia crying "Father, Father, if we drown will we go to hell?". They were not allowed to go back to their rooms for anything but somehow, Elizabeth was able to get a shawl for baby Eva.

An S.O.S. was sent out, and another ship picked them up and took them back to Bremenhoffen where they stayed five days waiting for their ship to be repaired. Their clothes had been rescued and brought back to them. Fortunately, their fare included the expense of their enforced stay at Bremenhoffen or Henry's small amount of cash would have been greatly diminished.

Once again, they boarded the ship and this time for seventeen days they sailed thru all kinds of weather and landed in Galveston, Texas May 24, 1908. This was the time of the disastrous flood that did so much damage to the city. No trains could leave (on account of the flood) so for five long days and nights they

were forced to stay in the depot; no bedding, no pillows, no change of clothes as their baggage had all been consigned to Ingersoll. When they could finally leave, the rails were so shaky from the rains that in some places the passengers had to cross the bridges a foot for fear they would collapse from the weight of the train.

Two months after they had left Russia, they arrived in Ingersoll, Oklahoma June 2, 1908, to find it devastated by a tornado which many people had been killed. Perhaps by now, Henry felt they had not done such a sensible thing in leaving Russia.

They found a place to live, and Elizabeth set about making a home for them while Henry helped clean up the debris left by the storm. The many hardships of the trip had proved to much for Lizzie and she became very ill. The high fever caused her hair to come out so when she recovered she not only had to make a new life, but also had to grow a new head of hair.

Henry soon found work on the railroad which paid a fair wage, but since the family had had experience in raising sugar beets, they decided to move to Garden City, Kansas where they stayed until the beet harvest was finished. They soon heard from two families they had known in Russia who wrote of the job opportunities they had found in Portland, Oregon; once more, they boarded the train for the long trip to the Northwest.

They were very happy in Portland. Henry found a good job on the street car line, Jake and John worked in a show case factory, and Lizzie had a pleasant job in a laundry where she made many friends. The family soon found the climate too damp for Jake, and as Henry wanted to keep his family together, they returned to Garden City, Kansas; and later moved to Iowa. Their final move was to

Glencoe, Minnesoda where they made a permanent home. Elizabeth passed away in 1944 and Henry in 1945.

In the meantime, Lizzie had found friends and worked in a hotel. In spite of the fact that a very nice young widower wanted to marry her, she went to Ingersoll in 1917 to visit her sister Katie. While in Ingersoll, she met young Jake Goeken. It must have been love at first sight as they were married after a very short courtship.

Jake was a farmer and there was no job (indoors or out) that Lizzie was afraid to tackle. Although there was always plenty of work, Lizzie always found the time to be a very good mother to her five children - Henry, Helen, Alfred, Richard and Ruth Ann.

Jake died in 1951. Elizabeth moved to the town of Cherokee where she was loved by all who knew her. She passed away December 13, 1974.

As Told By: Lizzie Goeken

Written By: Edna Scott, 1968

Ralph Hadwiger Story

My parent's names were Ralph and Eva (Bahm) Hadwiger.

Ralph was born in Braunsifen, Austria in the year 1875, April 17. His parents were Mr. and Mrs. August Hadwiger; his mother's maiden name was Eloise (Heinz). My father was only 3 years old when the family came to America; he remembered very little about his native country but Harvey and I have been privileged to tour Austria several times and we love seeing the beautiful country. I even talked with Elfriede Hadwiger by telephone in the year of 1985 and she promised to write and tell me much about the little village of Braunsifen, where my father was born but I have not had a letter from her.

My grandparents settled in western Kansas, near the little town of Olmitz, Ks.; they stayed a few short years there and then went east to the little town of Attica, Kansas. Here my father grew up and at the age of 22 he enlisted in the army; he served as a corporal and spent his time in the Phillipine Islands. After his tour of duty he came back to Kansas and Oklahoma, worked around Ingersoll for his brother, Gus and a friend Tom Shafer; he bought a quarter of land 2 miles west of Ingersoll from a man who had homesteaded the quarter. He paid \$200.00, a shot gun and an old cow for the 160 Acres, which was to become his home for a long time.

My mother was born in the little village of Kutter, Russia in 1883 to John and Eva Beltz Bahm. At the age of 8 she came with her parents to

Philadelphia, Pa via ship and then travelled by train to Rush County, Kansas. They moved to Oklahoma after the land rush and settled west and south of Ingersoll. My mother grew to womanhood in the vicinity, attended schools in the area. About this time a young soldier who had returned from the Spanish American War and the Philippine Islands began noticing the young lady. My mother and father were married Jan. 15, 1902; they moved to the farm 2 miles west of Ingersoll which my father had bought earlier from the homesteader. Their first home was a 2 room home and they only lived in it for 6 years; my father's cousin who lived in Pueblo, Colorado was a carpenter by trade and he came to build a new home for my parents. It was a large home with 3 bedrooms, living room, dining room, bath and kitchen and was quite a large modern home for the year 1908. Four children were born to Ralph and Eva Hadwiger, namely: Everett, Ruth, Quentin and Evelyn.

We attended church at the Christian Church in Ingersoll; we had a great abiding faith instilled in all of us through our father and mother who took us to church each Sunday.

Harvey and I were married July 7, 1940 at my parent's home; we live just 3 miles west from our home place where we all grew to manhood and womanhood. We love this area; it's been home to both of us all of our lives.

My mother passed away on May 3, 1947 in Wichita, Kansas after being confined to the hospital for 6 months. My father passed away Aug. 20, 1952 in Alva, Okla. They are both buried in the Cherokee Cemetery.

