

Riedel-Schreiter Family History



**Anna van Raaphorst-Johnson
Third Edition (3.0) - November 2014**

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Chapter

1

Introduction

Keyword tags: ancestor, Bavaria, descendant, Dorsch, Germany, Johnson, Joram, Michigan, Riedel, Saxony, Schreiter, United States of America, van Raaphorst

Written by Anna van Raaphorst Johnson in 2014

Primary subjects of this book

This book provides information about the following people:

- Heinrich Adolph (Adolph) Riedel, born 1842 in Germany
- His wife, Marie Augusta (Augusta) Joram, born 1839 in Germany
- Ehregott August Albin (Alvin) Schreiter, born 1843 in Germany
- His wife, Friederike Luise (Louise) Dorsch, born 1845 in Germany
- Some of their descendants, primarily descendants of Adolph's oldest son, Louis Herman Riedel, and his daughter, Nettie Augusta (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst

Adolph, Augusta, Alvin, and Louise (along with the children they had at the time) emigrated from Saxony, Germany, in 1873 and settled in the area around Forestville, Michigan, USA. A number of their descendants still live in Michigan, but many have migrated all around the United States.

About this book

This is the third edition of *Riedel-Schreiter Family History*, copyright 2012-2014 by Anna van Raaphorst and Richard Johnson. The first edition was written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst and Anna van Raaphorst Johnson, and was published on June 1, 1991.

Nan passed on in 2000. In 2012 and 2013 the original material was updated and expanded (by me, Anna) as a celebration of her and Richard Harold (Dick) Johnson's 50th wedding anniversary (June 22, 2013). The second edition contained most of the original narratives, but none of the genealogical material, which is now recorded in the van Raaphorst-Riedel Family Tree in Family Tree Maker (see [For More Information](#) on page 147).

The third edition is dedicated to the memory of my mother, and to my descendants, who carry the genes of the courageous, diverse, and interesting people described here. I hope they enjoy the story and continue to add to it over time.

Changes to the third edition

The third edition contains a contribution about his pet ducks by Jim Stutsman (a great-grandson of Louis Riedel and Anna Schreiter) and a contribution by Anna titled "'I Did It My Way': Multigenerational Pride and Independence in a German Immigrant Family."

Related material

This document is a companion piece to other printed and electronic documents about Anna and Dick's families, listed in [For More Information](#) on page 147.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to the following people, whose contributions to this story have made it even richer.

- Susan Bauerle Bisio
- Helena Blomquist
- Art Bostwick
- Bill Bostwick
- Dick Johnson
- Ellen Johnson Livengood
- Gillian Johnson Blomquist
- Tim Johnson
- Gladys Kelley Riedel
- Isolde Kneschke Schenk
- Don Obrigkeit
- Joan Potts
- Al Riedel
- Louis Riedel
- Paul Riedel
- Sal Riedel
- Alvin Schreiter
- Anna Schreiter Riedel
- Dorothy Slack Riedel
- Diane Stutsman Shuey
- Jim Stutsman
- Ed Wahla

Chapter 2

Ancestors

Keyword tags: ancestor, Dorsch, Joram, Riedel, Schreiter

This chapter provides an overview of our Riedel-Schreiter ancestors and the area of Michigan called "the Thumb," where those family members who migrated from the Old World to the New first settled in the United States.

The Riedel-Schreiter Families

Keyword tags: ancestor, Colonia Saxonica, Dorsch, family, Germany, Joram, Riedel, Saxony, Schreiter

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in 1990

By now most of us have married people with backgrounds at least somewhat different from ours, and as an extended family we are a sort of United Nations. But we share a distinctive background: membership in a pioneering colony whose people arrived at the beginning of steam sailing and who had the grinding job of making homes out of primeval wilderness. It is such a rich history that books could be — and have been — written about these people and their times. It will be difficult to pick just the highlights! But we will aim for a bird's-eye view of the families of the following people:

- Heinrich Adolph (Adolph) Riedel, born 13 July 1842 in Falkenstein, Saxony, Germany
- His wife, Marie Augusta (Augusta) Joram, born 25 August 1839 in Marieney, Saxony, Germany
- Ehregott August Albin (Alvin) Schreiter, born 1843 in Geyer, Saxony, Germany
- His wife, Friederike Luise (Louise) Dorsch, born 1845 in Schleiz, Saxony, Germany

Adolph Riedel was a weaver who moved his family from Falkenstein to Meerane, because weaving was a thriving trade there at the time. Weaving in Meerane must have declined quickly, since only a few years later Adolph joined the *Colonia Saxonica* — Saxon Colony — to try his fortune in the New World, where he owned two hotels, as had other members of his extended family in Germany.

Alvin Schreiter came from a family of textile workers who made *Posamentieren* (decorative braid, the kind that used to make army uniforms such splendid things). There were also in the family all manner of miners and smiths, who made the machinery of the mines. And stocking and sock weavers. And even some judges and sea captains. In the New World Alvin worked in a saw mill and ran a small farm.

Our grandmothers, of course, listed their occupation as *Frau* (wife) or *Hausfrau* (housewife). Being a wife was an occupation. However, Grandma Riedel also owned property and helped operate the hotels Granddad bought in Forestville, and Grandma Schreiter was an herbalist and a midwife.



Figure 1: Adolph Riedel



Figure 2: Augusta Joram



Figure 3: Adolph Riedel family (about 1890)



Figure 4: Augusta Joram with granddaughters [?]



Figure 5: Augusta Joram and members of the Ullmann family



Figure 6: Alvin and Louise Schreiter with Luise Friederike [?] (about 1867)



Figure 7: Alvin Schreiter



Figure 8: Louise Dorsch

The Thumb of Michigan

Keyword tags: ancestor, Dorsch, Forestville, Joram, Michigan, Minden City, Munising, Riedel, Schreiter, Thumb area of Michigan

Written by Anna van Raaphorst Johnson in 2012

The state of Michigan is shaped like a mitten, and the eastern side is the mitten's "thumb."



Figure 9: Thumb of Michigan



Figure 10: Forestville and Minden City, MI

In 1852 Michigan pioneer and future "captain of industry" Eber B. Ward purchased a huge tract of land in Sanilac County, Michigan, portions of which our Riedel and Schreiter ancestors bought when they migrated to the United States.

In the 1850s the whole Thumb of Michigan was still an unbroken forest of pine, cedar, and hemlock, interspersed with stands of beech, maple, and other hardwoods. Ward intended to cut down the choicest trees and process it for lumber. Before E. B. Ward and his uncle and business partner, Sam Ward, arrived, the land had been inhabited by only a few Saginaw and Canadian Chippewa tribes of Indians.

There were no roads in the Thumb wilderness, and the first logs were sent downstream in creeks or dragged out on wagons pulled by oxen. Ward was also in the shipbuilding and shipping businesses, and he built sawmills and docks in strategic locations on the shores of Lake Huron to handle the logs and the lumber.

E. B. Ward and his wife, a schoolteacher, settled in Forestville for a short time, but in less than a year the Wards moved to Detroit, where he had other business ventures. However, the local logging activities continued until the fire of 1871 wiped out most of the timber, but made the cleared land more attractive for farming.

In 1872, Ward and local land speculator Julius Davis published a brochure listing for sale various 40-acre parcels of land, including the land around Forestville. The brochure pictured Forestville as a thriving, booming city soon to have a great harbor filled with fishing and shipping activities. Included with the brochure was a list of currently available, low-priced farm sites and town lots. The 40-acre parcels, which had originally been purchased for about \$1.25 were at the time going for \$7 to \$8. Davis and the parcels are mentioned in Albin Schreiter's letters (see [Letters Home](#) on page 37).

So at the same time that economic times were hard in Saxony (and other parts of Germany) and our ancestors and others like them were starting to consider migration to the New World, the Davis brochures made them think that the opportunity they had been hoping for just might be possible. The American Dream. They thought about it, talked about it, formed the Colonia Saxonica and signed up to make the voyage.

An interesting note about the Colony members, which included our Riedel and Schreiter ancestors, is that they apparently originally expected to go to Munising, Michigan, a small town on the southern shores of Lake Superior in the Upper Peninsula, where there was a mining and lumber business. Great-grandpa Schreiter's letters (see [Letters Home](#) on page 37) allude to news received in New York of economic uncertainty in Munising, and a decision by Colony members not to proceed there but to go on to Detroit where they could take stock and look for alternative solutions. The solution of choice was Forestville.



Figure 11: Munising, MI

After the minor land rushes around the time our ancestors arrived, the Thumb area of Michigan had a number of economic ups and downs (and it remains today an area with little economic activity). Some of the German, Austrian, and Swiss settlers who came in the 1870s were wiped out in a series of downturns, including the aftermath of the fire of 1881. The railroad that was put through from Port Huron to Minden City (9 miles west of Forestville) caused some, including Louis and Anna Riedel, ancestors of our family, to move there.



Figure 12: Ward's Forestville Land Map (1872)

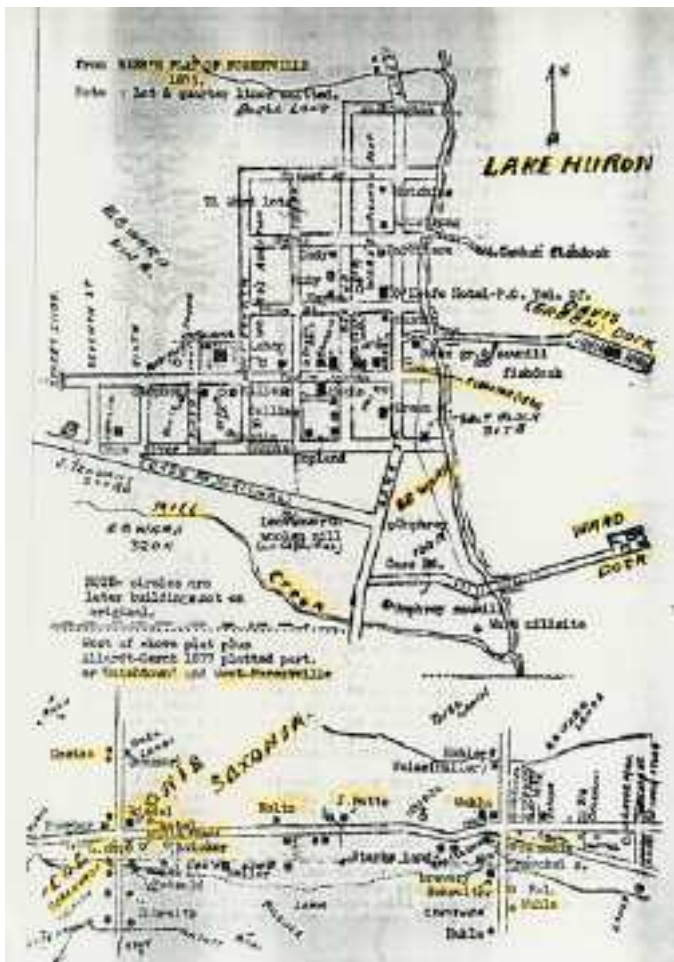


Figure 13: Beer's Plat of Forestville (1875)

For more information

For a fascinating (and much more complete) history of "Old Forestville and the Saxon Colony," see the document of that name, which was written by Edward J. (Ed) Wahla in 1965, and is listed in [For More Information](#) on page 147. Wahla's history describes the Alvin Schreiter "letters home," which had been discovered and translated right before Wahla's document was published.

Why and How Did They Migrate?

Keyword tags: ancestor, Dorsch, Forestville, Franco-Prussian War, Germany, Hamburg, Hull, Joram, Liverpool, Michigan, migration, Minden City, New York, Riedel, Saxony, Schreiter, steamship, United States of America

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in 1990

After the Franco-Prussian War, which the Prussians won in 1871, times were hard in Europe. Grandpa Schreiter used to blame the *Verdammte Preuss* (Damn Prussians) for the state of things. When they got here, things looked promising. However, after a devastating forest fire (the second in only a few years), and as the post-Civil War economic slump dampened things in the United States, some of the hope certainly left them.

Mother's memories were of bitter poverty. Grandmother Schreiter would have liked to move to Milwaukee, where she went one winter to visit an uncle, who would apparently have employed Granddad. But all her pleas and tears could not persuade Granddad to give up his independence to work for someone else again.

So they joined the *Colonia Saxonia*. It was made up of about 30 families, most of whom were from Saxony, which is the southern-eastern part of Germany. Zwickau is the center of the area where most of them lived. Other towns were Planitz, Meerane, Chemnitz, and Geyer.



Figure 14: Overview map of Saxony, Germany



Figure 15: More detailed map of Saxony, Germany

The group left Hamburg August 8, 1873, aboard the steamship *Minerva*, under the command of Captain Eckert, under the German flag, for Hull. There were about 165 passengers aboard the ship, Most of the emigrants were relatively young parents in their 30s, with three or four children, many with babies under a year old. Our ancestor Louis Herman Riedel, his sisters Bertha Lina (Lina) and Selma Lina, and his brother Adolph Max (Max) were born in Germany. A stillborn infant and another son were born in the U.S. Our ancestor Anna Marie Schreiter, her sister Luise Friederika, and her brother Eduard Paul (Paul) were born in Germany. Six more children were born in the U.S.

Our Colonia Saxonia came by what was called "the indirect route": Hamburg to Hull (by ship) to Liverpool (by train) to New York (by ship). They traveled by steamship, which was still quite an innovation at that time, and the crossing was cut to 10-14 days, rather than the four weeks that trip usually took direct from Bremen on a sailing ship. The trip was also much safer on the steamship, but by no means fun.



Figure 16: Riedel-Schreiter migration route

Our ancestors entered the United States through Yew York's Castle Gardens (the forerunner of Ellis Island), and they eventually arrived in Forestville, Michigan (a town on Lake Huron) by the *E. B. Ward* from Detroit.

Anna's comments about migration

Keyword tags: ancestor, comment, Dorsch, Germany, Joram, Kneschke, migration, Riedel, Saxony, Schenk, Schmidt, Schreiter, Shuey, Stutsman

Written by Anna van Raaphorst Johnson in 2012

I believe none of the Riedel or Schreiter immigrants ever got back to the Old Country.

Our family (Dick, I, Ellen, and Tim — Gillian wasn't born yet) visited the Erzgebirge area of Saxony in 1973. We stayed in the *Wilder Mann* Hotel (built in the 1300s and now quite a luxury establishment, judging from their pictures on the Internet) in Annaberg, and visited our relatives at their home in Tannenberg. We also drove around the area in the car that we rented in West Germany. In Geyer we visited a museum that featured mining and textiles. We also took Betty and Gisela to the Fichtelberg, one of the highest points in the area, and location of a ski resort, where we had lunch.

It was quite an adventure crossing the border into what was then East Germany. All the many border guards were carrying machine guns, and they made a very thorough search of our car. The police were also much in evidence in Annaberg. East Germany was a poor and drab place at the time. Our general appearance, the fact that we spoke English to each other, and especially our clothes (the color burgundy was popular that year), gave us away as complete outsiders. When we entered the hotel breakfast room, everyone stopped talking and simply stared. The police in the town square were especially vigilant when we were around. We toured a local school and were subjected to a 30-minute lecture in German about our many flaws as representatives of the Capitalist Roder system of government and economics. Still, it was touching to be meeting family members for the first time, and exciting to be in a place so different and exotic.

(Gisela Kneschke, Betty's older daughter, had a particularly harrowing tale to tell about World War II. She happen to be at the local railroad station when a munitions train, which was parked on a side track, blew up. She was picked up for dead and "stacked" with other, presumably dead, victims of the explosion. As the pile of bodies was being "unstacked" and readied for burial, she moved slightly and was immediately transferred to the local hospital. The doctors told her, when she finally came to, that the fact that she was surrounded by corpses probably kept her from bleeding to death. In the photo below she has outlined the location of one of the longest cuts on her forehead that resulted from the accident. Her body was still filled with shrapnel, even after many surgeries, and she had lifelong health problems. In spite of all that, she was a cheerful, friendly individual. Over the years she sent us a lot of local and family mementos saved in scrapbooks decorated with matchsticks, one of her hobbies. We enjoyed meeting her and hearing about her life.)



