

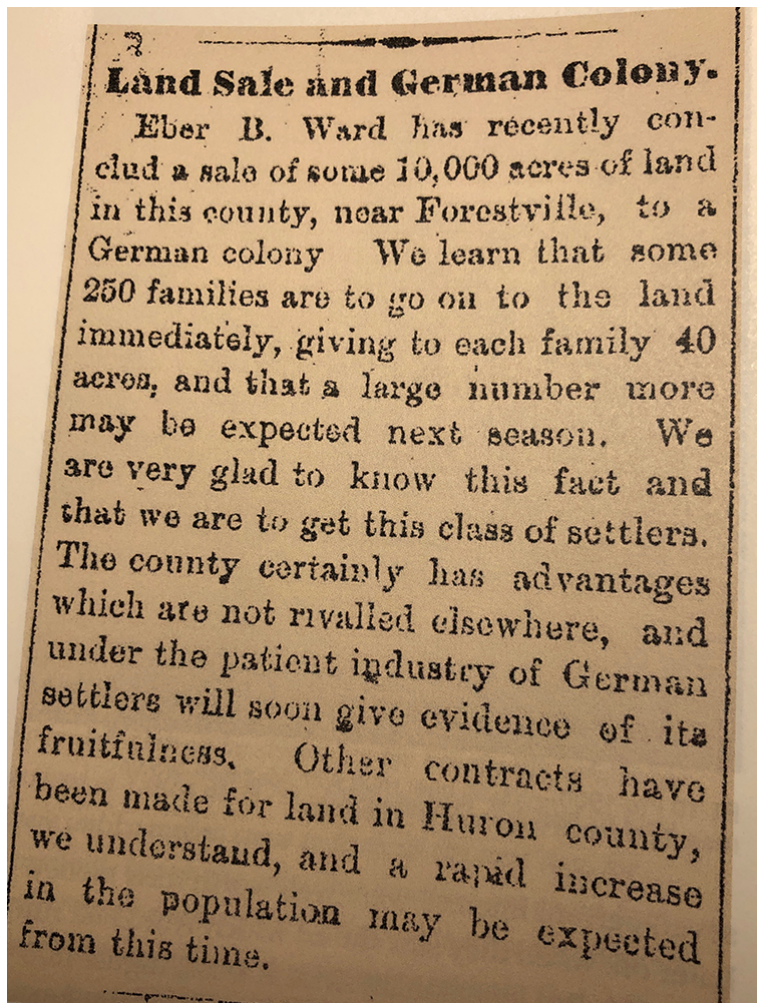
News from Nan

ANNA'S FAMILY HISTORY

RECENTLY PUBLISHED HISTORY BOOK ABOUT MICHIGAN'S SAXONIA SETTLERS

NOVEMBER 25, 2019 | ANNA

Utz H. Schmidt, a modern-day German immigrant and retired automotive engineer living in Palms, Michigan, recently published a history book about the *Colonie* (also spelled *Colonia*) *Saxonia*, one of a number of immigration promotion groups formed during the 19th century to encourage and support German settlers. This colony, which included as members my Riedel and Schreiter ancestors, came from the German state of Saxony and settled in the town of Forestville, Sanilac County, Michigan. Utz's book is titled *Michigan's Thumb, a Paradise for Saxonia Settlers*, and it is available from Lulu Press.



Newspaper clipping about the land sale to the Colonie Saxonia

Many descendants of the Saxon Colony settlers (including myself) provided Utz with maps, photographs, and information about their German ancestors. In addition, Utz did extensive research in both the United States and Germany. The book is rich in family stories and interesting images.

One of the book's most important story themes involves a set of letters that my great grandfather Alvin Schreiter wrote to his oldest brother in Germany; the first was written in October 1873, soon after they arrived.

The Voyage Starts

The 8th of August 1873 was a great day. In the morning there was coffee and rolls and at noon meat and potatoes. Our Paul couldn't eat with us, for the trip had made him queasy. At 6:00 in the evening we boarded the Minerva and at 1:00 the ship set sail. At sea we had a storm immediately, so that the waves washed over the deck. Everything had to be tied down. My wife was the first to get seasick. The next day there were only three men who were well. I myself couldn't get up one whole day. Johann Rau, also from Planitz, had to wait on us, for there was vomit and diarrhea.