Ruth (Hadwiger) Neigand

MICHAEL LAU

In May of 1902, Michael Lau, his wife Bertha, and their one-year-old daughter, Augusta, left the village of Swiniary, Warsaw Province, Russian Poland. They, along with several other German-Russian families, arrived in Washita County, Oklahoma, a few weeks later. Included in the group were Mrs. Lau's parents, Wilhelm and Eleanora Kiehn. Wilhelm's brother, John Kiehn, had immigrated some years earlier, prospered, and desired that other family members might do the same. He arranged for the passage of these families on the ship named Grauwaldersie, which departed from Hamburg and arrived in New York. The group then traveled by train to their Oklahoma destination.

The decision to leave Russian Poland was not difficult for Michael Lau. Orphaned at an early age, he had no close relatives. He had already served his compulsory, four-year enlistment in the Czar's army, and prospects for a decent livelihood in Russia appeared bleak. He believed that the opportunity to come to America offered him the best chance for success. He was right.

Michael Lau soon paid off his loan and purchased a farm. As he prospered, he increased his land holdings. He truly exemplified the traditional values of the Germans from Russia: faith in God, strong sense of family, and love of farming. He never forgot the circumstances that brought him to America; and, when he had an opportunity to help bring others to this country, he did so. These traits became the legacy of his ten children who grew to adulthood. This writer is one of the thirty-five grandchildren who mourned his passing at the age of eighty-one on November 6, 1954.

Submitted by
Ray D. Lau
Alva, Oklahoma

William (Bill) Lehl - Family History

by Elvest L. Lehl

William's father was John Lehl, and his mother was Elizabeth (Schreiber) Lehl. John Lehl was born Aug. 19, 1855 in Norka Russia. He died July 7, 1937 in Alva. Elizabeth (Schreiber) Lehl was born Oct. 4, 1857 in Norka Russia. She died on Jan. 4th, 1929 in Alva. Both are buried in the Short Springs cemetery.

The Lehl and Schreiber forebears originated in Hesse Germany and immigrated to Russia in the 1700s during the reign of Katherine the Great.

John Lehl's father was also John Lehl, born Aug. 7, 1837. His mother was Lena (Giebelhaus) Lehl. We do not know the parent's names of Elizabeth (Schreiber) Lehl.

John Lehl immigrated to the U.S. in 1885, and Elizabeth with the two oldest children John b. 1882, and Christina b. 1884 came over in 1886.

They first came to Sutton, NE. where Elizabeth's brother lived. John got a job on the Burlington Railroad, then the family moved to Strang, NE. where two more sons were born - Adam in 1887, and William, my father, in 1890.

About 1892 John moved his family to Tacoma, Wash. where he worked in the saw mills. It runs in my mind that Grandma's brother Schreiber had moved out there. I remember my father telling of raking in the salmon fish with garden rakes. In Washington three more children were born; George in 1893, and Elizabeth in 1895, also an infant who died soon after birth.

About 1897, Grandfather John Lehl decided to come back to the prairies and settled in the Burlington area near his sister, Christina Schwindt on some leased land, living in a sod house. Here there were four more children born; Jacob and Konrad twins, 1898 who died soon after birth, and Marie (Mary) and her twin born 1899, but her twin died soon after birth. These three baby graves are in the Keith Cem.

John finally acquired a quarter section of land of his own seven miles east and one mile south of Alva, OK, on the Alfalfa and Woods County line with the farm being in Woods County. From this time on, the Lehl family was involved with community activities of Ashley and Short Springs and Elmdale Schools.

John and Elizabeth Lehl raised their family on the farm which was later acquired by their son, William (Bill) Lehl and his wife Pauline. Their family was raised there. The farm is now under the ownership of William's son, Carl H. Lehl of Alva.

William Lehl was married on Aug. 11, 1912 to Rocena Wenninger. To this union was born a son, Harold William. Rocena died Apr. 11, 1914.

On Nov. 7, 1914, William married Pauline (Schlegel) in the German Meth. Church, located on the Peter Rudy farm. She was born in Donhoff Russia Oct. 7, 1893. Her parents were Heinrich and Katherine (Gies) Schlegel. The family lived in Mikhaylovka Russia when Pauline immigrated from there in 1913. She was the only one of her family to come to America. Her passage was sponsored by Henry Korell Sr., a cousin of her mothers. Pauline landed at Galveston, TX, and came by train to Alva where Mr. Korell met her and she arrived at the Korell farm on Thanksgiving Day, 1913.

William Lehl passed away in 1969 and Pauline in 1982. They are buried in the Short Springs Cemetery. The children of William and Pauline are: Elvest Leo, Elmer Clarence, who died in infancy; Nellie Victoria, Frieda Pauline, Carl Henry and Lillian June who died in infancy.

RATZLAFF-SCHMIT FAMILY STORY
as told by Frances (Anderson) Bridges

My mother's parents and my mother's maternal grandfather and his son Benjamin came from Russia during the Mennonite migration, on the ship *Vaterland*, landing in Philadelphia, December 25, 1874. Her father's parents and a brother and two sisters came at a later date which we have not been able to establish. They had all lived in the western Ukraine, in the Province Volhynia, near the town of Ostrog, in the Mennonite villages of Antanofka, Karlswalde and Gruental. The families had all, at one time, lived in the lowlands of Germany and spoke the "Platte Dutch", although they could all read and write in "High German".