Figure 17: Kneschke family home in Tannenberg



Figure 18: Betty Schreiter Kneschke



Figure 19: Gisela Kneschke



Figure 20: Kneschkes and Johnsons in Tannenberg (1973)



Figure 21: Kneschkes and Johnsons at the Fichtelberg (1973)



Figure 22: Isolde, Helmut and Betty in Tannenberg (1973)

My parents also visited Isolde and Helmut in Hamburg, and in 2004, Dick and I did, as well. Diane Stutsman Shuey (a descendant of Selma Louise (Sal) Riedel Bostwick), and her father, Ben Stutsman, have also visited the relatives in Hamburg. While there we all met other cousins who are descendants of Isolde and Helmut. In 1992, one of those descendants, Detlef Schmidt, visited us in San Jose, California, when he was touring the United States with some friends.



Figure 23: Detlef Schmidt and friends in San Jose, CA (1992)



Figure 24: Isolde and Werner Schenk in Reinbek (2004)

Isolde was a faithful correspondent with both my mother and me, and unfailingly sent presents to *all* family members every Christmas — wonderful mementos that always reminded us of our German roots.

Life in Forestville

Keyword tags: ancestor, Dorsch, Forestville, Joram, L. H. Riedel Lumber Company, Michigan, Minden City, Riedel, Schreiter

Written by Anna van Raaphorst Johnson in 2012

The story of Alvin Schreiter's purchase of one of Eber Ward's 40-acre parcels of land, and the early years of their life as immigrants, is told by Alvin himself in [Letters Home](#) on page 37.

Adolph Riedel also got a 40-acre parcel of land, located further inland — about a mile west of the village, where he established a farm and orchard.



Figure 25: Typical Forestville log cabin in 1873 (Courtesy Ed Wahla)

In 1873, the year the Saxony Colony members arrived, Forestville was in the middle of a temperance battle. The WCTU (Women's Christian Temperance Union) and Sons of Temperance had started a campaign to get the bars to close at 9:00 p.m. (as the law dictated) and forbid the sale of alcoholic beverages on the shore steamers. The newly arrived Germans were apparently used to liberal drinking laws and customs, and the "west end" of town, where the newest immigrants settled, became a haven for the "wet" cause (vs. the "dry" "east end," where people from prior immigration waves lived).

Adolph Riedel apparently had brought with him from Germany enough capital to expand his holdings beyond his original "Ward" acreage, which was located a mile west of the village of Forestville. In the early 1880s he leased one of the many "west-end" saloons in Forestville (the Saxony bar) and over the next 10-15 years he bought additional land and other businesses.

The extended Riedel family holdings on the West End also eventually included a blacksmith shop owned by a Riedel son-in-law, Emil Zwicker. Other immigrants also built residences and businesses in that area, including a landmark store owned by Charles and Frank Wahla.



Figure 26: Riedel hotel and home on the West End (Courtesy Ed Wahla)



Figure 27: Riedel hotel and home on the West End

Adolph Riedel's saloon is mentioned in a number of newspaper articles of that era. For example, in 1882 he was fined for selling whisky on the Fourth of July. He was also accused of running two saloons on a single license. In 1886 newspapers reported that the sheriff had "finally" begun enforcing the 9:00 p.m. closing law and "we no longer have to hear the howling and profanity of drunks returning home to Minden at all hours of the night." Other newspapers refer to incidents of drag racing on horseback involving "wildly galloping teams startling the poor Cass Roaders out of a sound sleep in the wee small hours."

Forestville was a little like an Old West frontier town in other ways, as well. In 1878 a robbery of the Baker Express Agency netted the thieves \$800 in cash and freight. Theft of personal property, including horse teams and wagons, was relatively common. In one case a local posse was formed that recovered the goods and shot and killed one of the thieves.

In 1878 the Saxons built a social hall (Saxonia Halle), which was so popular with the locals that it was enlarged the following year. The beer and schnapps concession was leased to Adolph Riedel, who also managed the programs, which included annual fall celebrations (Oktoberfests), carnivals, parades, and plays. The first fall "fest" was held in 1878, in honor of the 5th anniversary of the Colony members' arrival in the United States. It also marked the year when many became citizens. The Germans who were Franco-Prussian War veterans had their own annual celebrations with beer, speeches, and target shooting with their old military rifles.

Early Forestville, from the time of Eber Ward's 1852 land purchase through the arrival of the Colonia Saxonia, had no churches, although the so-called "Dutch Evangelicals" (Lutherans) had a parsonage at Linwood (west of Forestville), which they used as a meeting house.

In 1876 this group received from Mrs. Adolph Riedel (our own Marie Augusta Joram Riedel) a gift of land on Cass Road to build a church. [I wonder why, in the years well before it was common for women to own property, the gift was from her and not him. Was it *her* money they brought from Germany?]

Over time the church name has evolved, and a number of buildings have stood on the same property. The latest replacement is still there today, and it is now known as the Trinity Lutheran Church.

Another Lutheran church, which evolved to "Evangelical and Reformed Church," acquired land and began to construct a church in 1877. Its history is described by Joan Potts in [Joan's comments about Forestville](#) on page 36.



Figure 28: Wahla Store and Lutheran Church in 1913 (Courtesy Ed Wahla)

By 1878 there was speculation that a railroad would be built from Port Huron up into the Thumb, but it was still unknown whether it would follow the Lake Huron shore or be built further inland. Inland towns, like Minden, began to promote their desire to be on the railroad line. Eventually Minden (which changed its name to Minden City in 1883 or 1885) pledged \$5000 to get a depot. When the Port Huron and Northwestern narrow gauge was completed in 1880, the Lake Huron steamship business declined, and some of the people in Forestville began to move away.

Adolph Riedel, who served as Village President for a time, continued to expand his business ventures over the years, and his oldest son, Louis (my grandfather) became his business partner. Their barley business included a grain elevator, built in 1890 near the shore, so the grain could be shipped by boat to larger distribution towns like Port Huron. When the boats laid up for the winter, in December, goods had to be hauled by wagon to Minden City where they could be transferred to freight cars on the new railway. Haulers regularly working that route needed a place to overnight, and in 1895 Adolph Riedel bought the Forest Hotel (on the East End) to provide the service.



Figure 29: Wagons headed for the Riedel elevator and docks (1900)



Figure 30: Forest House on the East End (Courtesy Ed Wahla)



Figure 31: Forest House on the East End

In 1900, after the elevator near the shore burned down, Louis Riedel sold the hotel in Forestville and moved to Minden City. Along with business partners Tom Canham and Charles Ross (who were already operating businesses in Minden City), Louis established the Riedel Elevator (later the L. H. Riedel Lumber Company, which he eventually owned outright and operated with his four sons Al, Louie, Ray, and Paul). A souvenir edition of the *Minden City Herald* from 1901-1902 calls Louis Riedel "a newcomer in Minden who is rapidly gaining prominence" and goes on to say that "the Herald is pleased to note Mr. Riedel's success since becoming a Mindenite, and predicts for him a most promising future."



Figure 32: L. H. Riedel Co. in Minden City, MI



Figure 33: Louis Riedel and his son Al at L. H. Riedel Co.

Louis put up the Forest House in Forestville for sale, but when it didn't sell, he dismantled it and used the materials for other building purposes.

The Forest House hotel also served as a residence, and several of the Louis and Anna Riedel children were born there. It was also the scene of an often-repeated local story. One night a buggy-load of drunken young troublemakers threatened to throw Adolph Riedel out of the bar room when he ordered them out of the hotel. They might have succeeded, but "Grandma" Riedel (Augusta) showed up brandishing a horse whip. The brawlers were so surprised and cowed that they beat a hasty retreat.

The Forest House was also the scene of many of the Forestville's many social activities mentioned earlier. The west wing of the building was a dance hall, for which music could be provided by an orchestra in the balcony. The room had a moveable stage to accommodate performances by the German theater group and the Forestville Clowns.

Adolph Riedel died in 1909 and was buried in the cemetery that Eber Ward had given the community in 1861. A number of other Riedel and Schreiter descendants are buried there, as well.



Figure 34: Adolph Riedel's application for American citizenship (1879)

Al's comments about Forestville

Keyword tags: ancestor, comment, Dorsch, Forestville, Joram, Riedel, Schreiter

Written by Albert (Al) Riedel on February 20, 1988 in a letter to his sister, Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst. I (Anna) have corrected a few facts that appeared to be incorrect.



Figure 35: Al Riedel's comments about Forestville

A. Riedel (Grandpa Adolph) and Son (our Dad) had an elevator at Forestville shipping in bags by boat over Potts dock to Detroit. Barley sold to H. W. Rushel [?] and Co. Peas to R. Hirt, Jr. still in business. [According to an article in the *Detroit Free Press*, a specialty store by that name, dating back to 1887 and famous for its cheeses, closed its doors in 2011. It appeared that its owners planned to open again under another name.] Elevator burned down about 1908 or 1909. [The dates were actually 1901-1902.] That's when we moved to Minden City and built present elevator by Riedel, Ross and Canham.

Moved to a house east of tracks [in Minden City], across from Yeagers but closer to town. House later moved to another location. Believe later burned down.

I was born in uptown [West End] Forestville location near Wahla store. Louie too. Later Adolph acquired hotel near lake [Forest House]. Sally born there possibly Ray too. Hotel was known as Harrison House. No relation to our Harrisons. [He is referring to his wife Ruth's family.] Mother and Dad ran that hotel. Dad was away a lot. Salesman for Deering Farm Machinery Co. that later became part of International Harvester Co. for whom Dad continued to work as a salesman and was successful too.

Dad sold windmills for pumping water and also bigger ones on barns for grinding feed. Had partnership with one Seigert [apparently should be Siegert]. Riedel and Siegert. Dad sold and financed the business. Siegert set them up.

Dad dealt in all kinds of things. Traded in apples, potatoes. Anything to make a buck. Shipped hay by boat to Detroit. I was on a boat of hay to Detroit and was returning by train to Minden City one December when he made the deal with [Charles] Ross and [Tom] Canham to rebuild Forestville elevator at Minden City on the railroad line when shipping by boat became uneconomical.

The hotel vacated at Forestville could not be sold, so Dad tore it down and used the lumber to build what you call the red brick house [presumably the Red House that the Louis Riedel family owned until after his death]. The house was built from lumber salvaged from the old hotel and brick veneered. The plan is indeed Mother's plan and a fine old house. It is where you and Paul were born.

No, we never went to the Kelley School. Am surprised to learn that the Seamans did. Their home was just east of ours and I would never believe they lived in the Kelley School District. I went to the German Lutheran School, near Ruth, one winter with Minnie Seaman and Art Weber.

No, I definitely was *not* born in the hotel near the lake. I and Louie too were born in the uptown hotel. Am not sure about Ray but believe both he and Sal were born there.

Joan's comments about Forestville

Keyword tags: ancestor, comment, Dorsch, Forestville, Joram, Lutheran Church, Potts, Riedel, Schreiter

Written by Joan Potts on September 30, 2012.

On October 13, 1877, my great-grandfather sold to the Evangelical Association of North America (one of the "Lutheran" denominations in Forestville) a parcel of land located at Linwood Corners (3 miles west of Forestville on the Bay City-Forestville Road) for one dollar.

A church was built, services were conducted, and a cemetery was started. (The cemetery is still there.) Evidence that there was an operating church there is found in a letter from my great-grandmother to her daughter telling that a friend, Mr. Nye, was buried from the church in 1892. There is also paper evidence of a Kunze baby being baptized in the Linwood Church.

My father (born 1906) remembered the church being there, and the congregation was called "The Delaware Society of the Evangelical Association of North America." The church was also called "the German Church."

My father also remembered that on March 28, 1913, the congregation began the move of the church 2 miles to the west to the village of Charleston. Using a steam engine and sleds, they hauled the church from its location at Linwood on to the Cass Road (now called the Bay City-Forestville Road) and west to Charleston. Night came soon and there was trouble negotiating the curve at Charleston. The building couldn't be seated on its new location, so it was left on the sleds with plans to finish the job the next day. That night a wind storm, which was called a hurricane by the *Minden City Herald*, swept through the area causing death and destruction. Of course the church building was blown apart and was unsalvageable.

A newspaper article published at the time had the following headline and lead.

Friday's Hurricane Destroys Lives & Property: One life snapped short and several injured is the story of last Friday's story in this vicinity, to say nothing of the immense damage to property.

The congregation was left to look for a place to worship. A local place large enough to accommodate a worship service was the Town Hall located on Cass Road, where the church conducted services in German one week and in English the next. Sunday School was also held.

The congregation continued to worship in the Town Hall until 1920 when they purchased for \$3000 the saloon building located on the corner of Cass Road and Big Gulley Road on the western limits of the village of Forestville from Mrs. Flora Plutschuck. The congregation was then called "German Evangelical Lutheran Unity Congregation of Forestville."

The congregation transformed the building into a church, complete with steeple, stained glass windows, an altar, a pulpit, and the swinging doors from the saloon — all of which are still part of the church building today. The church and congregation became known as the "Unity Evangelical and Reformed Church." A 50th anniversary celebration was observed on September 10, 1961.

Following are the article's headlines and lead from the *Minden City Herald*.

Forestville Church to Observe 50th Anniversary: ...The church was organized on February 11, 1911, as a Mission Church by Rev. Paul Stappenbeck with approximately twenty-three members. ...A reed organ was purchased in April 1911 with Miss Ruth Schubel as the first organist. ...Throughout the years various improvements were made to the church building. Several of the major additions included the installation of electric lights in 1936, an oil furnace in 1956, lowering of the church ceiling in 1956 and the purchase of a Baldwin spinet organ in 1959.

Later the Evangelical and Reformed Churches merged with the Congregational Church, taking the name "Unity United Church of Christ."

Services continued until the congregation grew too small to support a minister, and in 2004 the church building was sold to be used as an antique shop. Concern about saving the building and its historical significance resulted in its being donated and moved to become part of the historical village of the Sanilac County Museum located in Port Sanilac, Michigan.



Figure 36: Museum Church (Courtesy Sanilac County Historic Village & Museum)

Letters Home

Keyword tags: ancestor, Dorsch, Forestville, Joram, letter, Michigan, Riedel, Schreiter

Following are three letters written by Ehregott August Albin (Alvin) Schreiter to his brother (probably his oldest brother, Friedrich Wilhelm Otto) in Germany. The first letter tells the story of the trip from Germany to Michigan, from the time they left Zwickau until they were in Forestville, ready to settle into the log cabin and become Americans.

The letters were discovered in a trunk in her attic by our cousin (and Friedrich Wilhelm Otto's granddaughter), Elizabeth (Betty) Schreiter Kneschke, who continued to live her whole life in the Erzgebirge area of Germany. The letters were put into modern German by Betty's daughter Isolde Kneschke Schenk and translated into English by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst.



Figure 37: Betty Schreiter Kneschke, discoverer of the letters



Figure 38: Isolde Kneschke Schenk and her granddaughter Wiebke

Forestville, Michigan, October 9, 1873

Keyword tags: ancestor, Dorsch, Forestville, Joram, letter, Michigan, Riedel, Schreiter

Dear Brother and Sister-in-Law,

Eight weeks have passed since we parted from you. So now I will write you how it has gone with us and how things are. We went from Zwickau to Hamburg in one day. We arrived in Leipzig at 8:30 a.m. and went on at 1:00 p.m. by express train to Hamburg. At 11:00 p.m. we arrived there. From the railroad station we drove to our hotel by cab, which naturally was a little expensive for us. But there was nothing else to do, for what can one do in a strange city at night with wife and children, and the children wanting to sleep. Here only "full speed ahead" is indicated, so that peace comes. When we got to the hotel, we were led up four flights and given a room with two beds tandem. It didn't look like a hotel, but rather like a poorhouse. The room had only one window and in this there were only two panes, so there was fresh air. The beds were hard, as though they were filled with iron. We weren't able to use them — we made a bed with our blankets. There was nothing to eat but bread and milk for the children.