Monday the 11th we came to Hull, an English city. There we couldn't land on account of low tide. We had to wait for a small ship, which took us to land. We went immediately to the railroad station. There we had to wait until 11:00 p.m. and then went by express to Liverpool. We arrived there at 7:00 a.m. Can you imagine the cranky kids and infants? We were quartered in two houses and had two days' time to recuperate, which we did.

(A. Schreiter Letter 9 October 1873⁵)

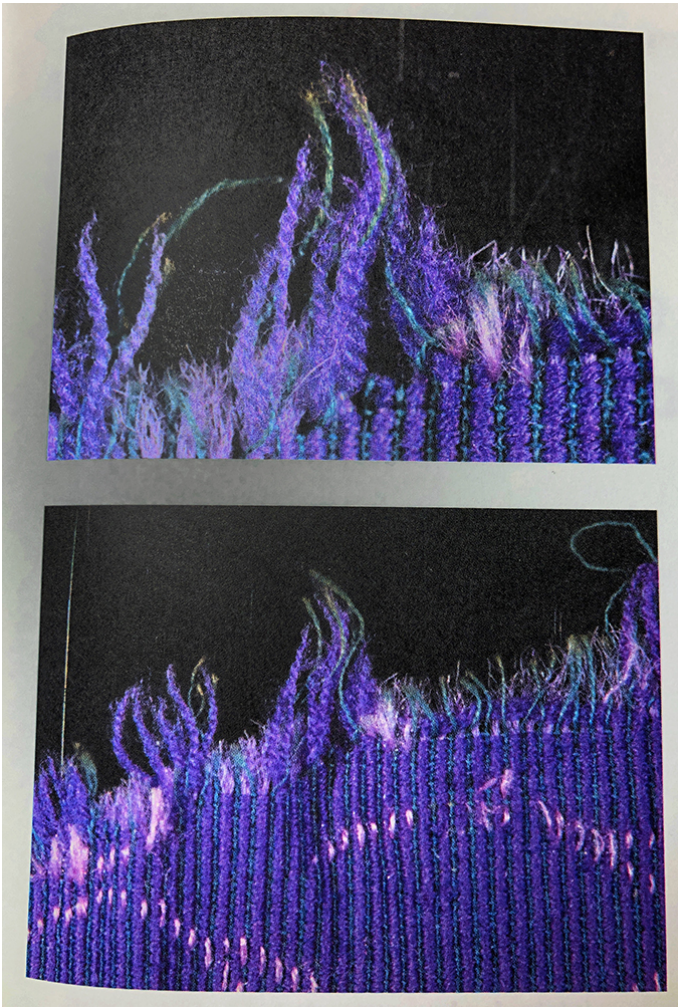
Letter written in 1873 from Alvin Schreiter to his brother in Germany

Alvin became a farmer in Michigan; in Germany he was a miner and maker of decorative braid trims.

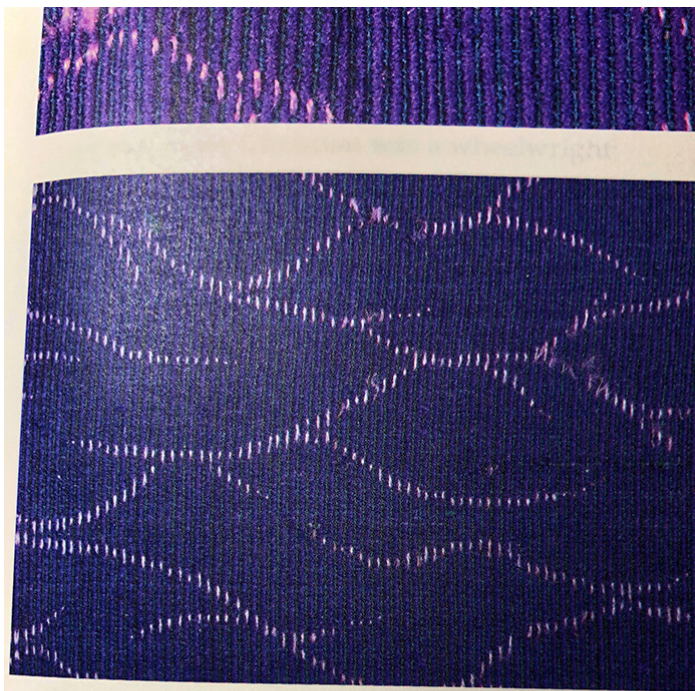


Decorative trims of the type produced by Alvin Schreiter in Germany

Adolph Riedel owned a farm and various local businesses in Michigan; in Germany he was a weaver.