The first record of the name Ratzlaff is in the story of a German soldier named Ratzlaff in the 16th century who threw his sword into the ground and exclaimed, "I'm tired of war. I'm going to join the Mennonites!" The Mennonites' hatred of war and infant baptism were reasons for much persecution by the other churches of that time. Since they were excellent land reclaimers, when Holland offered them freedom from bearing arms if they would move there, many did. But troubles developed of jealousy and inter-marriage, so when they were promised they could live and worship as they pleased in Russia, they went there, thinking this promise was for all time. The Mennonites did not understand that it was only for 50 years. They only had leases on the land; only the improvements belonged to them. Here they lived in villages and farmed the surrounding land. After 50 years the leases were renewed, but they had to pay a heavy tax for each man who was exempt, but still fit, to serve in the Russian army. When this 50 years was up, they could stay on the land but had to serve in the army and go to Russian schools which they did not want to do.

At this time the Santa Fe Railroad was opening up the west, and the Railroad wanted settlers. Hearing of the problems in Russia, they sent representatives there to get them to come to the United States. So the Mennonite people sent emissaries to America to investigate. One of them was a Jacob Buller, a relative of my great-great-grandmother Ratzlaff. Here they met with the President of the United States, and he guaranteed them religious freedom. They were impressed and when they returned to Russia with this news, preparations were made to immigrate.

My grandmother told me that her father sold everything to pay their passage. Later on, my grandfather's brother worked and earned enough money to pay passage for his parents and two sisters. We do not know the exact date or place of their arrival.

The people on the *Vaterland* were housed in Philadelphia for some time before proceeding by train to Florence, Kansas. The Mennonite Central Committee had sponsored this. They also had raised money to pay for passage for those people who were unable.

The ship had a rough time in crossing the Atlantic Ocean,

losing one rudder while still at sea and the other before making port, and had to be towed in. Grandmother said they ran out of salt, too, before reaching port, salt which they had depended on to season their food.

That first winter in America was hard, lacking warm housing and good food. However, with help of many, things improved.

My grandparents were Benjamin and Helena (nee Schmit) Ratzlaff. Benjamin's family:

father-Andrew, and mother-Katie (nee Buller) Ratzlaff, children-Benjamin, Lena, Anna, and Gehart

Benjamin married Helena Schmit and moved to the town of Goltry, Oklahoma around 1912 with a group of Mennonites who were settling there

Lena died as a young woman

Anna married Andrew Koehn and moved to a farm near Ringwood, Oklahoma around 1912

Gehart married Agneta Unruh and moved to Alberta, Canada in 1906

Helena's family:

father-Jacob Schmit, her mother's name is not known, children-one daughter died in Russia, Helena, and Ben

Helena married Benjamin Ratzlaff
Ben married Susan Becker?

My grandparents' (Ben and Helena Ratzlaff) children were:

one was born and died in Russia

one died in Kansas, as a 3 year old infant

one died in Kansas, age around 5

Andrew, never married

Lena married Jim Anderson, their children were Frances and Leona

Matilda married George Lindsay, then Henry Wedel

Matilda's children were Mildred, Alma, Kenneth, and Ray Lindsay

Martha married David Wedel, and their children were

Clyde, Wilton, Martha Lena, Lawrence, and Gerald

Blondina became a nurse and later a nun and was the second Xray technician to be registered in the State of Oklahoma. She was an army nurse in WWI at Fort Riley, Kansas

Mary (Marie) married Chieftan Crew and their children were Ira Harold, and Gene

Ben and Helena (Schmit) Ratzlaff and all of their children are buried in Kroma Cemetery at Goltry, Oklahoma, except Blondina

(Sister Mary Agneta) who is buried in a Catholic Cemetery in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

When I was young I loved to go to grandma's to have her cook German food that I liked and listen to her tell stories about the "old country". She always told me that those people in Russia were so "green", and how glad she was to live in the United States.

She would tell me that in Russian farm villages most houses were only 3 rooms, one in which they lived, one where they did their spinning, etc., and parents and baby slept. The third was a loft and all the children slept there. In their living part, they had a stove where they never dared let the fire go out. It was almost a crime if they did, since having no matches, they would have to go to the neighbor's and borrow fire. (I couldn't picture this stove until I saw the one in the Old Adobe House in Hillsboro, Kansas. It is a marvel of engineering.)

My grandmother told me that the Mennonites weren't allowed to show affection for each other in Russia, only in private. They could be punished if seen.

Grandma's mother had died when grandma was 5 years old and her father wasn't allowed to keep his children himself, so they were farmed out. The beds in the lofts were often like boxes nailed on the wall and filled with straw. You slept on a feather mattress and covered with a feather-filled cover. One morning grandma's sister, who was living with another farm family, didn't get up to make breakfast, so the man of the house sent his son up to get her. So he went up, and when she didn't answer, he grabbed her by the feet and pulled her out of bed and down the stairs. When he got there she was dead. Grandma cried and cried, but her father said, "Don't cry, she is better off than we are".

One time when she was working in the field, grandma fell in the road, and the farmer where she was living was coming down the road with a cart load of hay. He didn't try to avoid her and ran the cart over her foot before she could roll out of the way. This left bad scars on her foot. Orphans were mostly ill treated.

One day while in Philadelphia, the lady where grandmother stayed took her shopping, and while in the store, grandmother couldn't find her. She looked everywhere. Not knowing the language and with everything strange, she was frantic. Finally, she went out on the street, and there was one of the men who had been with them on the ship, and he knew what to do.