The next day 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 were aboard ship 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. We were quartered in two houses and had two days' time to recuperate, which we did.

Sound and well we boarded the big ocean liner on Thursday, the 19th. It was 500 feet long and 24 feet broad. From Liverpool to York, a port in Ireland, the trip went quite pleasantly. When we got to open sea we had storms. We had three thunderstorms, one when we left Hamburg, one in Ireland, and then another one two days out of New York. Here the waves washed over the deck so that one could go nowhere at all.

Tuesday the 29th we arrived in New York. We were all sound and well and were quartered at an inn. We had to pay \$1.00 per person for lodging and three meals a day, which was not too much for us, for we could eat what we wanted.

In New York we heard about a colony in Munising [Michigan] that left to go to Omaha [Oklahoma?] because they had received no pay... [Here the page ends, and the next page does not match up to it.]

In New York we held a meeting and decided not to go to Munising but for the time being only to go to Detroit. So we went on the 30th at 8:00 p.m. to Detroit on an immigrant train. The trip lasted two days. Just think, such a long trip and so fast. The seats are all upholstered and one can do what one wants. In the daytime one goes on the platform. One can also go walking from one car to the other, so that time passes and one doesn't know how. Nights one lies down on the floor and sleeps, while the children sleep on the benches. here each one can do what he wants. The farmer boys bring milk to sell in the car. They travel along from one station to another and need no ticket.

When we got to Detroit we all took work in a brickworks. We had free lodging and fuel and \$36.00 a month. We had to work from 5:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Hard work the whole day, dear Brother, and everything done by machine. We were two families in one room, where we could hardly turn around. It often got too warm for me, and I slept in the shed. A bedstead was not to be thought of, nor lying on the floor either, and with all that the bad air. There was bad water, too, and I couldn't get rid of the diarrhea.

During this time Mr. Davis concluded an agreement for a land purchase and proposed it to us. An acre of land with hardwood for \$7.00, where, however, the fire had mostly laid waste. [This refers to the fire of 1871.] But that was not so bad, for it made it easier to cultivate. We accepted Mr. Davis's proposal. The acre cost \$7.00 with ten-year payments including interest.

So we left Detroit by steamship for Forestville, where we arrived at 1:00 a.m. We had to stay there until a vehicle came to fetch us the next day, for Forestville lies on the lake. Our dwelling lies about four hours away and is called Carlston [Charleston]. Here we have free housing, and it is the same with the fuel. Mr. Davis has taken great pains to satisfy us. Every family got a room and a stove, for here it is not as with you, that the landlord provides the stove. Whoever moves into a room has to bring along a stove if he wants to cook anything. Stoves are more practical than with you, for we have the whole cooking outfit, with iron kettles and saucepans, tin pans black and white, and a teakettle with it. Such a stove costs \$24.00, American money. In addition, Mr. Davis bought 150 boards that cost 3 *Groschen*, or 8 cents. Then we built ourselves bedsteads, tables, benches, and other things. Now many ran out of money. Then Mr. Davis said that we are to turn to him, that he will give something to us.

We have a member from Dresden, by the name of Gernd, who had a bakeoven built, for here there is no baker where we can buy bread. The farmers and we bake our bread ourselves out of wheat flour. But there are lots of unmarried among us, who can't bake for themselves. For these our colony baker Brum, from Crimmitschau, bakes bread.

We have investigated the land further and inquired, too, of the farmers what it is like. They say that everything does grow, everything that one seeds and plants. When we arrived here there was an acre seeded with wheat that was as nice a stand as you have. When we were looking at the land a farmer gave us potatoes, which we dug out of the field with him. They were as big as your beer mugs. The potatoes were so loose in the earth that one could dig them out with one's hand. The potatoes are not planted here until the beginning of May, so they will not get ripe so fast. Here everything does grow very fast, because it is very warm.

After the land was selected, it was divided. Numbers were made and were put into a hat. Each one drew a lot. I drew number 5. It is not far from the lake. Through my piece of land a river flows [Mill Creek], which rises strongly in the springtime. There is also a spring of drinking water, which can't easily be rivaled. There is no wildlife here any more, for the fire two years ago cleared everything away. There are only squirrels and partridges again, and also some songbirds.

We have just begun to work and to cut wood. Borner and I couldn't earn much. In the first place we weren't used to the work, and in the second place we had to walk too far, for we have four English miles or one German mile to walk. The others had dry wood. On my parcel there is a lot of green beech wood. We get a dollar American money for a cord. The others make two cords a day while we can't get one together. But now we're building houses together on our pieces of land, so that we don't have to walk so far. We are building the houses out of logs with one door and two or three windows and a temporary board roof. Later we'll cover them with shingles. The shingles are not like those in Geyer, long and dovetailed, but they are square and flat on the one side and on the other somewhat stronger. Mr. Davis contracted for the boards, windows, and doors for us. The farmers smooth the wood where we need it. They build it for us, too, for we don't understand it as well as these people. They put it up in one day, but we don't. I think my house will be all done and ready in eight days. Then nobody can put me out any more if I pay my interest every year, and I trust myself to get that together.

Foodstuffs are not so expensive here as with you. A pound of meat costs 8 cents, or 3 German new *Groschen*, and bacon costs 10 cents. A barrel of white wheat flour is not quite \$8.00. Butter is various prices. In the store the butter costs 20 cents, but at several farmers' we pay only 10 cents. Milk is bought here fresh from the cow and is very good. Often one must pay dearly, but often to get it cheaper we only have to walk a little distance. Here one farm is not next to the other, as with us. One can only see them from a distance. The people here are for the most part pure German. If one comes just at mealtime, one must eat with them. They are also very God-fearing and believe in the Heaven to come.

Dear Brother, if we earn \$6.00 a week it is just as much as when you are working at mining. We have to learn first, and then we will earn as much as the Englishmen [Americans?], \$2-3 a day. And it is better, too, if one can speak English.

The enclosed map shows our land area. The black dots on the white little boxes, those are the farmers, or in German, "Bauern." Two black lines next to each other are streets, and so are the red lines. The blue square is my 40-acre parcel, where the river flows through. It is good land with a good spring. The land will increase a lot in value, probably, when the wood is off.

[The map in the following figure shows the location of the house where the Schreiters were living temporarily, their 40-acre property on Mill Creek, and the dock area of Forestville.]

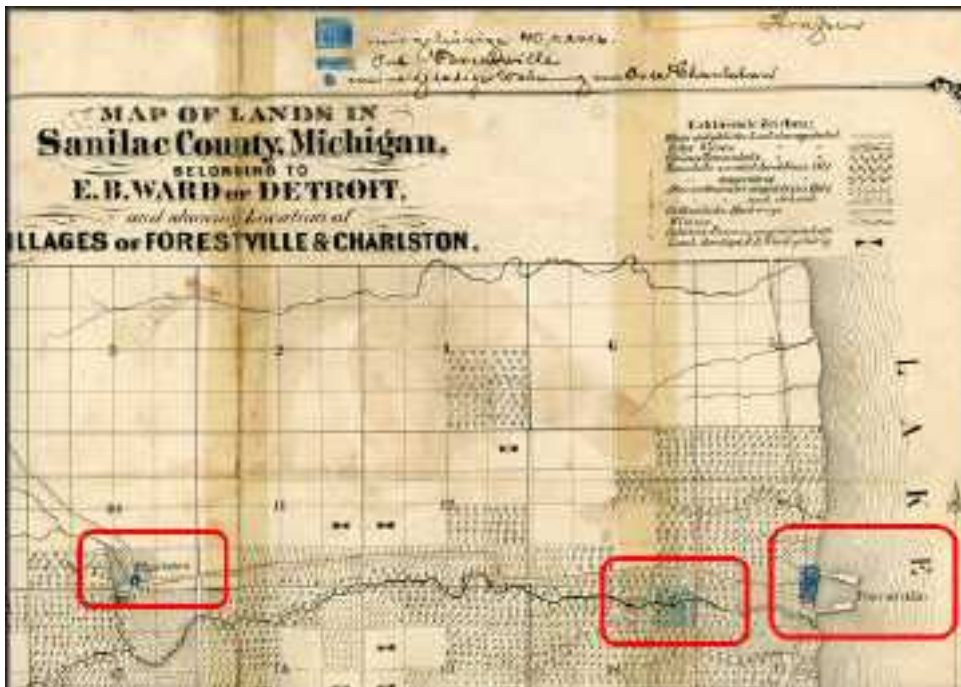


Figure 39: Map of Forestville showing the Schreiter property

Dear Brother, anyone who trusts himself to work here gets ahead better here than in Germany. The farmers all had no money and began as we. But they didn't even have roads, but only primeval woods. They are all doing well.

Dear Brother, I can only advise you to come over here if you can get the money together. That is easy to say — "come over here" — but not easily done. It is not so dangerous to travel across England. Two members from Chemnitz went with the steamer "Schmidt" from Bremen, four weeks. On this stretch several ships went down, while we had no danger to worry about. You don't need to join a group, for that can be of no benefit to you. Just simply go to Mr. Davis, and then the trip costs you \$60.00 all the way here. Bring with you what work tools you have and bring me a saw 6/4 long. Here there is none like it: they are all shorter. If you travel with Mr. Davis, you don't need to pay so much freight. I paid only to Hamburg and soon had two "Zentner" (hundredweight) overweight. From Hamburg 100 pounds is free on the train and the steamship. The chest must be all out of good wood and bound with iron bands. [See the following photos of the chest, which I (Anna) still have.] If it is as good as mine, it is not so dangerous at the customs in New York. Mine was not searched at all. The main thing is that the chests are like mine. I brought everything over, including a picture.

But that was badly packed. If Mother wants to come, then she ought to come as soon as she can. Here she can lead a peaceful life, for in 8 days we will live in our house, and not right in a primeval forest where real wild animals are.

I can see the houses of Forestville, where there are a butcher and two stores, where one can buy what one needs. I can earn money in winter by lumbering and in summer there is still more work. Every farmer pays a dollar a day and board. Johann Rau has received \$2.00 and board and room. He works as a bricklayer, a rare occupation here.

Mother must be in Hamburg on November 6. She can apply to Mr. Albert in Leipzig, whose address I have given her. She doesn't need to buy the ship's contract before, only in Hamburg. The chests must, however, be sent previously to Hamburg, to Eggers. Pack everything porcelain in the bedding, so nothing breaks.

[Nan's comments: I wonder why Great-grandmother would consider coming here when apparently Great-grandfather was still alive? And I wonder how many brothers and sisters there were? I know that Alvin's mother did set out to come to America. Mother told me that. She got as far as Hamburg and then was turned back because she was too old. Mother said that her mother cried one whole winter because she thought the old lady was coming, so I gather that her arrival was not anticipated with joy in all quarters. I guess, at that, a log cabin was fairly small quarters for two women to keep house together.]

The clothes are just as in Germany, and the women go better dressed than in Germany. On the trip Mother should take her coffee-making apparatus along and also a pan for cooking, because the meat on the ship is only half-cooked. There is always tea and coffee. She should also take along some sausage and smoked meat, as well as a bottle of vinegar, some onions, and pickled herring. It is best, however, to eat nothing during a storm, for the ship shakes too much. Otherwise it goes along very quietly, better than on the train. Mother ought to take along to Hamburg some bottles of beer, too, and dress as warmly as possible, for on the ship it is very cold. For covering she ought to take a wool blanket, because the "beds" [probably feather beds] will be in the chests. Some pack their beds in sacks and keep them with them.

Dear Brother, write Mother right away and have her come to you. Explain everything to her, how it is with us, that she needs to suffer no hunger with us. That is not the style in America. Everywhere things are served up as for a christening, but at my house it has not got that far yet. We eat meat every day and not too little.

So I am going to close in the hope that you are all well, as is the case with us. I will write another letter if Mr. Davis goes over to Germany.

Many greetings to all,

Albin Schreiter



Figure 40: Schreiter trunk described in the letter



Figure 41: Handles of the Schreiter trunk



Figure 42: Schreiter trunk



Figure 43: Schreiter trunk

Forestville, Michigan, January 10, 1879

Keyword tags: ancestor, Dorsch, Forestville, Joram, letter, Michigan, Riedel, Schreiter

Dear Brother and Sister-in-Law,

We just received your letter today, which by the way was rather long coming, because Popp couldn't come with the steamship. He traveled with the mail from Port Huron and then he couldn't bring his things with him. Here they don't load so much on, because the road is always bad. Popp arrived here five weeks ago, but his chest only now. That cost a lot.

Dear Brother, you write that you want to come in spring. However, I don't advise you to do it now, for we are having now a period of bad times. Businesses are not going in Port Huron and Detroit. There are a lot of people who have no work. In former years the farmers paid \$35.00 with board and room, but today they pay only half of that. Most of us are felling wood, for which they now get no money either. But otherwise they get what they want, everything from the store.

I work one hour from our house, in a steam sawmill. There are two mills, though; these employ almost 100 men, of which half work in the woods and the others in the mill. I have been working there six weeks now and haven't had a payday. However, the board is better than in Germany. We get meat three times a day, warm and cold, and each time with potatoes, sometimes peeled and sometimes not. We eat in the dining room, and there are also three rooms where we sleep. On Saturday I go home, and on Monday back.

Dear Brother, you ask how we take the wood out. That doesn't bother us; that is Davis's problem. Our only concern is to cut the wood so that it can be taken out. We get \$1.00 for chopping a cord of wood. In Detroit a cord costs \$7.00. Fuel costs us no money, so we can save a lot and we don't need to pay rent, either.

Dear Brother, you probably think we live in an impenetrable primeval forest, where no devil seeks us. Three hundred steps to the right of us is the street to Forestville, and 300 steps left is the entrance to a good high road to Forestville. This area has been settled for 20 years, only no city has formed here yet.

Mother ought to come along in spring, for she doesn't need to have any more worries with us. What she needs to have to live, we have. Meat doesn't cost much, and one who has meat doesn't eat much bread, either.

Mother shouldn't buy any clothes, though. Cups and plates she should bring along, as many as she has, but pack well in the beds and in good chests, which must be bound with iron bands, as my chests were. Only such a weak one as my little chest was, she shouldn't take. That one went to pieces on me in New York. There the chests were loaded from the big ship to a little one on an 8-10 yard chute. Mother should take along cigars, so that she can now and then spend one. For cigars are expensive in England and with us. For handbaggage a suitcase is best, but with a lock, for there are thieves everywhere. And a woolen blanket rolled up with a string or a rope and carried on the back. Featherbeds one cannot use: they get too dirty. For if there is a storm there is always vomiting. She should take her coffee-making apparatus along and also spirits, for in England and American liquor is very expensive. And Mother should always carry something to eat along, for in Hamburg we were aboard at noon and got something to eat only the next morning. It was the same in Hull in England: there we were aboard at noon and had something to eat only the next morning. So one must always keep a stock. For dishes on the ship one needs a washbasin, a drinking glass for a half-liter, and a tin night-chamber with cover, which must be kept clean always; otherwise the ship's captain throws it out the window. Further, she needs a tin pan, for the meat is always only half cooked, so that she can cook the meat further in the kitchen. If she gives a cigar for it, they will be glad to do it.

Dear Mother, be so good as to bring a red and white bedspread and a piece of *Barchent* [in English, fustian, a coarse, twilled cloth made of cotton or cotton and linen], also red and white. It is for a farmer's wife an hour distant from us, for here they don't have red and white bedspreads. [Anna: We had such a bedspread in the family until about 20 years ago, when it finally gave out.] You will be paid well, for they are good people. Bring five pounds of blue cloverseed, too, for the same farmer. For us, please, two pounds of cough medicine, for there is none here. Mirror, iron (for ironing clothes), and other tinware and dishes, pack well. Not too many pictures, and pack well — mine broke on the trip. The things you need on the ship you must carry with you: wash basin, drinking glass, spoons, you must put in a little basket, as also a dish to eat from. Night chamber and a little basket should be tied together with a strong rope and carried on your shoulder. And always dress

warmly, for on the ship it is always cold and windy. We froze a lot, but every day one must go out on deck on the big ship, for everything has to be cleaned every day.

