

News from Nan

NAN'S WRITINGS

NAN'S INTRODUCTION TO FAMILY HISTORY

APRIL 28, 2021 | NAN

[Anna:] This post is part of a series based on family cards, letters, and reminiscences. This one tells how Nan, who was the the family historian her whole life long, got started in genealogy. The original document was written in about 1994, six years after Nan had a major stroke.

The things I “know,” about my grandparents, both my father’s parents and my mother’s, are mostly secondhand, that is, things I have been told or have heard. There were about 40 of us first cousins on each side, and Paul [Nan’s younger brother] and I were among the youngest in each group. Grandma Schreiter [Friederika Luise Dorsch Schreiter] died in 1894 when she was only 49 years old, many years before I was born. Grandpa Riedel [Heinrich Adolph Riedel] died in 1909 when I was only about three years old, so I don’t remember him at all.



Louise Dorsch Schreiter



Heinrich Adolph Riedel

The other two [Ehregott August Albin (Alvin) Schreiter and Marie Augusta Joram Riedel] then lived on alone, Grandpa Schreiter in the little log house that replaced the original log cabin, and Grandma Riedel in the hotel at the west end of Forestville.



Alvin Schreiter on his farm



Marie Augusta Joram Riedel

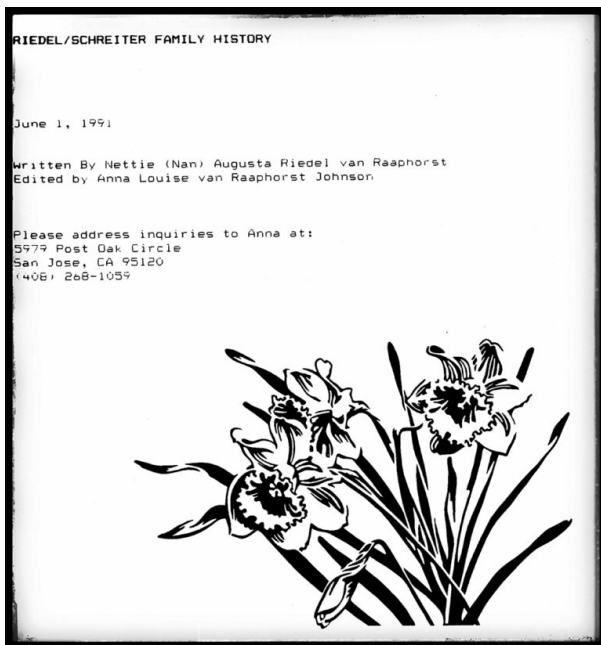
When I was little, I thought that was odd, and I asked my mother once why they didn't live together. She explained that they weren't a couple, but I still thought they should have married each other and made a couple.

I remember asking Mother if Grandpa would know who I was if he met me on the street. I don't think he would have.

When I was a Camp Fire Girl, I was earning a bead by learning about family history, and when I asked Mother where she was born, she didn't know! So the next time we went to see Grandpa, I urged her to ask him. She did, and he said, "Who wants to know?!" This sounds very rude, doesn't it? I think people in Europe often felt that their lives were interfered with by officials. That was one reason they came to America: to be free of bureaucratic "nosiness." Mother explained that she didn't know, and the children needed to know "for school."

Grandpa didn't answer for some time, apparently thinking it over. But just before we left, he said that she was born in Planitz. [Planitz, formerly a separate city, is now part of Zwickau.] When John [Nan's husband] and I were in East Germany, we went there. We saw the church where Mother was baptized.

[Anna:] I can relate to the difficulties Nan describes in finding out family information. I was also the youngest on both sides of my family, and I never had the advantage my older cousins had of hearing family "gossip" over the dinner table. Maybe our persistent curiosity helped to make both of us better genealogists! In any case, we teamed up and published the first edition of the Riedel-Schreiter family history in 1991.



First edition of the Riedel-Schreiter Family History, published in 1991

◀ 2021 ◀ EHREGOTT AUGUST ALBIN (ALVIN) SCHREITER ◀ FORESTVILLE ◀ FRIEDERIKA LUISE DORSCH SCHREITER
◀ GENEALOGY ◀ HEINRICH ADOLPH RIEDEL ◀ MARIE AUGUSTA JORAM RIEDEL ◀ MICHIGAN
◀ NETTIE (NAN) AUGUSTA RIEDEL VAN RAAPHORST ◀ RIEDEL ◀ SCHREITER