Not knowing what difficult circumstances they would be facing, it took a lot of courage to leave everything and go to a new country. But it was an experience that they all faced together, helping each other, and never regretting their decision.

[Prepared by Frances (Anderson) Bridges, Carmen, OK, June 1991]

STEBENS FAMILY HISTORY

JACOB STEBENS (STIEBEN)

Jacob STEBENS was born 20 June 1820, in Russia, to Anton and Helena (REINEN) STIEBEN. On 10 October 1841, by Probst KONRADI, he married Eva Elizabeth KLING who was born 22 February 1822, in Russia, to Samuel and Katherina (RUTH) KLING. The parents of Jacob and Eva Elizabeth were born in Russia and all were of German ancestry.

Jacob, his wife, nine of their children, a daughter-in-law and three grand children traveled from the Volga area in Russia, to Hamburg, Germany, where they departed on or about 17 December 1875, for Hull, England, on the Dutch steam vessel, *Hansa* (according to the Hamburg Passenger lists). From there, they traveled overland, probably by train, to Liverpool where they embarked on the *S.S. City of Montreal* en route to New York. On or about 6 January 1876, they arrived at New York Harbor where they disembarked and where, probably again traveling by train, they made their way to, and settled in, Marion County, Kansas.

Jacob and his wife bought a farm in Marion County in 1877, and another in 1879. They are listed in the United States census for 1880, 9 June, in Wilson Township. The 1885 Kansas census lists Jacob's widow with three children in Grant Township and one son, John, with his wife and children, in Liberty Township.

Jacob died sometime between the 1880 and the 1885 census and Eva Elizabeth died about two years later, but after the 1885 Kansas census. According to family oral history, both are buried about four miles south of Lehigh, possibly in the REISWIG Cemetery. There are no markers.

Their known children were: 1) Johann Jacob, 2) Johannes, 3) Eva Catherine, 4) Kaspar, 5) Anna Elizabeth, 6) Conrad, 7) Jacob, 8) George Heinrich, 9) Mary Christina and 10) Frederick.

- 1) Johann Jacob was born 15 December 1845, in Russia; was listed as "epileptic" in the Ebenfeld Church record and was eventually admitted to the Kansas State Asylum at Topeka.
- 2) Johannes (John) was born 5 June 1849, in Alt Bauer, Russia, west of the Volga River, near Saratov; married Eva Catherine WAGNER, 14 February 1869, by Jakob WAGNER; had nine known children: Eva Catherine¹ 1870, John 1873, Elizabeth 1875, Mary 1878, Helena 1880, a daughter who died in infancy, Jacob 1884, Frederick 1886, and Harry 1891; died 27 December 1929, and was buried in the Carmen Cemetery, Carmen, Oklahoma.
- 3) Eva Catherine was born 15 February 1851; died 11 August 1876, and was buried in the Gard Cemetery, Marion County. No marker.

- 4) Kaspar was born 23 November 1853, in Russia; served in a Russian military unit; traveled to Marion County, about ten years after his parents; married Elizabeth FISHER; had seven known children: Jacob c.1887, Kasper 1888, Mary, Ruben, Molly 1891, Holderidge, and Kattie; died 14 January 1902, and was buried in the Wesley M. E. Chapel Cemetery northeast of Lahoma, Oklahoma. There is a marker.
- 5) Anna Elizabeth was born 10 October 1855; died 13 May 1880, and was buried in the Gard Cemetery, Marion County. There is no marker.
- 6) Conrad was born 10 March 1858, in Alt Bauer, Russia, west of the Volga River near Saratov; married Elizabeth PIESTER; had five known children: Bertha May 1892, Willie 1894, Roy O. 1897, Conrad, Lila Margaret 1906, and Howard Arthur 1907; died 16 November 1939, and is buried in the Hopewell Cemetery, Selman, Oklahoma.
- 7) Jacob was born 8 August 1862, in Russia; he and his family moved to Portland, Oregon.
- 8) George Heinrich was born 2 January 1864, in Alt Bauer, Russia, west of the Volga River near Saratov; had one son with Katherine EITEL: George EITEL; then married Anna Katherine BERNHARD and they had four known children: George, Henry, Stella, and Clara; died 27 July 1942, at Manitou, Oklahoma.
- 9) Mary Christena was born 16 March 1867, in Russia; married Fred BROWN 1 March 1888; had seven known children: Joseph, Emil, David, Rachel, Bertha, Fred, and Herman; died 7 May 1924, at Ferguson, Oklahoma, and was buried at Hitchcock, Oklahoma.
- 10) Frederick was born 11 February 1868, in Alt Bauer, Russia, west of the Volga River near Saratov; married (possibly Katherina WAGENER); had four known children: Martha, Lea, Harry, and Rusty; died in Hitchcock, Oklahoma.

1 Eva Catherine (STEBENS) HAGEN, grandmother of compiler.

ELIZABETH GILLIG VOGEL

Father - John Jacob Gillig

born: Oct 12, 1840 in Grime or Friedenfield, Russia of German parents

died: Feb 24, 1917 in rural Kiowa, KS

married: December 25, 1875

to

Mother - Eliza Linker Gillig

born: February 28, 1853 in Grime or Friedenfield, Russia of German parents

died: August 27, 1925 in rural Kiowa, KS

My mother, Elizabeth Gillig Vogel was one of 12 children of this union. The youngest child of the five children who were born in Russia. As I remember her saying, she was between three and four years old when they left Russia. There were seven more born in America.