From New York you go directly to Detroit on an immigrant train. The train leaves New York at 7 o'clock in the evening, and the trip lasts 36-40 hours. It goes night and day in one trip, so one must take care of foodstuffs. There are stoves in the railroad cars, but one can't cook; the trip goes too fast. In Detroit if a ship is not going to Forestville, one finds accommodations in a tavern or a private home.

The farmer's wife wants to have, too, two linen shirts (or vests), but good ones. The overweight fee will not cost much: I paid \$4 and 18 new *Groschen*. That is to say, for those who travel with Davis. For Popp, the trip cost \$200 for 5 people, \$34 and 18 new *Groschen* per person, from Leipzig to Hamburg and 45 *Thaler* on the ship. It was \$10.00 from New York to Detroit, and a dollar from Detroit to Forestville.

Dear Mother, you pay the money in Hamburg to Mr. Davis, who then takes care of everything, and the rest of the money you must leave unchanged, if possible, in paper money. The big chests must be fitted with good keys, as my chest was. The iron band under the latch you should make fast with wooden screws, so it can be opened in New York. Mother must bring a hammer, pliers, and a screwdriver with her, and nails, for she has to take care of her chest in Liverpool and also in New York.

Dear Mother, bring me two packages of hemp twine and shoe (cobbler's) wax. The hamper you can bring along, too, and also the handbasket. Our children are happy about Grandmother's coming, and we, too. Davis will leave here again in six weeks, and will stay longer in Germany this time. A Dresden songbook and a Bible you can bring along, too, and other songbooks.

So I will close in the hope that my letter finds you well. We are, thank God, all sound and well. Write again right away how things are with you, and keep the letter to yourself, for many people think that in America things are not so good. Above all Mr. Troll, who can mind his own business and not mine. If I work here I won't be laid off, as with him. I think that in two or three years I can write that things are better than now.

Dear Mother, bring along table cloths and commode covers, for they are expensive here. And if it is possible, a bottle of rum so that we can make a grog, for here there is only *Nordhäuser* [a brand of distilled beverage popular in Germany] and it is very expensive.

Greetings to all my brothers, Father, and Mother.

Albin and Luise Schreiter

Forestville, Michigan, February 18, 1896

Keyword tags: ancestor, Dorsch, Forestville, Joram, letter, Michigan, Riedel, Schreiter

Dear Brother,

My wife died of cancer on September 21, 1894. I am alone with my children. three girls, a boy. Two girls in service and two are married, and Paul, too. He is the oldest and lives in Minnesota. I have 80 acres of land, 60 acres under cultivation. The rest is woods. 60 pounds of potatoes cost 10 cents, 11 pounds of barley 60 cents, 100 pounds of peas 35 cents.

[Unfortunately, the rest of the letter is lost.]

[Our ancestor, Anna, was one of the married daughters. She had been in service, in Detroit, from the age of 13.

Al's comments about letters home

Keyword tags: ancestor, comment, Dorsch, Joram, Riedel, Schreiter



Figure 44: Al Riedel

This letter was written by Albert Louis Riedel to Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in 1965, apparently shortly after the Albin Schreiter "letters home" were discovered, translated into English, and sent out to family members.



Figure 45: Al Riedel's comments on Letters Home

April 5, 1965

Dear Nettie and family,

TERRIFIC! TERRIFIC!

I don't know when I have been so thrilled as with the copies of correspondence or letters written by our grandfather to his brother beginning in 1873 and extending to 1896. This is extraordinary and classic — a peek into the past that is so rare. I think you have done a marvelous job of translation. It surely is close enough to know all about what the thinking was way back when.

I probably shouldn't declare myself, but I always liked the maternal side of the family a little better. Grandfather Schreiter I always regarded sort of a taciturn type — I think I was awed by him a bit, but he appeared to have his feet on the ground, certainly a reliable, well behaved sort. Looking back, knowing something of the hardships endured and being responsible for a motherless family in part — and some doubts as to how good a mother grandmother Schreiter was because the stories told indicate she was inclined to visit in Milwaukee and Detroit and wasn't exactly contented in Forestville, for which, too, there may have been plenty of good

reason, one has a clearer understanding of how these believed to be odd things in people's characters came about.

Mother's report the her mother, or our grandmother, crying one whole winter in the belief that her mother-in-law, Grandpa Schreiter's mother was coming to live with them, is easily understood in the present day. To me it's a bit humorous because I would like to see that combination worked out in the present day, excepting in very, very rare instances, and the old lady was probably taking advantage of the method by which you women even today have your way, although I guess the old boy, as least so the correspondence indicates, was quite determined.

The old boy's ability to write so descriptively indicates that he was not without some education. The implied hardships, his almost apparent indifference to them versus his contentment with the new country is apparent.

In the letter he wrote in 1879 where he asks that they "write again right away" but wants the correspondence kept confidential and above all from a Mr. Troll, who should mind his own business, is highly amusing and indicative of snoops and busybodies probably handing out cheap advice, making predictions of failure, etc., the same as we have nowadays.

I hope you have written "our relative" in Germany to tell her of the overall interest there is in this correspondence and see if they can't find more. Thank heavens there is one member of the family that is interested enough to keep up a smattering of that relationship, namely yourself.

Can't help but be proud of an old guy that had guts enough to do what he did, mind his own business, and got to be a respected citizen in a strange country — nothing spectacular, honest, paid his bills, and a credit to the community. He was charitable, considerate, asked no favors, and last, but not least, no handouts, etc. from the government.

No one took these people in and accepted them socially. They were accepted when they earned it.

The pattern of the whole life is classic and exemplary. Nothing has happened to me that I am more proud of.

I hope to heavens you can dig up more and I hope it will be possible for me to get back to Germany some day, which if and when I do, I would want to visit this area...

Does anyone know what Grandma Schreiter's maiden name was, and same is also true of Grandma Riedel?

Best wishes to you all.

Sincerely, Ruth and Al



Figure 46: Al and Nettie Riedel (about 1910)

Chapter

3

Reminiscences

Keyword tags: reminiscence

This chapter contains personal reminiscences by members of the Riedel-Schreiter family.

Nan's Reminiscences of Her Childhood

Keyword tags: childhood, reminiscence, Riedel

In the late 1980s and 1990, after she had partially recovered from a major stroke, Nan wrote the following reminiscences of her childhood. Before that she had often talked about her childhood, but as far as I [Anna] knew, she hadn't written anything down in a formal way. I encouraged her to do that as a sort of "writing assignment," thinking that it would encourage her recovery as well as be interesting to future generations. I included some of the pieces in the early "News From Nan" newsletters that I mailed to her many family members and friends to try to keep her in touch.

Getting up in the morning

Keyword tags: childhood, getting up in the morning, reminiscence, Riedel

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in about 1990

When I was growing up in Michigan — school-girl age, how were things?

If it was winter, the house was not cozily warm when we got up in the morning, although we were sheltered from the worst of the cold. We had no furnace in the house until I was about ten or twelve, and after we got the wondrous creature, it had to be hand fed (that is, the coal was shoveled into its maw in the basement, and hand controlled to keep the heat coming along reasonably evenly).

My dad was a good fireman, and Mother had to be a good fireman's assistant through the day.

For a big house, as ours was, the one register was not much. But we had a kitchen range, which burned wood or coal, and there were registers in several upstairs rooms to let some heat up from the first floor. We often went to bed with a warm brick wrapped in cloth.

Before the furnace days, there was a so-called "base burner." (Another name might have been "space heater.") It didn't heat much space, and it didn't put out a very fierce heat, but it was mellow and cozy. One could pull a chair up close, take off one's shoes, and press one's cold, wool-socked feet against the metal trim for comfort.

As a supplementary assistant, we had a smaller "space heater" in the upper hallway.

The base burner had to be shaken down, and the first sound of morning was Dad shaking down the base burner — or tending the furnace — and Mother getting the big range going for breakfast preparations. Dad would be carrying *out* ashes and carrying *in* wood and scuttles of coal. Kindling and wood for the kitchen had to be at the ready in the wood box, probably filled the night before. And water had to be pumped at the outside pump and brought in by the painful. In very cold weather the pump might have to be thawed and primed.

During these early-morning preliminaries, our pet rabbit [appropriately called "Bunny" and described in detail in another reminiscence] would be following Dad in and out of the house, and perhaps up and down the cellar

steps. She might make her own breakfast preparations by getting an apple or carrot or even a potato from the storage room, if she could get in. That room had a door to keep the cold *in*: the winter supply of fruit and vegetables had to *keep* there, and there were no refrigerators for winter use. In winter, ice was cut and hauled from the lake [Lake Huron], ten miles away, and packed in sawdust and stored for use during the hot days of summer to keep food from spoiling.

All this and we aren't even up yet!

Now the edge is off the cold, and we kids are called.

Paul and I dressed beside the upstairs heater, when it was in service, and beside the big square register there, which was harvesting heat from the furnace. This was a fun time for the rabbit and cat, who came to lick our feet and to play games with us or each other.

We pulled on long-legged underwear and hand-knit woolen stockings, trying to wrap the underwear legs neatly so that the stockings fitted smoothly. The stockings were fastened to a garter waist. And there was lots more to come: shoes to be laced or buttoned, heavy coats and caps and mittens and scarves — maybe snow pants and galoshes.

At our house, the big dining room table was usually set for eight. The older ones would be gone for school or work by the time we younger ones made it. The oatmeal was keeping warm on the back of the range and developing a "skin" over the top, which I *hated!* Toast could be had only if the fire was down to red coals in the range and Mother had time to hold a toasting fork over them. Sometimes she buttered bread and toasted it in the hot oven — a special treat!

I forgot to say that Dad was always an avid weather person, and each day began with his interested observation as to what the thermometer reading was. Later, barometer, too — when we had one. I carry on the weather watch for my dad. Well, for myself — but from him I learned to be interested. From him, too, I learned the grains, the common weeds that shouldn't be in the grains, and the effects of weather on the crops. From Mother, the flowers and the garden vegetables. And where did they learn them?

So, the day has begun. No electricity. No water except what was carried in. The indoor toilet facilities we had required the carrying *out* of the end products. Not even a washing machine in the early days. Nor a telephone, at first. Lots of "go and get.." Kids' legs were in demand! No radio. No television. No movies. Almost no books!

Books

Keyword tags: book, education, reminiscence, Riedel

Written by Nettie (Nan) Augusta Riedel van Raaphorst in about 1990

There used to be a story about how the Chinese so venerated learning that they cherished every scrap of paper, no matter how small.

Our family tradition is something like that. In the log cabin, Mother used to tell us, if a newspaper was received, it was put high up out of harm's (or children's) way, and to touch it was forbidden. Perhaps that made the children hunger for the knowledge the print represented: Mother cried to be allowed to go to school, but even when she got there, she had no books, and looking on with luckier students was very unsatisfactory. She never ceased to envy the kids who had books, and though she never achieved that happy state herself, she made sure her children did.

I think Dad had a little better opportunity. For one thing, he was a boy, who would become a breadwinner. Many women had to be that, but the fact was ignored. Then, too, the Riedels were business people, and Dad would be expected to help in the business. So he even had a little business training.

Mother bought us books when there were any to be had, which wasn't often in a small town like Minden. And occasionally a little religious book came our way from Sunday School.

When my brothers got older, they bought Horatio Alger books. Horatio worked hard and always succeeded: the work ethic formula in action.

I could — and did — read one book between school's closing and bedtime, and often another in the evening.

My happiest reading time was after Ray's marriage to Glad, who was a teacher. They subscribed to *Youth's Companion* for me, and I could scarcely live from one issue to the next.

The cottage

Keyword tags: cottage, Forestville, reminiscence, Riedel

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in about 1990



Figure 47: Original cottage in the early days

The worst thing about going to the lake was that you always had to go home "just when it was getting nice."

When I was a middle-aged child my parents bought nine acres on Lake Huron from Mr. Pfaehler, who had bought a farm and was selling it in cottage-sized lots. We still had to go home "just when it was getting nice," but for us children the stays were extended. This piece of property became our Shrangri-La. For Mother, especially, it was a lot more work. But work was something neither of them shied away from.

This was an area they had both enjoyed in their own childhood and youth, and a good place to try to re-create the "forest primeval," which they remembered so vividly and with such pleasure. So almost at once, they bought trees from the state and planted them as an infant reforestation area near the entrance to the cottage. They carried the water, which the little trees drank thirstily, from the lake — pailful by heavy pailful.

The only trees on the place in the beginning were a willow or two near the boathouse. So all the trees that now provide shade were planted in our time. Sal and I were both plant and tree lovers, and we put some in. At the top of the hill there is now quite dense growth, I am told. For that Sal and I and the birds can claim a share of the credit. And the wildflowers were moved in almost singly. Sal brought trilliums, remembering those that used to bloom in Summers' Woods. With great consternation she used to remember that she had picked them, which she now knew should not be done. Conservation had not yet begun, and we did not know then that all wildflowers were not for picking. She established a small bed of bloodroot, and I may have helped

with that, remembering the magnificent stands of it that were found around Lake Odessa [where Nan taught high school in 1926-27]. I think I brought the Mayapple, which is now quite well established north of the garage. Mother planted violets and forget-me-nots, which bloom every year. We all tried to bring new varieties when we found them.

Usually we asked permission, as a matter of simple good manners. I remember Mother asking Mr. Goetze if she might have a piece of a shrub, and his laughing about her wanting "brush." I remember the stems glowed red as spring came and the sap rose. I learned that one can be too careful about not removing from original sites. Near Port Huron there was a field of a fall flower that I wanted, but I couldn't establish the owner and didn't want to denude Nature. So I left them and didn't take even a spear. All at once, someone plowed up the field and destroyed all the wildflowers! Sal and one of her naturalist friends once moved an entire stand of that sort to a place away from developers. So the rule for conserving can be: "Don't take it!" or "Take it!" but know what you are doing.

The cottage was a very simple affair, built to start with little more than shelter from the weather. Dad was selling lumber, among other things. (The elevator in Minden was for buying grain, but they also sold coal, flour, feeds, and then lumber and creamery products.) Alex Stephens used to be the area carpenter, and I suppose he built the cottage. The lumber was light, and the knots sometimes fell out, giving the little critters shelter, too, under our roof. Swallows built their nests where we could watch the whole process as we lay in bed in the morning. Bees and hornets came in, too. Our cat caught and ate hornets until one day a "Yeow!" told us a hornet had stung her. We thought she would stop eating them, but she didn't. Apparently she didn't generalize from one hot specimen.

Our beds were straw ticks laid on sawhorses, emptied and freshly filled once a year. Mother also filled some pillows with the softer chicken feathers.

Food was prepared almost entirely at home in Minden and brought to us for eating. Every morning Mother and Dad went home to work hard all day, leaving us to get acquainted with the pleasures of the earth. We could play on the beach or in the creek, and we even had a rowboat we could take out if the weather was suitable and we kept within our established space limits. The "Big Hole" that the creek had formed below the bridge was off-limits: a couple of cows had drowned there and even a local boy. We learned the rudiments of Great Lakes weather: not to be caught on the lake if a wind sprang up. We almost were, once, and we had to abandon ship and walk to shore and then home. The boat was found later. We didn't need any further warnings about what wind and the lake could do.

[Anna's comments: Certainly a different child-raising philosophy than either my mother's or mine — imagine leaving a 10-year-old and 5-year-old alone all day by the lake!]

There were berries for picking, and once we caught a nice little catfish. As a pet in a pail it was a success; we hadn't the heart to kill it.

The stove was a "laundry stove," with limited space on top and a small oven. Eventually I learned a few things about cooking on a wood-burning stove, but those are not for amateurs. We also had an oil-burning stove, for hot weather, and that, too, takes some skill. Mother built a brick stove outdoors. As a Rule of Thumb, I think one might say that the less sophisticated one's equipment, the more skill is required to get an acceptable product.