Adolph Riedel's wool cloth remnant discovered by Utz Schmidt in the course of writing his book

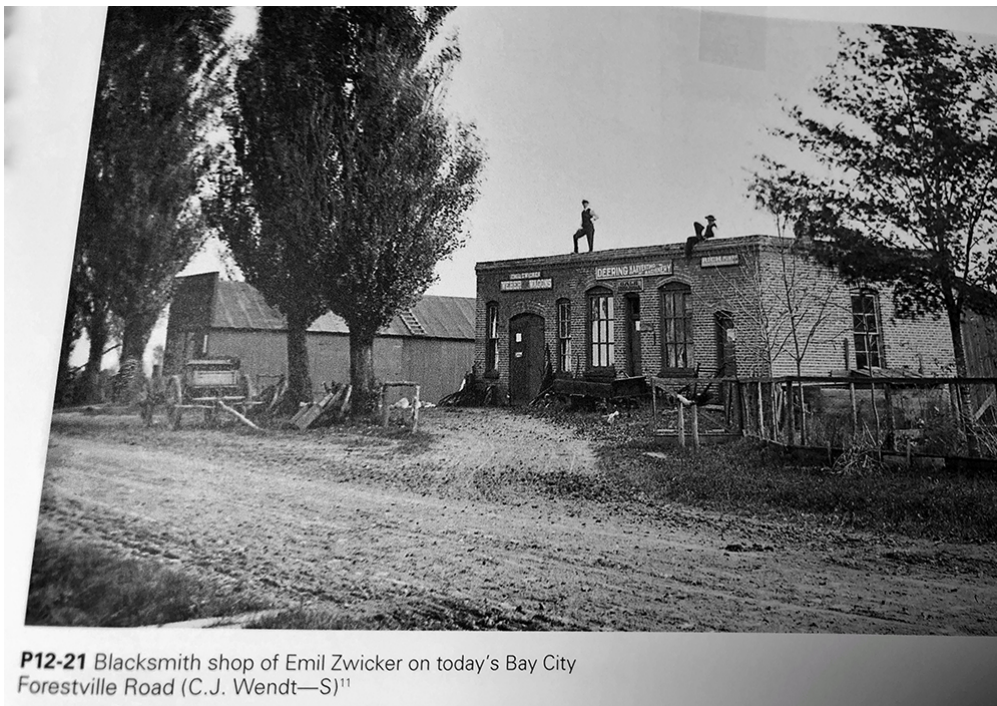


From top to bottom: **P18-1, P19-1, P20-1** 1870—Adolph Riedel, wool cloth remnant (P, picture courtesy D. Haenchen)²⁶

Material Spec: Wool cloth. To give needed strength, a very fine linen thread in medium green is used for the warp. Two different weft threads create the pattern. Weft one is thick, dark purple wool to create the elevations; for the valleys, the warp thread is used again, now as weft-two. To make it more complex, a brocaded weft pattern of reflective silk or treated cotton is added as a beautiful finishing touch.

Adolph Riedel's wool cloth remnant

Adolph was not the only small business owner in the group; his future son-in-law Emil Zwicker owned the local blacksmith shop.



P12-21 Blacksmith shop of Emil Zwicker on today's Bay City Forestville Road (C.J. Wendt—S)¹¹

Emil Zwicker's blacksmith shop

One image in Utz's book of particular interest to me was the list of Saxonia Masons. Four members are my close relatives: L. H. Riedel is my grandfather, and A. N. Bostwick, A. L. Riedel, and L. A. Riedel are my uncles.

Saxonia Masons Cato Lodge No. 2015 (P)²⁵	
Name	Date of Attendance
L.H. Riedel	1908
Chas Weber	1909
E.Z. Zwicker	1910
Alex Stephens	1910
Albert Schubel	1910
Otto Wendt	1910
Fred Zwicker	1912
A.N. Bostwick	1915
A.L. Riedel	1915
L.A. Riedel	1915
William Schaaf	1919
Arthur Jacobs	1919

TB2-23

List of Saxonia Masons

Kudos to Utz Schmidt for producing such a rich addition of information about this interesting group of immigrants!

◀ 2019 ◀ DELAWARE TOWNSHIP ◀ GERMANY ◀ MICHIGAN ◀ MIGRATION ◀ RIEDEL ◀ SANILAC COUNTY
 ◀ SAXONY ◀ SCHREITER ◀ UTZ H. SCHMIDT ◀ VAN RAAPHORST