As noted in the history of my Grandfather John Jacob Gillig, the family finally made their home in Rush Co, KS. One incident that stands out in my mind that my mother told me was about that first load Grandfather moved from Rush Co. to the farm near Kiowa (but actually in Oklahoma). My mother who was about 12 years old, her brother, Fred, two years older, and a younger sister came along to stay at the farm with a few livestock and bare necessities. My mother made bread but had no oven. She would take the bread to a neighbor over $\frac{1}{2}$ mile south to bake the bread. During this time, about 6 or 8 weeks, the younger sister became ill because of

a bowel irregularity. Mother became very worried and concerned. Finally Mother decided she would feed the little sister lots of butter which she had just made and yes, it did work!

Having been responsible for many tasks at the age of twelve, Mother was a very hard-working, independent personality all her life and yet she was a tender, loving, patient mother.

Another incident I will relate describes Mother's chores. It was her task, along with some other siblings, to herd and graze the small herd of cattle they had acquired. As normal children they became tired and bored as they carried a long stick to help herd the animals. She decided to left the cow's tail and lay the stick under. Just as this was done, it frightened the cow and she started running as fast as she could! Mother was even more frightened as she visioned a runaway herd. In a short while the cow switched her tail and out fell the stick, much to my mother's relief. She would really laugh as she related this old story.

Mother

Elizabeth Gillig Vogel - Seamstress, homemaker

born: Dec. 21, 1882 - Russia

died: Sept. 30, 1974 - Kiowa, KS

Father

Albert Vogel - Bricklayer, farmer

born: Aug. 9, 1866

died: July 5, 1942

married: Dec. 21, 1910

Me

Berniece Mae Vogel Spicer

born: Dec. 12, 1921 - rural Kiowa, KS

married: July 2, 1940

to

George Vincent Spicer - Farmer, cattleman, auctioneer, real estate broker

born: Oct. 4, 1917 - rural Hazelton, KS

Children

1. Karen Jo Spicer - Ex. Director of Social Service for Catholic Charities
Ft. Worth, TX

born: Sept 19, 1941

She is single.

Daughter: Megan Elizabeth Spicer (adopted)

born: April 10, 1972 - Ft. Worth, TX

2. Stanley Lynn Spicer

born: March 24, 1943 - Hardtner, KS

died: Jan. 18, 1946

3. Samuel Raymond Spicer - Farmer, cattleman, actioneer, real estate broker

born: Jan. 3, 1947 - Hardtner, KS

married: May 21, 1983

to

Cathy Sue Patterson - Homemaker, teacher

born: Oct. 27, 1960 - Wichita, KS

Their children: Hanna Lea Spicer - born Aug 24, 1984 - Kiowa, KS

Haley Rae Spicer - born April 3, 1986 - Kiowa, KS

4. Susan Beth Spicer Luthi - Homemaker, social worker

born: Dec. 17, 1948 - Hardtner, KS

married - Jan. 15, 1971

to

Dannie Gene Luthi - Teacher, farmer, cattleman at Hazelton, KS

born: Jan. 17, 1949 - Perryton, TX

Daughter: Cassie Elizabeth Luthi - born April 27, 1977
Knoxville, TN

I really do appreciate my mother's Christian training.
We were faithful in our church attendance because she felt
it was important.

Berneice Spicer

June, 1991

ANCESTRAL RECORD OF HENRY & EMMA WEBER

My ancestors originated in the "Graftschaft Wartburg, Kleinboges, Kolonies" Germany, near Eizenach. The mother and her three sons migrated to Russia, near the city of Saratove, to a small village by the name of Messer, "Ust-Zolica", between the years 1768 and 1772. I am a descendent of the oldest son, Johan Peter, and Lena Weber. My great, great grandfather, son of Johan Peter, was Heinrich Jacob; my great grandfather was George Peter and grandmother, Christina Maria (Laubach) Weber. My father was Henirich Peter and my mother was Anna Marie (Lehr) Weber. My parents and grandparents were Protestants and belonged to the Reformed Church.

I was born January 11, 1886, in the village of Messer in Russia. My parents, with their family, which included Amalia (Mollie), Henry, Jacob, John, Emelia (Millie), and Carl migrated to the United States of America because of the wonderful opportunities that existed here. Three brothers and sisters died in Russia before we came to the U.S. One brother, Carl, the youngest of the family, died in 1904 in March, and was buried north of Okeene.

I started school when I was seven years old. I attended school seven years and graduated from the 8th grade. Our school was conducted in the German language, however we were compelled to learn the Russian language. The books we used were largely Russian fables.

At the age of seven I had to take the horses out to the "Steppes" to pasture them every night. My cousin, who was nine years old, went with me. We hobbled the horses and lay down to sleep on the ground, wrapped in a comfort. When a rainstorm came up, we were frequently soaked to the skin. One night especially we were in a terrible storm with no protection. My uncle came out to see how we were fairing and took us home. Like all boys, we had lots of

fun playing leap-frog and wrestling, pulling off tricks on one another was expected.

Everyone had to learn a trade. My uncles were shoemakers. The shoes were made to measure. One uncle made wagons. Everything was made from scratch.

Since my parents were weavers by trade, I had to get up early (5:00 in the morning) to go to the Schmidts to get our spools. In the winter time those two blocks were a long trek for a child, through the snow and ice. We had to work when we were not in school. School was just one half of a day because there wasn't room for all the pupils. We wove 180 yards in three weeks' time and received 5 cents per yard.