The best food came out of the car ready to eat when our parents arrived in the evening. If we had neighbor children with us, as we usually had, sometimes their parents came, too — or at least some food sent from their kitchen. We furnished good appetites.

One of the first accidents I recall was when Paul was not much more than a toddler, and of course I was supposed to be looking after him. We went up the shore to Mastin's Fish Docks, where the fishing boats were pulled up snug. That made the thick ropes that held them taut as a tightrope, and very attractive as a play-place. I may have held his hand as he walked over it — I don't remember that. But suddenly he lost his footing and fell, and his stomach hit the hard rope and then he fell to the hard sand below, gasping for breath. I was scared out of my wits and frantic that I had let him come to harm in my care. I don't remember that he had bad after-effects, but I never got over the horror of it and probably never will!

We used to enjoy the birds: gulls, of course, and sandpipers (which Louie called teeter-ass snipes); the kingfisher, bustling up and down the creek like a noisy freight train; the swallows, barn and cliff; the martins; and all the long-legged wading birds that enjoyed the creek openings and the low, damp places.

Once in later years I stayed there all by myself one day to enjoy the birds and the solitude. Dad had built a bridge across the creek, and the birds used it as an observation post. My observation was that the punkerlunk (bittern) was coming there daily about noon to enjoy a little nap. I decided to see if I could observe him close-up. I got down on hands and knees, and he flew in, on schedule, and settled down for a rest. Soon his eyes closed, but intermittently he would start, look quickly and carefully all around, and then relax again. So, matching his pattern, I moved in carefully when he was relaxed and froze when he went on guard. Soon I was almost directly under his long, sharp beak, and beginning to wonder if I had been smart to get that close to it. But he was beautiful, and I surely would never have a better chance to study such a lovely thing alive. All at once, he was also aware of me! He started, stared open-eyed at me, and said, "Awk!" With that, he drew up his long, beautiful wings, and swooped away!

The herons came there, too, but I never was so close to any other big bird.

Not far from that spot, one warm day in early spring, I had a nightmare come true. I was in no danger, actually; it was just that snakes scare me, and although I have tried to like them and my mind accepts them as part of Nature's world, my instinct is to keep as far from them as possible.

On this balmy, sunny spring day, I had been wandering between the hills. Coltsfoot was out. I just stood, enjoying the sun and air. Suddenly, I was aware of the ground at my feet, covered with snakes, all doing what I was: enjoying the warmth of the spring sun. I don't think I had the breath to scream. I stood transfixed until I was able, at last, to move carefully out, away from them. They were probably just garter snakes out from winter holes.

Poor things! I wonder if *Punkerlunk* was that afraid of *me*?



Figure 48: View of the cottage



Figure 49: Creek at the cottage

Anna's comments on the cottage

Keyword tags: comment, cottage, Forestville, reminiscence, van Raaphorst

Written by Anna van Raaphorst Johnson in 2012



Figure 50: Cousins Anna and Andi at the cottage



Figure 51: Cousins Gretchen and Anna at the cottage



Figure 52: Anna and Grandpa Riedel rowing in the creek



Figure 53: Anna's bloody toe incident

As I was growing up, the cottage was a special place for me, although my parents and I typically drove the 100-mile round trip only a few times each summer. As a child my mother kept me primed for the next "cottage encounter" by telling me tales of her magical summers on Lake Huron.

In the early years, before we moved to California, I would occasionally be allowed to stay there by myself with one cousin or another. I sometimes learned a thing or two away from the super-protective atmosphere at home. At a time when my home-based comic book purchases were limited to Donald Duck, Mickey Mouse, and Little Lulu, my cousins read various Superhero series like Batman and Captain Marvel, and in the later years they used to smuggle in Mickey Spillane books to read under the covers in the bunk beds.

"The cousins" were also allowed to wander up and down the beach and even up the hill to "town" where we could hang out with the locals and buy popsicles and ice cream. At the dawn of the rock-and-roll era, Andi and Dan even had a record player of their own, and I remember listening to "Rock Around the Clock" until we drove Aunt Dorothy crazy and she made us turn it off. For a rather sheltered child it was a heady experience!

One of my more memorable experiences at the cottage was the "bloody toe" incident, which occurred one Fourth of July. We cousins had been wading in the creek when I stepped on a piece of broken glass and sliced open the bottom of my foot just at the base of my big toe. It bled copiously, and I had to hobble across the beach to get to one of the cottages for assistance, thereby getting a lot of sand in the open cut. By the time I got to Harbor Beach, where we managed to find a doctor who reluctantly came to his office to stitch up my foot, the cut needed a lot of cleaning and disinfecting. The doctor did the cleaning and stitching *first* (I remember it as being excruciatingly painful) and then *afterwards* he gave me a shot of painkiller. Was it punishment for having dragged him away from his holiday festivities?!

Dick and I and our three kids made one trip as a family to the cottage in 1976, when we towed our tent trailer across the U.S. and spent a few days there (thanks to the generosity of our relatives). Gillian was about 8 months old, and she did her first "crawl" in the living room of the Riedel/Westman cottage. I enjoyed showing my family that special place!

As an extended family we have all scattered, and I believe no Riedel descendants still owns property on the original eleven acres purchased over 100 years ago.



Figure 54: Gillian in the Riedel/Westman cottage (1976)



Figure 55: Ellen and Tim in front of our "turkey coop" cottage (1976)

Mealtimes

Keyword tags: food, mealtime, reminiscence, Riedel

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in about 1990



Figure 56: The Red House in Minden City, MI

In the Red House our meals were family affairs. We all gathered around the table, each with his own special place, three times a day. Breakfast might get shortened if Dad had a load of lumber to deliver early, and he sometimes got called away from a meal to go to the elevator and wait on a customer in a hurry.

Usually we were eight at the table, and often more. Dad brought someone home to dinner more often than not. Dinner was the noon meal, and the housewife was always ready to add a potato to the boiling pot and to set another place and chair at table. Catching a train? Coming on the train from Detroit? Shopping in town? Selling a load of grain? Dinner, supper, or overnight at Riedels. Anna and Louie made everyone welcome.

The menu was more or less standard with seasonal variations. A daily errand was to go to the meat market for "a quarter's worth of round steak." Mother pounded it tender and it was divided among us or us and guests. The portions were not large, but they were delicious, served with boiled potatoes and steak gravy or occasionally baked potatoes. Whatever vegetables were ready in the garden were eaten with it — and/or salad made from Mother's home-grown lettuce prepared with vinegar and sugar. In early spring we might have dandelion greens in lieu of spinach, flavored with browned flour.

Desserts were plain. When fruits were in season, we might have wild strawberry shortcake, the berries of our picking. The first apples brought apple pie, and berries — raspberries, blueberries, or whatever — also made pie. Dessert was often simply "sauce." All the ladies in town canned everything they could get, and all those quarts and quarts of fruit on the cellar shelves provided ready-made dessert or filling for pies or cobblers.

Home-made applesauce was popular and good with Mother's delicious home-made bread. Store bread was considered housewifely laziness. The "old" bread made lovely bread pudding. The "new" was almost better than cake. There was also a supply of home-made cookies, to which kids had ready access. They were only a little sweeter than bread and could be eaten without harm in quantity. Kids just home from school carried away handfuls. They were good with the sauce or with fresh fruit or (lucky days) with a glass of milk.

Supper was "left-overs," but not less good for that. Your nose knew it was suppertime. Fried potatoes smelled good in front of every house: no need to wait to be called! With them went fried eggs, often. Our Gladys said Mother made the best fried eggs. They were for unexpected company, too. If a roast was had for dinner, cold sliced meat was on the menu for supper — with home-made pickles and relishes.

One guest at a neighbor's house upset their plan for using the left-over roast. At dinner, the housewife sliced pieces from it and passed the platter. She had left the main part whole, to be sliced cold for subsequent meals, and the hungry visitor chose that for his portion, to the considerable consternation of the family!

When we were growing up, our meals were fun, as I remember. Louie was always the family joker, and he used to snatch the pieces of pie waiting at the plates of those who sat next to him. Of course, if you saw it going, you tried to prevent his raids. He always declared the crust was no good if the pie couldn't be "fork-lifted." Since the pie was served before the meal, people sometimes ate it first, while waiting for the first course.

The boys asked for seconds so often that Mother decided to try to fill them up, and once each one even got a half-pie! When they still called "More! More!", she declared them greedy and gave up, serving only standard servings thenceforth. Mrs. Lincoln (Esther) cleverly solved that by just cutting the served piece in half, making "two pieces."

We made merry over such roguery, but the boys did make Sal's life miserable when she was learning to cook. She was sensitive and took them seriously. "Who made this?" they would demand, as a dish was served. If Sal was the cook (I was too young for this as yet) they pretended not to — or perhaps actually didn't — eat any. But my father was blessed; he would serve himself, eat with relish, and say "It's just the way I like it!" We had an indulgent father.

Since meals were family gatherings, the children were called in at mealtime. School-age children came home at noon, and my dad and the brothers came whistling from work. The call system, in the days before more sophistication, was a vocal one. The mothers came out on steps or porch and called, on a rising inflection: "Nettie!" "Gertrude!" "Dorothy!" "Celestine!" If her voice chanced not to reach to where the child was, the Grapevine usually finished the job: One of your playmates would usually say, "Your mother's callin' ya!" or "Your mother wants ya."

One summer evening I reached home before the call to dinner and had a sudden quixotic notion to play a joke on my mother. The wagon (a little wagon was standard for kids' wheels — before roller skates and bicycles, if you got that high) stood near the west window of the kitchen in a cool spot. I thought I'd sit there and when Mother came to the back door to call, I'd pop up as a surprise. (Even our *jokes* were simple!) So I sat and waited, watching the window from which I would be visible if she looked out of that window. And then — Surprise! but not on Mother! — as my glance went back and forth, I discovered that a little snake was stretched along the top of the wagon box! I don't think we knew poisonous or non-poisonous about snakes, but to me they were all horror. I went screaming into the house where everyone was already at the table! I should have smelled potatoes frying and been home sooner! We didn't have watches and there were no church bells or factory whistles to give warning, but we were expected to pay attention to minor signs! I must have scared the poor little snake to death.



Figure 57: The Red House

Old-time natural foods

Keyword tags: food, reminiscence, Riedel

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in about 1990



Figure 58: Anna and her grandma Anna at the Schreiter homestead site

Our ancestor, my mother's mother (Friederike Luise Schreiter) was an herbalist. And so some of the "weeds" were food for the pioneers, and probably contributed to the excellent physique of the family line.

Mother used to talk about the kettles of greens: dandelion greens, lamb's quarters, and "pig-weed" that were a standard part of their diet. We ate those, too, though not with joy at the time, I recall. The dandelion greens were mashed, and looked most unfortunately like "cow pies" — although I remember the good flavor imported to them by "browned flour."

I associate this with Grandma Schreiter. One just stirred the flour in the frying pan — dry, but hot — and kept stirring, so that it turned brown, but not black! This was stirred into the "green mush" to thicken and flavor it. That was how we got our "roughage" — now called fiber.

We also got fiber from fresh, raw fruit, notably apples, which were available to us from early fall through the winter. While they were firm and hard we ate them as snacks. When they began to soften, they became applesauce, which was as common a diet staple as potatoes or eggs. I can't imagine how we happened not to eat violets. There were always violets, in the yard and in the woods. Both the flowers and the leaves are edible.

If one had a garden, the "thinnings" made some of the earliest treats of the season. Mother made a delicious cream soup with perhaps the first tiny lettuce leaves and baby carrots out of the rows, pulled to make room for the carrots to grow. I read recently that one could eat the tiny bean plants (peas, too?) before the pods begin to appear.

I don't think we had salad often (that is, the fancy type). But we had leaf lettuce from the first gardening days of spring, fixed "German style." The leaves were washed and drained and put in a bowl. A little butter was melted: enough to flavor, but not to make greasy. Sugar and salt to taste were sprinkled on, and then a small spoonful of vinegar was sprinkled on and stirred in with the butter. Individualized salads, as opposed to the "bowl salads" began to be on family tables in about the 1920s, I think. I remember a pineapple and banana concoction, put together to resemble a candlestick. Still in the bowl, but popular and exciting, was Waldorf salad: chopped apples, a bit of onion, celery, and raisins. The dressing was homemade "boiled" dressing.

Homemade mayonnaise came in with kitchen machinery. There was a part with the mixer for dropping the oil evenly into the mix. I don't remember when dressings became available in the stores — perhaps about the same time. For church dinners and big groups coleslaw was the favorite, probably because it didn't wilt like lettuce nor get soft like fruit mixes. Plain celery and carrot sticks were always reliable as a crisp bite. Pickles used to provide that, too, especially the fancy ones like "icicle" or "7-day" varieties. The harder and crisper they are in the finished product, the longer their preparation time. Since pickles were the first salads, really, the pioneer ladies had shelves of different varieties in their cellars, as well as crocks of dill pickles. End-of-season or end-of-crop foods tended to become pickled: spiced pears and watermelon rind and peaches.

Like the old story that they used all of the pig but the squeal, it is true that the housewife used everything to the last morsel. My mother made a syrup of the peach parings that I liked better than anything, but my sister Sal strenuously objected to it as "made from garbage!" On pancakes or potato pancakes it was a very special treat. Mother probably could have made money as an innovator: fruit syrups came late to the marketplace.

Grass stems made good munching. The grass needs to be approaching blooming season and must be pulled just right to separate from the enclosing sheath.

There was a wild fruit we called "ground cherry" — the fruit a cherry-like berry enclosed in a green ribbed sheath. The fruit fell on the ground and was ripened by the sun, which caused the sheath to dry off. When the exposed fruit was golden and translucent, it was delectable. Unripe, it tasted terrible! This was a treat for the patient, knowing ones. You had to wait for maturity and know when the right moment had come! Left un-garnered, the fruit reseeded next year's crop.



Figure 59: Anna and her grandma Anna at the "little house" in Minden



Figure 60: Anna and Andi in Grandma's garden behind the Red House

A Sunday tradition

Keyword tags: reminiscence, Riedel, tradition

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst on November 26, 1988



Figure 61: Nan and her mother observing a Sunday tradition (1910)

Yesterday the Johnsons and I were visiting the Jobses for day-after-Thanksgiving leftovers, and a chance to take note of the up-coming December birthdays in which our families specialize. The college-age cousins had a chance to renew acquaintance, and since Paul and Dorothy were also there, we spoke of old times and old things. I had taken Andi an old rounded-end table knife of silver-plate Rogers silverware that she had once said would make a good spreader. It is a tad-end remnant of a set Mother used to have, of no value intrinsically, certainly, but loved as a memory of life in my parents' home.

We were talking about what is the best way to pass along one's belongings, which may look like a lot of old junk or a house bulging with treasure, according to the eye of the beholder. And Dorothy mentioned that my mother gave her a set of old glasses — four or six perhaps. They might have been a wedding present. I know they had been in the dining-room cupboard for as long as I can remember. They were not especially fine glass but were appealing because of the forget-me-nots that decorated each tiny lily-shaped cup of the wee stemmed goblets.

My brother Paul remarked that they had probably never had anything in them but grape juice — remembering, no doubt, that my mother was sternly opposed to drinking. But I am five years older than he, and I can correct that impression he had of tee-totaling at Mother's house. It was not the drink she opposed, it was the abuse of it.

The little glasses are really a wonderful symbol of a different kind of hospitality. There was nothing of luxury in our house, for it was a home that had been built up with economy and care on an always limited income and with a careful eye to making due provision for necessities first. It had to be that way. But life was lived with courtesy and thoughtfulness in that community of families, most of them headed by parents who had had only the rudiments of education. Even the "professor" [the high school teacher?] had probably had no more training for his job than a few months at an educational institute.