We farmed 80 acres. We raised rye, wheat, barley and oats, potatoes, sunflowers, broom corn and many vegetables. We had five cows who always came fresh in the spring. During the winter, we had little or no milk. Butter was rendered and put into crocks to save for later use.

Our crops we harvested with a sythe or cradlw and threshed with a roller purposely made to thresh the grain. Two horses pulled the roller over the bundles of grain. The grain, wheat and rye were taken to the mill and ground into flour and cereal for our own use. The other grain was used for feed. We had four mills in our town. Wheat and rye were also stored to sell. Wheat was sold for 60 cents a bushel.

When I was four years old, we attended the wedding of my father's sister. There was a big feast and when the couple came back from the church, the youngsters pulled a rope across the door and would not let the couple enter until they gave each child a coin.

Recreation was swimming in the old mill stream during the summer. In the winter we skated at the same place.

To begin the trip to America we traveled by rail to Bremen, Germany, where we boarded the "Breslau" on December 19, 1903, bound for Galveston, Texas and landed at New York on January 1, 1904. We were detained there for four days and arrived at Galveston, Texas, on January 11, 1904. From Galveston we went by train to Isabella, Oklahoma, arriving on January 14, 1904. In the fall of 1905 my father bought a farm five miles south and nine miles east of Okeene. In the spring of 1906 he built a home on this farm. In March 1907, I came to Ingersoll, Oklahoma, and worked for Christ Haas for two years. In March 1909 I rented one of his farms two miles west of Ingersoll. In 1910, January 27th, I was united in marriage to Emma Geis. Four children were born: Fabien, on November 27, 1910; Ralph, December 19, 1911; on September 16, 1921, a twin boy and girl were born. Both passed away the same day. We lived on the Haas farm from 1910 to 1918. In July 1918 we moved to the Grandpa Beltz farm a half mile south of Ingersoll. In 1919 we bought 60 acres of land which lay three miles west of Ingersoll. On February 9, 1927, we bought the 20 acres adjoining the 60 acre field. Total purchase price was \$10,255.00 for the 60 acres. On April 20, 1926, we bought the school land for \$5,500.00. In May 1928, we moved on the school land. In July 1929, we tore down the old house and built a new one. We are thankful to God that we could live in our new home.

Both Fabien and Ralph received their primary education at the Pleasant Valley School and at Ingersoll. Both of them graduated from the Ingersoll High School. Fabien in 1925 and Ralph in 1929. After they graduated their father and mother decided to send them to college. Fabien started in the fall of 1928 and Ralph a year later. Both parents thought the best heritage they could give their children was an education. After graduating from Northwestern State Teachers College, they both taught school. Fabien married LaVaughn Payne

of Alva, July 30, 1939. Both taught school at Lambert.

Ralph was married to Frances Holland on Jan. 25, 1936. Ralph began his teaching at Vici. Three children were born to this union: Tanis Bernard, Ralph Neal Weber, and Mary Lou Munn.

Tanis and Tom Bernard have one daughter, Tomilou.

Neal Weber has a son, Mark Neal Weber.

Mary Lou and Bill Munn have two children: Tena Lou and Christian Jay Mun.

On January 30, 1941, we bought the Diel 80, four and one-half miles west of Ingersoll. On April 15, 1943, we bought 40 acres of the same quarter section, that was part of the Schwab Estate. Total purchase price for the 120 acres was \$11,000.00.

In 1942, on August 3, Fabien had to go to the Army. My health was poor so Ralph quit teaching school to take over the farm work. In 1943 we built a home on the 80 west of Ingersoll. On October 18, 1943, we moved into our new home.

Fabien returned from the army November 17, 1945, and was discharged.

On April 14, 1949, we bought a home on 821 S. Kansas, Cherokee, Oklahoma, from Zene McMurtrey for \$12,500.00. We moved into this home on May 23, 1949. Fabien moved to the farm home.

We lived together here until death separated us on November 27, 1950. My wife was admitted to the hospital at Cherokee, Oklahoma on September 28, 1950, returned home on October 24, 1950. She passed away at home on November 27, 1950 at 4:30 a.m.

I have been a citizen of Alfalfa County since 1907, before Oklahoma became a state. I was on the Board of Directors of the Farmers Tel. Co. of Ingersoll, also a director of the Farmers Elevator Co.

My son, Fabien, has been the principal of the Cherokee Grade School for twenty years. Ralph is the Executive Vice President of the Alfalfa Co. National Bank, a home-owned bank.

I have lived here 68 years, never living anywhere else (as an adult).

I was converted on November 18, 1907, during a convention of the Baptist Church at Ingersoll. I was baptized July, 1908, by Rev. J.P. Rempel and joined the Bethel Baptist Church at Ingersoll. I was secretary of the Church for 21 years. Was Sunday School Superintendent for 14 years. I have been a teacher in Sunday School since 1933, and a deacon since 1929.

Emma was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Geis, who came to the United States from Messer, Russia, (same place where I was born) in 1887, in March, settling in Marion County, Kansas, northwest of Durham. This is where she was born, March 30, 1891. They moved to Oklahoma in 1892, to a farm 7 miles east and 7 miles south of Okeene. We were married in the Immanuel Baptist Church, nearby.

The passing of my dear wife was the hardest blow that ever struck me. However, I tried to adjust myself to my conditions.

"The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." We were married 40 years and 10 months. She was a devoted wife and a good mother to our children. She is released from all suffering and is forever with the Lord.