The adults were usually not on a first-name basis with close neighbors and friends. I suppose my mother and one of the longest-lasting of the neighborhood ladies rarely called each other "Kate" and "Anna" to their dying day. It was always "Mrs. Moore" and "Mrs. Riedel."

The snapshot I like best of me with my mother [see above] was probably taken as we set out for a Sunday afternoon "call." That would have been about 1910, and the ladies even had calling cards with their names on them to leave after the visit. It was a ceremonial visit — as opposed to a workday drop-in for the purpose of sharing garden largesse or to offer, or bring, help in case of illness or accident or death in the family. On a ceremonial call one would be entertained in the parlor, if there was one, and the little glasses would be brought in with real wine — home-made dandelion, probably, in our house, though it might be elderberry or something else elsewhere. With it might be served a very thin slice of fruit cake. It had nothing to do with

hunger or thirst — it was pure ceremony. The little table that held it would be covered with a white linen cloth, beautifully "done-up," and probably embroidered or lace-edged with the hostess's own handiwork — or that of one of her relatives or friends. It was a nice, dignified, neighborly rite.

I had completely forgotten about the little forget-me-not glasses, but I am pleased to have them back in my memory. It is a pleasant winter afternoon, and in my mind's eye, once more I am wearing a "Sunday dress" and in "good" shoes, and perhaps even carrying gloves or a muff, and walking out in the town with my mother, snow crunching under foot, going to call on a neighbor, getting to sit in the "good room," and listening to a ladylike exchange of town news. It was nice!

On the first trip I took to Europe [1934], in a little German town where the bus made a short stop, I found the male counterpart of the little forget-me-not glasses and bought them as a take-home gift for my father. They were little green glasses in a carrier, I suppose intended for a few sips of "schnapps" to match the ladies' wine. My father also always had his few bottles of liquid hospitality at hand for visitors. This was almost entirely local. Everybody in our small town lived within walking distance of everybody else. Even after there began to be a few cars, they would all be up on blocks for the winter months.

How very different it all was!



Figure 62: Anna Schreiter Riedel's forget-me-not wine glasses

Anna's comments on the Sunday tradition

Keyword tags: comment, reminiscence, tradition, van Raaphorst

Written by Anna van Raaphorst Johnson in 2012

I inherited two of the forget-me-not wine glasses that Nan mentions in her reminiscence — I assume that Aunt Dorothy passed them on to my mother sometime after the post-Thanksgiving feast. They've sat in our corner cabinet for many years, and I intend to pass them on to my granddaughters, Miranda and Helena — one each, so through many additional years, I hope, they can remind each other of their special meaning in the history of their family.

Dan, Andi, and I were the babies of the Riedel/Schreiter family, and we never got to participate in any of the early family traditions described here. However, the following photo shows that Andi and I did, at least once, attend church with our grandmother.



Figure 63: Anna Schreiter Riedel with her two youngest granddaughters

Music

Keyword tags: music, reminiscence, Riedel

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst on July 29, 1988

I'm so glad that we loved music in our family! Poor as we were, as few spare pence as Mother had, she paid music teachers for us and insisted that we all have musical opportunities. Not that Dad objected, for he himself played cornet in his youth, and all his life he sat transfixed when someone gave an especially good rendition on a cornet! There was a piano in the old hotel (West End), sounding pretty cracked by the time I was old enough to test it a little.

In the log cabin at Schreiters' there were more mouths to feed and less money. So there was no piano, but the feel for music was there, as witness Grandpa Schreiter's request in his letter [see [Letters Home](#) on page 37] for his mother to "bring song books."

Mother's music in the early days was bird song. Over and over she has related the early morning chrous at the pond that the creek formed, below the log cabin, and how she would slip out early and go down there to listen to the music and watch the fabulous colors. One of the first chores of the day would be to carry pails of water up from the spring, but the morning concert was her pleasure.

Although she laughed at my infant conceit, it must have given her pleasure to hear me say, "Listen! *My* birdie, singing for *me!*" "I got it from no strangers," as people always used to say when a family trait revealed itself: I have always loved the birds and still find them one of the greatest joys!

Besides the cornet, Dad could play the piano. I think the only thing I remember his playing was "Frolic of the Frogs." [I (Anna) believe Ellen still has the Riedel family "Frolic" sheet music.]

Louie had lessons, but didn't "take to" the violin. Mother used to relate her amazement and chagrin that Louie just sawed through it, and they hadn't thought to let Ray begin until he begged to. He arms had grown a bit crooked — they thought he "grew too fast." (One supposes that he, like me, was calcium deficient.) And lo — when he began, Mother would say with delight, "*there* is the violinist I always wanted!"

The tune I always associate with Ray — my favorite tune and also Kelley's, when he was little — was "The Bohemian Girl."

Sal played piano, and when she and the older boys were all at home, we often had regular band sessions. I think Louie played an instrument, and Al, too. (Al says he liked guitar best.) We all gathered around the piano to sing. No radio, TV, or even records to play in those days: all music was self-made. The boys had a village band. And DeRosia's, who had a hotel in Minden, was also often a center for music. Bertha was the pianist.

When I was still on the yon side of Fool's Hill (assuming I eventually acquired some understanding), Mother used to like to hear "Down by the Old Mill Stream," and "Silver Threads Among the Gold," and such, and I think if I played them for her, it wasn't in good spirit, as I was snippily scornful of "that old stuff." I'm so sorry, Mom: I've regretted it so much! If I ever get the chance, I'll get the Heavenly Choir to sing them for you with heartfelt zeal!

Dad was sentimental, too. I never hear nor play "O, Tannenbaum" without seeing him beside the piano in the front room at the Red House, singing it with tears in his eyes! He had such rosy apple cheeks!

Anna's comments on "Music"

Keyword tags: comment, music, reminiscence, van Raaphorst

Written by Anna van Raaphorst Johnson in 2012



Figure 64: Anna playing piano (about 1943)



Figure 65: Anna and her dad going to a band concert

Music continues to be a strong theme for many Riedel/Schreiter descendants; here are some examples:

- Nan played the piano, often accompanying singers and choral groups.
- Anna played piano, violin, trombone, and recorder, and she sang in several choral groups.

- Ellen played piano, clarinet, and saxophone. She was in the band in junior high, high school, and at UCLA, and was in a Foothill College community orchestra and the 1984 Summer Olympics band.
- Tim played piano, trombone, and guitar in junior high, high school, and beyond.
- Miranda plays piano and has played clarinet and percussion in her junior high school band.
- Archer plays the piano at school and has expressed an interest in taking lessons.



Figure 66: Tim and Dick playing recorder



Figure 67: Ellen playing piano



Figure 68: Ellen in her UCLA band uniform



Figure 69: Tim Johnson and Scott Young playing guitar



Figure 70: Miranda in a piano recital

Tim's comments on "Music"

Keyword tags: Bach, Carlsbad, comment, Czech Republic, Eisenfeld, Falkenstein, Germany, Johnson, Karlovy Vary, Leipzig, music, reminiscence, Saxony, Vogtlandkreis, YouTube

Written by Tim Johnson in 2012

Heinrich Adolph (Adolph) Riedel (my great-great-grandfather) was born on the 13th of July in 1842 in the town of Falkenstein, Saxony, Germany. In 1873 Adolph emigrated with his family to the thumb of Michigan, USA.

Falkenstein at the crossroads of Western and Eastern Europe

Falkenstein is located in the present-day district of Vogtlandkreis, which is at the southwest end of the modern German state of Saxony, located less than 10 miles from the Czech Republic. There are actually five towns in modern Germany called "Falkenstein," and two states called Saxony, and there is even a Falkenstein in the other Saxony. The Falkenstein that Adolph Riedel left is the one that is about 50 miles from the Czech spa town of Karlovy Vary, once known as Carlsbad, and about 100 miles from the German city of Leipzig, which is known by many as the birthplace of classical music. In 1871, Carlsbad was across the same border, but it was the border with the Austrian Empire in those days. In the border zone lived a mix of Czech-speaking and German-speaking people. In 19th-century Carlsbad, the majority spoke German, which is still the language of modern-day Austria. Falkenstein was located exactly at the place where Western Europe and Eastern Europe meet.

1873: A good time to emigrate from Saxony

In 1865 the Civil War in the United States ended. In 1866 there was a war between the Austrian Empire and the German Confederation, with the Kingdom of Saxony siding with the Austrian Empire. The Austrian Empire lost that war, which lasted only seven weeks. Falkenstein continued to be located in the independent Kingdom of Saxony, which then became part of the German Confederation. From 1870 to 1871 there was another war, which was between the German Confederation and France. This time the Kingdom of Saxony sided with the German Confederation, which in those days was led by Otto von Bismark of Prussia. At the end of this war the modern state of Germany was born. Although the people of Falkenstein were part of winning side of the 1870-71 war, they were now ruled by the Prussians, who they had fought a war against only four years prior. A good time to emigrate to America, I think.

Since then a lot of history has transpired. One thing I am thankful for is that my ancestor decided to move the family to the United States in 1873, for if he had not, I might have been born into much different circumstances. Falkenstein saw a lot of action in both world wars, and was part of East Germany until reunification with the west in 1990. Though somewhat run down during the Soviet era, today Falkenstein and the Vogtlandkreis district are once again part of a prosperous state of Saxony, which has benefitted economically since reunification.

Falkenstein as a music center

Though also notable for many other high cultural aspects, this region was and is today a musical center, ever since 1723 when Johan Sebastian Bach was appointed cantor of the Thomasschule at Thomaskirche in Leipzig, where he composed, played organ, and taught for twenty-seven years. Bach is often referred to as the Father of Classical Music. If you listen to composers before Bach and after Bach there is a difference in the complexity of the music. I know it but I can't put it into language, exactly. People came from all over Europe to study music in Leipzig. They still come today to study at the University of Music and Theatre Leipzig, which was founded by Felix Mendelssohn in 1843.

Falkenstein is a small town 100 miles from Leipzig, 50 miles from Karlovy Vary (aka Carlsbad). Carlsbad is still a very famous spa town. Many famous composers and other artists would visit Carlsbad to take in the spa treatments. One most notable was Ludwig von Beethoven, who used to walk about town talking with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Goethe wrote his last major work in Carlsbad, the Marienbad Elegy, in 1823. Frederic Chopin and Edvard Grieg also visit Carlsbad several times to take in the medicinal waters.

C.F. Martin & Company is a U.S. guitar manufacturer established in 1833 by Christian Frederick Martin of Markneukirchen, Vogtlandkreis.

The Rudolph Wurlitzer Company was an American company that produced stringed instruments, woodwinds, brass instruments, theater organs, band organs, orchestrions, electronic organs, electric pianos and jukeboxes. Wurlitzer got started in Cincinnati in 1856 by Franz Rudolph Wurlitzer (1832-1914), who was born in Schneck, Vogtlandkreis.

Falkenstein today

I wanted to see if I could find any famous composer who came from Falkenstein proper, and could not find one, which is because Falkenstein is small (fewer than 10,000 people), even today.

There is a famous soprano from Falkenstein name Brigitte Eisenfeld. She has a video on YouTube called Frühlingsstimmenwalzer ("Voices of Spring" by Johann Strauss), recorded in 1999. I found that the other day and saw for the first time what somebody from Falkenstein looks like these days. It's a very good video. I can see the Vienna influence on their waltzing. The *Dirndls* have a regional look.

Music by musicians and composers from the Vogtlandkreis district

After I found the Eisenfeld video, I decided to search the whole Vogtlandkreis district for famous musicians and composers. I also looked these up on YouTube to make sure some of their music is there. Here are some YouTube videos you can search for yourself by the musicians and composers of the Vogtlandkreis. I'd also recommended including "Leipzig" and "Karlovy Vary" in your search. Listen and be delighted!

Here are a few of the specific artists and titles:

- Gerhard Weber, Im Land der Mulde
- Stefanie Hertel, Hitmedley
- Kurt Edelhagen, Soley Soley (1972)
- Brigitte Eisenfeld, Frühlingsstimmenwalzer (1999)
- Oskar Böhme, Trumpet Concerto
- Hans Otte, Wassermannmusik
- Tokio Hotel, World Behind My Wall
- Outart, Sun Splash

Epithets

Keyword tags: epithet, reminiscence, Riedel

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in about 1990

Our language must have been uncommonly pure, on the whole. "O, sugar!" was a bad one, as I recall. Neighbors were amused that Dr. Harrison, forthright veterinarian, told his daughter Bertie that if she felt like swearing, to swear! Not to hide behind "O, sugar!" I can't remember ever hearing my mother say anything. Maybe "Oooohh!" when the molasses hit the ceiling. (I had played ball with the can all the way home from the store, not knowing it would spout when it was opened!)

All the men said G-- D--- and all the ladies were shocked. Dad had an unusual epithet, origin unknown: "By the holy powers of Mulcahames' cats!" When Paul was about seven, he took a pitcher and went to the basement for cider. When he got back, he tried to tell Mother, with remorse: "I broke your pitcher. And Dad said, 'By the holy powers...!'" Then Paul broke up completely. Mother couldn't be mad about the pitcher in the face of the gales of merriment that doubled him up.

I felt quite smart once when I had picked up some Polish words from the bean pickers, I also being one at the time. It sounded satisfactorily fierce for any occasion, and I tried it out on my brother Louie, who hushed me up immediately. "They know what you're saying!" he warned me. I didn't, except that it was something about dog's blood. I didn't add anything to my vocabulary until I took German in college and got "Millionen Donnerwetter!"

When Ray's and Sal's kids were in school, Francie Carter was a classmate. Mrs. Carter answered a question of a school questionnaire this way:

Languages spoken in the home: "English and profane."

Anna's comments on "Epithets"

Keyword tags: comment, epithet, reminiscence, van Raaphorst

Written by Anna van Raaphorst Johnson in 2012

I never heard Grandpa Riedel say "By the holy powers of Mulcahames' cats!" — maybe he thought it was too rough for the younger grandkids, or maybe he had just stopped using the expression. I got the spelling of the "M-word" from my mother, and I recently tried Googling it with that spelling and various others — no luck. Did he invent it himself? If so, how did he come up with the name?

My mother told a story that her mother told her about an incident that helped the Louis Riedels decide that the hotel and saloon (in Forestville) was not the best place to raise kids and that it wasn't only the business motivation that might make Minden City a better bet. Aunt Sal (as a toddler) was chasing squirrels in a park, and one climbed to safety up a tree. Sal, who was enjoying the active fun, said, "You dod dam son bitz, will you tum down?!" Grandma commented that it was a good thing she hadn't learned to talk clearly yet!

Holidays

Keyword tags: holiday, reminiscence, Riedel

In the following reminiscences, Nan talks about how her family celebrated Halloween and Christmas.

Halloween

Keyword tags: Halloween, holiday, reminiscence, Riedel

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in 1990



Figure 71: D.V.V. Club members, Al seated, left, and Louie standing, second right



Figure 72: D.V.V. Club members, Al seated, left, and Louie seated, middle

The wild stories of Halloween antics are mostly hearsay for me. It was the big boys who went out and did the mischief, if you believe their tales. There was a lot of moving of big items from one place to another. If you went out the day after Halloween, you might see a buggy (the kind a horse drew) on someone's roof. Almost surely there would be outdoor toilets pushed over.

My brothers belonged to a club, called D.V.V. It meant Dum Vivimus, Vivamus: Latin for "While we live, let's live!" When I heard that it was Latin, I asked my brothers where they had come upon a motto of such erudition. They would have been in high school if Minden had had a high school, which at that time it did not. No high school, no Latin. However, Norman Wahla attended parochial school and hence the Latin motto.

One of the high jinks that I heard the D.V.V. members laughing over was the theft of a freezer of ice cream that the girls had made for a party of their own. "The girls" would have been our sister Sal, Bertie and Josie De Rosia, Minnie and Martha Seaman, and others their age. The occasion might or might not have been a Halloween party, though that would give a good excuse, if the boys needed one, which they wouldn't have: girls were to be teased and badgered, and boys were there to do it.

I do remember my first — and perhaps last — Halloween "out." I don't think we had costumes, other than hobo type. I was small, so I just went "out" with no clear idea of what it entailed.

(The fact that I could be out in the dark, blindly following, indicates the innocence of our time. Everybody in town knew everybody else, and even though it was dark, we didn't need to be afraid.)

Seeing a couple of big boys, I just sort of latched on, and when they went upstairs over the drug store, I followed. At the turn in the stairs I heard a loud rattling sound against a window, and as I trailed to the top landing, Mrs. Coyne (if I remember her, after all these years) pounced out of her door. What I had heard was a "tick, tack, toe." Rolled against a window it made a fearsome racket, and it made Mrs. Coyne mad as a hornet! The perpetrator was already on his way downstairs, but if Mrs. Coyne saw me and realized that it could not have been I who operated the noise maker, she gave no sign. She was wound up tight, and she went on to the end of her tirade, pouring it over my shrinking frame without mercy.

I went home. I probably considered Halloween much overrated as a holiday. I know I was always afraid of Mrs. Coyne after that. She was not a big woman, but she had a lot of fire — and brimstone!

It was not until I was teaching — in lake Odessa, I think — that I heard about "trick-or-treating." They kept three nights: (1) Doorbell Night, (2) Beggar's Night, and (3) Halloween. It made some sense, at least: if you were stingy with the beggars, you got the "tricks" on Halloween — garbage on the porch, soap on the windows, and such unpleasantness. Before that, it was all tricks and no reprieve.

Anna's comments on "Halloween"

Keyword tags: comment, Halloween, holiday, reminiscence, van Raaphorst

Written by Anna van Raaphorst Johnson in 2012

As a child in Michigan I don't remember either going out out trick-or-treating or witnessing any damage around the neighborhood. However, I do remember that there was always a Halloween parade at school, and it was a given that all the kids dressed up for that.

Our two oldest, Ellen and Tim, probably first went trick-or-treating when we were living in New Jersey. I remember it as being extremely cold — the costumes were not warm enough by themselves, and the kids had to put on jackets or coats, which sort of ruined the effect.

Costumes were big in our family both at Halloween and also at other times of the year. We have always had a big box of dress-up costumes, which have been popular with both the kids and the grandkids. When we lived in El Dorado Hills, CA, Matthew and Miranda always dragged out the costume box when they came to visit so they could put on various capes and run around the house posing as "Superkids." Archer and Helena continued that tradition.



Figure 73: Anna dressed for the school Halloween party



Figure 74: Gillian in costume



Figure 75: Ellen and Tim in costume



Figure 76: Matthew and Miranda dressed as "Superkids"

Ellen's comments on "Halloween"

Keyword tags: comment, Halloween, holiday, Johnson, Livengood, reminiscence

Written by Ellen Johnson Livengood in 2012

As a child, I thought Halloween was the second-best holiday ever, following behind Christmas of course. We always dressed up, although my mom (not being a big seamstress) relied on us to use our imaginations to come up with costumes that could be put together without too much sewing or fuss. The best and most amusing example of this were our "giant paper bag" costumes, which Tim famously adorned with a sign that said something like "Make a sign and pin it on your costume."

The best part was the candy of course, which we would come back, dump out, and sift through for hours, trading back and forth.

After I got too old for trick or treating, I didn't enjoy Halloween as much for many years — until I had kids of my own, and once again discovered the joys of dressing up and even more fun: decorating! Nothing is better than pulling out the box of decorations, setting up the now-infamous Livengood graveyard on the front lawn, and scaring little kids (but not too much) with our giant skeleton archway. Over the years we have amassed quite a storehouse of things, including lots of costumes. This year my son, at 16, did not trick or treat for the first time ever. However, he did not go candy-less because we had a ton of extras, given that our aging

neighborhood has less and less of the little ones these days. This is a bittersweet milestone! But I hope I will continue to enjoy it all for myself for years to come.

Christmas

Keyword tags: Christmas, holiday, reminiscence, Riedel

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in 1990



Figure 77: A traditional German Christmas tree

Christmas was, of course, *the big one*, in every way. It wasn't a matter of gift exchange. We didn't give gifts ourselves until we were grown up, married, or in a job. The gifts under the Christmas tree were from Santa Claus, believe it or not!

I still believe it, because I wanted to then so desperately. I remember the year "Cheech" (Chi Chi) De Rosia made me have to admit to myself that I knew it was my parents who put the gifts under the tree. I didn't thank him for it, though he perhaps thought that at my age, I naturally didn't believe in Santa Claus. And lying in bed on Christmas Eve, in the back bedroom, with Paul (we slept together that one exciting night of the year), I could tell from the trips up and down stairs, and out to the garage and back, who was assembling Christmas. All the while I was urging Paul to hurry and go to sleep, because if Santa found us awake — Oh, Horror! — he would not leave any gifts!

The tree, of course, was the central core of the celebration. Dad had probably gone to the swamp himself to cut it, and it was hidden behind the garage to keep fresh and cold until Christmas Eve. I think I saw it there once, but I manfully ignored the evidence and never disillusioned any young believers myself.

On Christmas Eve, after we were asleep, or making a good pretense of being, Dad would put the tree on a stand and bring it in, and Mother would trim it, complete with real wax candles in little snap-on holders. While it was still pitch dark, we would be awake and importuning our parents to let us go and see what Santa had brought. We were held off until Mother could get down ahead of us to light the candles, so that the sight we saw was enchanting: the fragrant green tree in full glory of illumination with the gifts spread out (no wrappings) under it. We didn't note that Mother was now Santa's Fire Department, standing by with a pail of water and a dipper.

One of our favorite decorations was a set of little musical instruments. One year a little horn was the first thing Paul saw, and in reaching up to blow the glad tidings, he pulled the whole tree over!

We were especially lucky with our gifts. Most of the kids got serviceable things: wool socks or mittens, new underwear, a toy for the lucky. My parents really made it a memorable day. I can't ever remember ever having stood with nose pressed against a window yearning for a special toy that I didn't receive that toy. That took a real Santa spirit even for the sleuthing!

There was a musical merry-go-round that I still mourn (it wore out eventually) and a hand-cranked music box that had "records" made with perforations. "On a Sunday Afternoon" was one tune. I saw a replica in the tax-free shop... in Amsterdam, I think. The handle would wear down, and Mr. Sundquist would repair it. Eventually, alas, it could no longer be repaired, and it ended in a drive for metals during one of the wars.

One year it was a set of doll furniture. Those were all at Mahon's hardware store; perhaps Frank, who was such a silent person, was in Santa's employ! (He was the justice of the peace who married John and me.)

Paul's gifts ran to wheel toys. When Dad went on business trips, he always brought back gifts for us. I remember a toy truck with a little driver who lifted out. Paul cried when he found he couldn't get into the space himself! I got a nice doll buggy that year. Paul couldn't ride in it, but he enjoyed wheeling it. That must have been a relief to the neighbors, for when he was a little younger, Paul started his morning early by taking a garden hoe and dragging it behind him all around the block. On the sidewalk, it made a nice, busy sound to a little boy who liked machinery.

Ellen's comments on "Christmas"

Keyword tags: Christmas, comment, holiday, Johnson, Livengood, reminiscence

Written by Ellen Johnson Livengood in 2012

Ah, Christmas. As a child, this was the absolute ultimate holiday, one that we counted down to with total focus. I was all about the surprise, whereas Tim was more about finding where Mom and Dad had hidden everything and/or carefully opening or shaking presents under the tree to figure out what he got. And of course, we had to count out who got how many presents, to make sure it was "even." I used to hate it when my Mom wanted to take down the tree right away, because I wanted to prolong the joy as long as possible.

Fast forward to my adulthood....with Christmas having turned into a 3-month long series of TV ads, with decorations out in the stores before Halloween has even arrived, I struggle to love it. "Black Friday" now starts on Thanksgiving? Ugh!! Parts of it I still enjoy. What I still love is decorating my house, the lights on the neighbor's houses and yards, and doing family things like the Nutcracker or other holiday-themed activities that don't involve buying or opening gifts. Decorating the tree while playing holiday music is still great. Even better? Taking everything down!! Yes, I have turned into a Scroogy day-after Xmas tree taker-downer. And I completely understand what drove my mother down that path.

Pets

Keyword tags: pet, reminiscence, Riedel

In the following reminiscences, Nan describes some of the family pets.

Bunny

Keyword tags: Bunny, pet, rabbit, reminiscence, Riedel

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in 1990

We always had animals living with us, and they arrived in various ways. One was a living legend, and the way of her coming was this: It must have been about 1920 — or perhaps 1919 — that Paul, who was about seven, had measles. His pattern with diseases was that if he fell ill with anything, he would be sicker than anyone else who had it. But he would bounce back, and once the recovery began, he got over it faster than anyone else. So it was with the measles. He had a very high fever and was probably delirious, and even the measles blotches were abnormally dark. Mother said one might call his illness "black measles," rather than red.

I had it next and remember quite well, the onset, the breaking out, being isolated in a dimly lighted room, the fever and thirst, studying the wallpaper pattern for imaginary creatures for entertainment; we weren't allowed to read, and there was no radio as yet.

So when Easter came, we were just recovering from a moderately bad time. It was like our parents to do something especially nice for us to compensate. So Dad combed the countryside and came home with Bunny, a beautiful Belgian hare.

Naturally, the Easter Rabbit paid her usual visit, and early Easter morning we were told the Easter Bunny had been there. *Had* been?! Here was this beautiful creature, hopping around the house, and our excited cries nearly raised the roof!

"Mama! Mama! The Easter Bunny is here!"

Paul gave her a hard day. Every little while he herded her into a corner and commanded that she lay an egg, and someone had to slip an egg into the corner for his garnering so that she could go free.

Imagine how you would feel if the Easter Rabbit chose your house for her home! She was a never-ending joy, and I still think tenderly of her.

She followed us all around the house and came when I called. When Dad got up in the morning and started tending fires, she followed him out when he took out the ashes, and back in when he brought wood or water. If he went to the basement for coal, Bunny lippity-lipped behind him, and if the "fruit room" door were open, she found a carrot or perhaps even a potato or an apple to carry upstairs for her own breakfast. She knew where foods were kept, and in the evening if she hankered for a cookie or a bit of cake, one might hear a plate clank against a crock in the pantry. She lifted the plate with her clever nose, reached in and got her bit, and pulled out, letting the plate fall back on the crock. We knew the sound: Bunny had her dessert.

She also felt entitlement to the furniture. There were fewer easy chairs than now, but we had one that was called a Morris chair. It had a hinged back and a device for holding the back at various angles. When Dad sat in it, there was a space behind him, and Bunny discovered that it was a very soft, warm, cozy hidey-hole. Then she found she wanted room to stretch, and to Dad's amusement she began pushing him, making a grunting sound that said, "Move over! Bunny needs stretching room!"

We also had a cat at the time, and the cat and Bunny chased each other. Landing on the ends of scatter rugs on the polished floor, they could slide good distances, leaving the house looking very much "lived-in."

Cats

Keyword tags: cat, pet, reminiscence, Riedel

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in 1990

We nearly always had cats: I remember up to eight (two mothers with three kittens each).

One early cat resident was a calico called Daisy, who paid her rent by being very tolerant of a baby's attention. Paul was then only a toddler and loved her hard, but she never harmed him.

Cats used to be put out at night, and I suppose the barn was warm. One of my very earliest memories is of going out there to see puppies, and when we first moved there, it was a barn with horses in it, instead of the garage it became later.

But Daisy knew the house was warmer, and she found that the curve of the stairway provided a cozy corner, dark and concealing. Poor Daisy! She gave herself away! She snored! She could be heard all over the house and was quickly found and put out at bedtime.

Mother cats that are nursing kittens get the same claustrophobic feeling that human mothers sometimes feel in the early days when Mama is on demand constantly. One of our cats hid her kittens in the coal bin, and when it was time to show them to the family, she brought them to me!

It was early morning and I was still in bed, when suddenly this loud kitten-crying was filling the air — and coming nearer! I sat up and looked around, and there she was, with a nice big kitten held by the back of its neck. Before I could say anything, she jumped on the bed and laid it beside me. And there was my mother! "She brought it to me," I explained, delighted! "Well," said Mother, "I wondered where she was taking it! All right, for a little while." And I got to cuddle the new baby while its mother got some rest. What an entrancing honor!

Another time, in the other house next to the bank, another cat also hid her litter in the coal bin. Mother decided on a beautiful warm spring day that the kittens should be out for air, and she brought them to the back yard, where I was playing on the back steps. Mehitabel did not at all approve of her family being so exposed. She also had plans for an outing of her own. So she began edging up the driveway, looking first at me and then at the kittens. It was all very plain: "Watch them for me until I get back." "All right," I told her, "I understand." And she went away and left me, feeling highly honored, on duty.

Mehitabel was a rather strange case. For some reason we had not had a cat for some time when I was teaching in Rochester [about 1931]. So I went to the Detroit Humane Society, and Mehitabel chose me. She leaped out of her cage into my arms. When I got home to Minden, I put the box containing Mehitabel on the

kitchen table, where she caused the box to do gyrations. "It's alive!" said Mother. Anything alive pleased Mother. So Mehitabel was "in," odd duck though she was.

She must have been in a spinster's house. She streaked for the basement at the sight of any man, including Dad or Paul, but even less did she like any male not of the family. She would not touch real milk, but only drank evaporated milk. She loved corn, fresh or canned, and if we brought corn from the garden, she would chew through the shucks to reach the kernels and nibble them. She also liked fresh tomatoes.

One thing she liked that Mother denied her absolutely: a freshly ironed white tablecloth looked to her just the place to sit. As she was jet black, it was a good study in contrasts — or might have been! I think we had Mehitabel the only time I was ever a little uneasy of a thunderstorm. She used to lie on my bed, and that night a storm broke after I had gone to bed. The lightning flashes were vicious stabs, and the thunder was like a monster cat with the house in its grasp. It was shaking the house as a cat shakes a mouse, and directly over my bed! Mehitabel lay at my feet with her big eyes firmly fixed on me. Suddenly, I felt victimized! I was scared! It was almost as bad as "The Fall of the House of Usher"! For probably the only time in my life, I made the cat go away!

Dogs

Keyword tags: dog, pet, reminiscence, Riedel

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in 1990

Mother would have agreed with James Herriott about the wisdom of creatures. She told of a little dog they had that had had puppies. Mother had gone to look in the kennel and had found that the puppies had been born, but one was dead. She took the dead one and laid it on the lawn while she attended to something in the kitchen. Glancing out the window, she saw the mother drag the puppy back into the kennel.

"Poor thing," she thought, "She doesn't know it's dead."

But when she was ready to go out again, she was surprised to find the puppy back where she had left it. Her thought then was that the mother knew, but she was just not ready to give it up. She had to love it a little before she could let it go.

I also remember being inundated by a flood of puppies at our neighbor's when I was a toddler. All those tongues washing me! I was enchanted! I did love little creatures — animals and birds — and of course, human babies! I still do.

Fowl

Keyword tags: food, fowl, pet, reminiscence, Riedel

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in 1990



Figure 78: Anna Schreiter Riedel with some of her hens



Figure 79: Anna Schreiter Riedel with her fowl at the cottage

It is a wonder that Mother ever raised fowl for the family table, loving the little downy cheeps as she did. Every spring she bought baby chicks and baby ducklings, and until the farmer in her took over in pride at the good sturdy fryer-size meals ready at hand, she enjoyed fussing over them and making pets of them.

The ducklings had a tiny artificial lake in the back yard. Mother deplored their "mussiness," but we all enjoyed their fun.

One afternoon at the cottage the sky suddenly turned black and the rain came down in torrents. Mother prepared to rush home to rescue her babies. I thought this seemed silly: didn't ducks love water? "Oh, no," she quickly educated me. If ducklings are with their mother, the mother covers them against the slashing rain. If they couldn't find cover, they could easily drown.