At the age of 15 years she accepted Christ as her personal savior and was baptized by Rev. E. Graalman, and became a member of the Emanuel Baptist Church near Okeene. Later she became a member of the Bethel Baptist Church of Ingersoll, Oklahoma. She was active in all branches of the church, especially of the Ladies Missionary Society of which she was the Treasurer until her death.

After the passing of my dear wife, I lived alone for 2 years and 7 months. On June 26, 1953, I was united in marriage to Lillian Tiemann Brenner at the home of her sister, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Geis. Rev. Leland Friesen performed the single-ring ceremony.

We hope and pray that God will bless us for the years which He has in store for us that we may joyfully and lovingly journey on life's pathway that leads to our eternal home.

On November 25th, 1957, we felt lead to transfer our church membership to the First Baptist Church of Cherokee where Henry's sons and grandchildren were members for a number of years. Since uniting with the First Baptist Church, the Lord has opened various avenues of service for us, through which we have been greatly blessed.

On July 4, 1970, we flew to Japan with 250 other Southern Baptists. There we visited Lillian's daughter, Dr. and Mrs. Harry Friesen and also attended the World's Fair and the Baptist World Alliance. It was a memorable trip. On Dec. 14, 1974, we flew to California to visit Lillian's son, Warren Brenner and family and most of all her grand-daughter Mr. and Mrs. R.B. Miller and their new baby daughter. The trip was most delightful, however we were most happy to return home to Cherokee.

Henry Weber

* Henry Weber passed away on December 1, 1982.

JACOB WEBER

The Jacob Weber family heritage had its beginning in Germany. Our ancestors accepted the invitation of Catherine the Great, between the years of 1768-1772, to emigrate to Russia with the promise of land of their own and exemption from military service for a 100-year period. They lived in the "Graftschaft Wartburg, Kleinboges Kolonie", Germany, near Eizenach.

My father was a descendent (several generations removed) of the oldest son of a Mother who left Germany, locating in a small village by the name of Messer, Russia which was located 25 miles west of the Volga river, and 60 miles South of the city of Saratow.

Father was born Feb. 24, 1888 at Messer. They lived in the village but went to their farms each day. Only German was spoken within the families and they attended German schools. They were Protestants belonging to the Evangelical Reformed Church.

By this time, living conditions were not the best and Grandfather saw little future for his family. Other German emigrants had moved to the United States and enticing reports of golden opportunities eventually convinced by grandparents to venture once more. They left their home in Russia and began a new chapter of their lives by boarding a train and traveling to Breman, Germany *Bremen* with their six children, a little bedding and clothing and one basket of food.

At Breman, on December, 1903, my father boarded the "Breslau", landing at New York January 1, 1904. Following a four-day detention period, they were allowed to travel on to Galveston, arriving there January 11, 1904. Final destination was Isabella, then Oklahoma Territory, arriving three days later. The entire trip had cost around \$100.00 per person.

Grandfather Weber bought a farm southeast of Okeene and there built a home. He had paid \$500 for a preferent right lease and later paid the United States Government \$1200 for the homestead.

My father Jacob was 16 years of age at this time. He came to the Ingersoll community as a laborer. On October 25, 1913, he married my mother Lydia Lena Schwab, whose parents had also come from Russia. They established a home in the community and it was there my sister and I were born. Over a period of years experiencing both good and bad crops as well as the Depression, my parents purchased several plots of land which are still in the family and being farmed by my husband, Virgil McDaniel.

"God has truly blessed our family and we are proud of our German heritage but so grateful our ancestors chose to make America their home."

Ruth Weber McDaniel

WEIGAND STORY

My parents, Philip and Mollie (Weber) Weigand were born in Messer, Russia in the year of 1877; they were married in 1898.

They accompanied Mollie's parents, Henry Peter and Anna Catherine Weber to the United States in 1904 with two small boys, Philip and Jacob. On their way the Weigand family was quarantined in Bremen, Germany because Jacob had the chicken pox. Mollie's parents continued to the United States with their other children. The ship landed in Galveston Harbor, Texas and as soon as the quarantine was lifted Philip and Mollie left Germany for the new country. They also landed in Galveston and then came to Okeene, Ok. by train where Mollie's parents had located. Much to their delight they found German people living in Okeene so they made their home there for several years. Philip worked as a section hand on the railroad, farm hand and any other odd jobs he could find. Leah, Carl, Edwin and Harvey were all born in or near Okeene. When Harvey was 3 years old Philip decided to try farming on his own. A realtor took Philip to Clovis, New Mexico to look over the farming situation. He decided to buy a half-section; the quarters laid nice and level and the soil was rich so they raised wheat and Philip taught the neighbors how to plant and raise wheat.

They found no German people living near them so there were no German churches and Mollie wasn't satisfied. In the year of 1918 Philip Jr. came to find work as a farm laborer; he found work with a man by the name of Ralph Hadwiger,

in the Ingersoll Community in Alfalfa County, Okla. Mollie's brothers were living near Ingersoll, churches were being built and with German people in the area they would make the area their home for the rest of their lives.

Their lives were centered around church activities, having a wonderful Christian home with faith in God and teaching their children the faith and hope from an early age.

They moved to Memorial Manor, Cherokee, Okla. in 1965; they did enjoy their last years together in the convalescent home. Mollie died Feb. 5, 1968 and Philip passed away April 19, 1969. Both lived full and rich lives to the ages of 91 and 92 years. What more can we ask? They are buried in the Cherokee Cemetery near the west gate and almost to the south end of the cemetery.

Harvey Weigand

FRÖHLICHE WEIHNACHTEN!

(Merry Christmas)

by Bonnie Haas

This holiday season a local group of Americans are counting extra blessings. The thankful members of AHSGR (American Historical Society of Germans from Russia) realize glasnost came too late to save their families from extinction in Russia.

With names like Goeken, Bahm, Weigand, Geis and Vogel, members of this ethnic background spread throughout AEC country. Their common bond is part of history.

In 1768, Catherine the Great of Russia issued an invitation to farmers in her native Germany. Thousands sailed north over the Arctic Circle with the hope of land and opportunity. Along the Volga they found barren stretches with no facilities and no money to return. The settlers built thatched-roofed homes and kept themselves apart by preserving German customs and language. A one hundred year exemption from the Russian Army was promised.

Unfortunately, Catherine's successor, Czar Alexander didn't honor promises. Don Brining tells, "My grandmother's brother, Fred Beltz, was nineteen and eligible for the Russian Army. He took the passport of a recently departed relative and disguised as an old woman he spent nearly three weeks at sea with his parents reminding him, "Mach du kline" (make yourself smaller).

Famines plagued these frugal people with the homespun clothing. Few could save the \$100 to emigrate to the United States, Canada or South America.

For those still remaining, the Russian winters had no pity. Henry Brining repeats this story, "My Dad made a trip from Kutter to Saratov in

the cold wintertime to get a pig to fatten. The folks traveled by horse-drawn sleigh through roads marked by timbers. On the way home, wolves started following. My family lit little bundles of hay and threw them out to scare the hungry animals. When the hay ran out, the wolves circled to the front of the wagon. The frightened horses refused to move so my folks finally threw out the live pig and felt lucky to escape with their lives.

Pockets of Mennonite, Catholic and "Reformers" (Reformed Lutheran) villages dreamed of a safer future for their children. Relatives and small churches answered the pleas by sponsoring homesteaders in the U.S.

A few brought meager possessions. One carried a spinning wheel but Oklahoma was short of kindling so it was burned for firewood. Harvey Weigand's father packed a mattress over his shoulder. Some clutched irons, tea pots and sacks of the turkey red wheat which has become this area's legacy.

Poor families couldn't travel first class so most were crammed into the bellies of ships where some scared travelers developed trachoma ("sore eye") and were deported at Ellis Island.

Lizzie Goeken was forced to abandon ship and separate from her family during a near tragedy at sea. "Mother was afraid of boats and water the rest of her life," Hank Goeken recalls.

The German-Baptist (Bethel) Church of Ingersoll drew the new the new immigrants like a magnet. Services were conducted in German, easing the displaced farmers into society. When suspicions raged during World War II ("Could these people be spies?") The German-Russians sought security in nearby rural communities.

Quarterly, descendants of this hardy stock meet for traditional German suppers. Leland Moser, folklore chairman, explains, "Holidays

were low-key in Russia. Most celebrations centered around the church and music. For Christmas, special cookies or candy was made, since sugar was a scarcity.

"Small gifts were brought by "Honagle" says Harvey Weigand. "In Ingersoll, I'll never forget our first Christmas there. The tree at the church was covered with candles. It was a beautiful sight. Then, afterward, all of us kids got a big sack of candy. It was wonderful."

Letters from the homeland were rare but the national AHSGR organization has published some from the Lehl family--"Letters to Pauline." Many descendants remember the "Sendbote", a weekly German newspaper published in Rochester, NY. Sadly, remaining Volga Germans were sent to Siberia, to prison or they starved to death during bloody Russian wars.

Returning from a tour of modern-day Russia, Ruth Weigand sums it up, "We're so glad none of us had to grow up under those conditions." When the Germans from Russia pause this holiday season for praise and thanksgiving, one has the sincere feeling that they really mean it.

OKLAHOMA HARVESTERS CHAPTER
A H S G R MEMBERSHIP

Brining	Don and Mary	525 S. Grand	Cherokee, OK	73728
Brining	Henry and Bernice	1119 S. OK	Cherokee, OK	73728
Brown	Marguerite L.	520 S. 6th.	Kiowa, KS	67070
Diel	Marcine* and Sue	Box 291	Kiowa, KS	67070
Geis	Alyce	804 S. KS	Cherokee, OK	73728
Goeken	Henry and Ada	616 E. 7th.	Cherokee, OK	73728
Haas	Chris and Bonnie	R.R.	Cherokee, OK	73728
Honer	Christine*	715 Noble	Alva, OK	73717
Lau	Prof. Ray and Cherie	1801 Cherry	Alva, OK	73717
Lehl	Elvest and Ruby	2450 Newell	Wichita, KS	67203
Lehl	Carl and Beulah	132 E. OK Ave.	Alva, OK	73717
Lohrding	Harry and Nellie	508 E. Cotton- wood	Coldwater, KS	67209
Moser	Leland and Barbara		Carmen, OK	73726
McDaniel	Virgil and Ruth	1305 Barnes	Alva, OK	73717
Roy	Betty Jo	603 S. 6th.	Kiowa, KS	67070
Spicer	George and Bernice	R.R.	Hazelton, KS	67061
Terry	Elizabeth	406 N. 7th.	Kiowa, KS	67070
Vogel	Richard*	1014 Dickinson	Kiowa, KS	67070
Weber	Fabien and Maxine	1125 W. Locust	Alva, OK	73717
Weber	Ralph and Frances	821 S. KS	Cherokee, OK	73728
Weigand	Harvey and Ruth	R.R. 3	Alva, OK	73717

*Helen Diel deceased

*Jean Vogel deceased

*Christine Honer born in Russia