One year at the cottage we had two broody ducks, which we called Alice and Lulu. The young gander was Jimmy, and he seemed quite proud of his harem when Alice and Lulu made nests side by side and raised twin families. Every morning they led the little ones to the creek, and it was a beautiful sight to see the babies dropping into the water and taking up the strong swimming stroke set by the mother.

One day a little one was very late in joining the line, and it was as good as a Disney film to hear him yelling at the top of his lungs, while he practically "swam standing" to give more power to his strokes. It was dangerous to be behind; it was dangerous to yell like that! There were ermine about, and they would even pull the baby chicks and ducklings from under a sitting mother, cutting the little throats and drinking the blood. One year they killed all our young rabbits.

(Rabbit was one "crop" that we were unable to harvest. Mother had someone else kill them, for she could not, nor could any of us. All the rabbits had names, and you can't eat a friend you have called by name.)

The most exotic fowl Mother ever had in her hen yard were wild pheasants, and those she raised to return to the wild, not for home consumption. I was teaching in Rochester, Michigan [about 1931], and we heard about someone who was raising pheasants for the cause of conservation. I was able to locate the place and to obtain a "setting" of eggs, with the understanding that they were to be returned to nature, to a parcel of land posted against hunting, so that they could increase. We posted the cottage acres and the woods on the Bay City-Forestville road that belonged to the Riedel and Schreiter grandparents.

Pheasant chicks are completely captivating. Their peeping is elusively subdued, and you can feel as though you are playing hide and seek with shadows. The chick food was hard-boiled egg yolk, chopped. When they heard knife against plate, the coaxing call began. It was such fun to feed those babies!

One of the most beautiful experiences of my life was to share the release of the pheasant babies. Very early in the cool of the morning we drove to Forestville and took the cage to a spot midway between woods and open meadow.

How could such tiny things fend for themselves alone?

Dad opened the crate. They scuttled out with a sidewise gait designed to protect them from overhead attack. And to the tender music of that soft call, they ran off, keeping to the shadows.



Figure 80: Nan, Tim and "Baby," a rescued bird (1974)

Anna's comments on "Pets"

Keyword tags: comment, pet, reminiscence, van Raaphorst

Written by Anna van Raaphorst Johnson in 2012

I had a lot of pets growing up, including cats, dogs, a parakeet, a hamster, and turtles. As I think back about the menagerie, I can see that my mother was probably trying to re-create for me the pet-filled life of her own childhood, although I have also always loved animals. Some worked in our more urban or suburban environment, but some didn't. My "Bunny" lived in a cage rather than lippity-lipping around the house, and as he grew he got too big for me to handle and I got some nasty scratches. Two cats and a dog came to bad ends in the river or on the road. But almost all the dogs we had after we moved to California were beloved pets and lived to a ripe old age.

Dick's and my children have had many pets of their own since they grew up and left home.

Currently we live in a condo right next to a seasonal creek bed, where many wild animals pass by every day, including deer, bobcats, wild turkeys, ducks, lizards, and snakes. We consider them more "friends" than "pets," and we especially like the fact that we don't need to feed them!

A few of our furry and feathered friends (both domestic and wild) are pictured below.



Figure 81: Anna and her "Bunny"



Figure 82: Anna and Terry



Figure 83: Anna, Dan, Dick and Kitten



Figure 84: Frosty, Anna's first dog in California (1954)



Figure 85: Heidi, trying to climb into Nan's lap (1970)



Figure 86: Our golden retriever, Maggie



Figure 87: Pauline, one of our "unpets"

Ellen's comments on "Pets"

Keyword tags: cat, comment, dog, Johnson, Livengood, pet, reminiscence

Written by Ellen Johnson Livengood in 2012

There is nothing better than a fuzzy creature sometimes. All of the pets we had growing up (dogs, rabbits, turtles, fish) brought joy to our house, they were truly family members. And the tradition continues now with our house full of cats. Who would have thought I'd grow to love cats? As a tried and true dog owner growing up, I always thought cats were cute, but also aloof and not as "real" of a pet. But now I eat my words. There is nothing nicer sometimes than a warm purring kitty lying next to you while you read or take a nap. (In fact, it is usually them who convince you in the first place that taking a nap might be just the thing!) They don't get too mad if you leave them alone for a couple days, as long as the crunchy bowl is full. But they let you know they missed you too.

Many of the conversations I have with my teenage kids are all about "what silly things are the cats doing" — so it is nice to always have that to talk about. We always have that in common! Watching your kids care sweetly and kindly for their pets is wonderful.

I'd love to have a dog again someday too, to take walks or hikes with. Probably when my kids leave the house I'll have to take that plunge! Either way, cats or dogs, animals are a huge part of my life. The kids and I always comment that we're not "cat people" or "dog people," as some people like to say about themselves. We don't discriminate! If you're furry, we like you.



Figure 88: Maynard Louise Livengood



Figure 89: Sparky Livengood



Figure 90: Morgan Livengood

Gillian's comments on "Pets"

Keyword tags: Blomquist, cat, comment, dog, Johnson, pet, reminiscence

Written by Gillian Johnson Blomquist in 2012. Pictures by Helena Blomquist, age 5.



Figure 91: Lucy and Mud Blomquist

Mud

Mud is a dog who loves people but spent the majority of his life as a hunting dog living in a kennel with other dogs. Oh, the injustice! He cries when anyone comes home and immediately wants to be hugged, not just petted, but hugged. He always has a sweet look on his face and aims to please. He does have a mischievous streak about him though. There have been many incidents in the past two years we have had him when I

could not stand to be near him. At the cabin, Grandma Jerri and I watched him eat a bird whole. It had hit the sliding glass door and then in its final moments, Mud gulped him down in one bite. He brought a baby turtle to me one afternoon and I, without knowing what it was, grabbed it out of his mouth only to drop it screaming. He had crushed the shell and was thinking he might eat the soft inside. Recently, he and Lucy have been killing rabbits in the back yard. But the thing is that considering his sweet disposition you cannot stay mad at him for long. My only regret is that he is already 9 and I know we may not have very long with him. An absolute sweetheart though for sure.

Lucy

Lucy has a more tentative love for all of us. She sometimes gives you a look that lets you know she is quite unhappy with what is happening in the house. For example, if the kids are being a little crazy, she will come "tell me" with a desperate sort of look that she is unhappy and if I do not do something about it, she will bark at me. When she was little, she would get mad if I didn't take her on walks everyday and in retaliation, she would go find my underwear in the laundry and chew it up. She is certainly a smart dog though. Once when we were looking all over the house for Helena's beloved "lion" and could not find him, with Helena in tears, Lucy was desperate to go outside. When I did let her out, she came right back to the door, with lion in her mouth. She loves every last visitor that comes to the house and acts like we never pet her almost jumping into their arms. She is a great running partner. Up at the cabin, she will run just up ahead of me, but always looks back to make sure I am close behind.



Figure 92: Jaws and Layla Blomquist

Jaws

Jaws is a cat that impresses everyone. I have heard time and again that he is a very special cat. He has no fear of the dogs and will just stand his ground quietly if a dog is near him. He lets the kids do all sorts of things to him, including letting Helena put him to bed in her toy crib. He almost never runs away and doesn't complain much. When he was little, he would play fetch with a tiny toy mouse, just like a dog. Mike always tells the story about how he also used to walk on his two hind legs like Frankenstein with his little front paws waiving about. When all is quiet in the evening and everyone is happy watching TV or reading, Jaws will come out to sit in someone's lap. He especially likes Mike and if Mike is on the couch, so is Jaws. He has a bad habit of eating ribbons (from presents or balloons) and also plants and then throwing up. Why he does this over and over I will never know, but he will. I was ready to get rid of him a few years ago when he was peeing all over the upstairs of the house until I tried putting a cat box upstairs and this worked immediately. So, he is a particular cat as I guess most are. I will always remember when Mike was taking him to the airport in

Washington when we lived in Canada. He had to cross the border and at the border the guard asked him where he was going and he said, "I gotta put my kitty on a red eye." The border guard let him pass.

Layla

Layla is rarely seen by any of us. She comes out in the evening to be fed and if she can see the metal at the bottom of the bowl, she will yell at us in loud meows until someone fills the bowl. Other than this, she is an introverted cat who spends her days under our bed. A notable exception to this is when my dad comes to visit. For some reason, she will come down and sit with him and want to be petted. In the middle of the night, she does some strange things like rattling the door to the basement. Once when Jill, my sister-in-law, was sleeping down there, she put a sock in the door to stop Layla from her rattling. We were told that Layla was a runt and had been on the streets for a while before we got her, but I really believe she was a wild cat that was picked up and taken the humane society unnecessarily. She is 12 years old and still mistrusts even us. But I like to think in her own way, she is happy living with us. She and Jaws can sometimes be found sleeping together in a little kitty ball and that is always sweet to see.

The Blomquist people

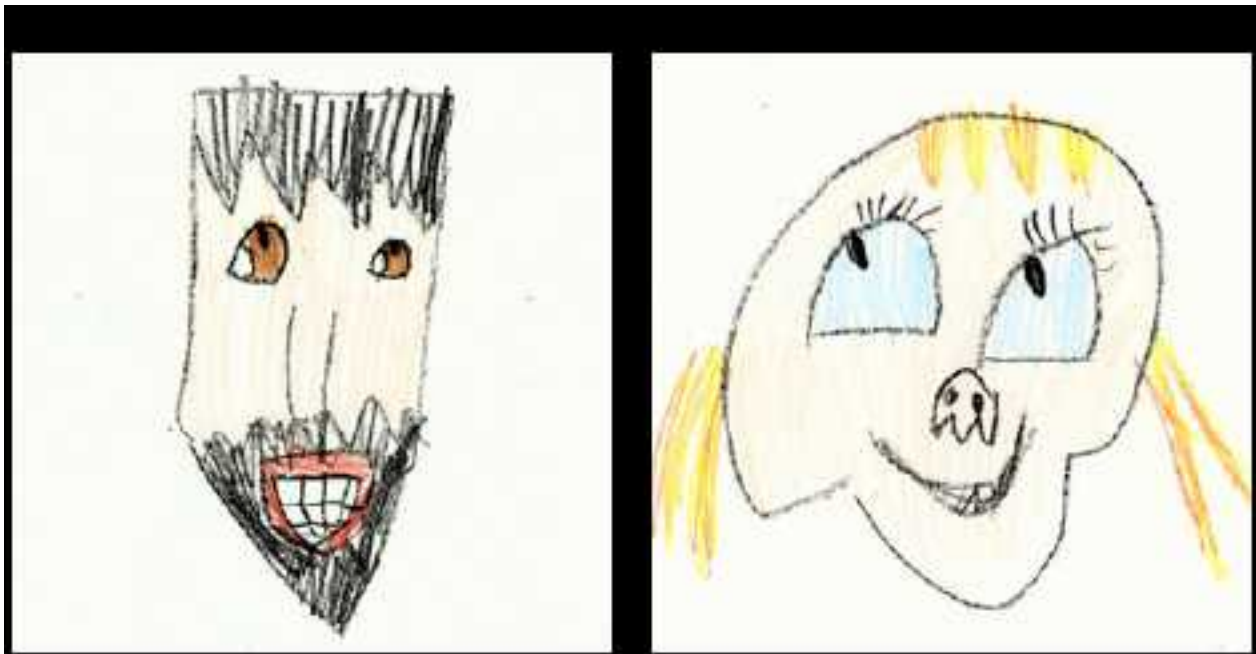


Figure 93: Mike and Gillian Blomquist

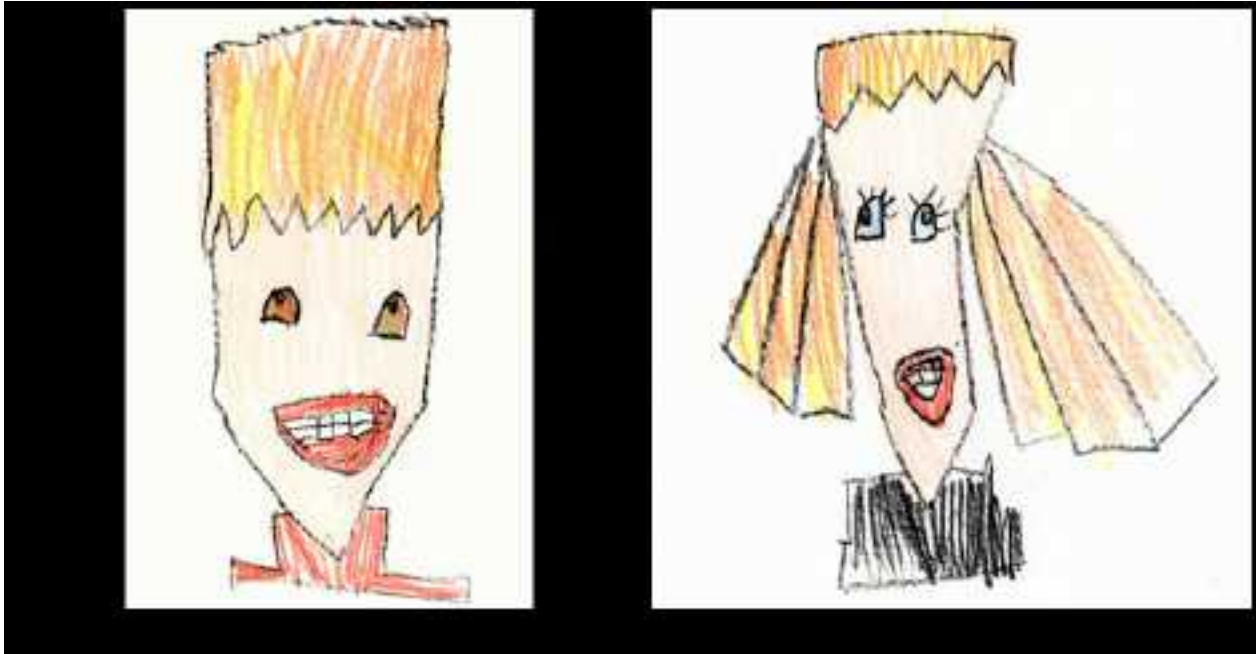


Figure 94: Archer and Helena Blomquist

Jim Stutsman's comments on "Pets"

Written by Jim Stutsman in 2012

I grew up with a wide range of exotic pets, and over several years the boys and I kept ducks, beginning with Lucy, who perished after eating a roofing staple, to be followed by Larry, Daryl, and Darrel. We got a lot of enjoyment out of them, and the "senior" hen Daryl lived several years longer than the average duck. She finished out her years on a pond next to my oldest son's first apartment, coming when called and knocking on his patio door for a ration of dog food each morning.

When [our pet dog at the time] Max the Wonder Dog (so named because people always wondered what kind of dog he was) started losing his eyesight he would often get down into the far corner of the back yard and be unable to find his way out. Daryl would go down and bump him with her bill, pushing him back toward the house. (Logically this makes no sense, as ducks are just slightly more intelligent than the average rock, but we saw it happen over and over with our own eyes.) When that stopped working, Daryl would come up the patio and tap on the door to let us know Max was stuck. She seemed far too intelligent to be a proper duck.

Art Bostwick's School Experiences

Keyword tags: Bostwick, education, reminiscence

Written by Arthur Netherclift (Art) Bostwick in a letter to Anna Louise van Raaphorst Johnson on January 20, 1982



Figure 95: Art Bostwick's school days

Dear Anna:

I have been thinking of writing to you for some time — today I am going to do it. I note that your kids are working with computers, and I am going to tell you what it was like when I went to school. I am sending you a picture [lost, unfortunately!] taken at the Kelley School where I went. I am not sure of the year, but I think I was about 15 or 16, which would make it 1906 or 1907.

The teacher was Albert Yager, and he was paid \$35.00 a month. If he didn't want to do the janitor work he hired one of the bigger boys to do it. The room was heated by a big box stove that the teacher fired; if your seat was near the stove you were too warm, and if it was in the back of the room you were cold. Everyone carried a lunch pail and the drinking water was in a covered pail from the nearest well, which was about a block away. There was one dipper for everyone. The pail sat on an old desk at one end of the entry and there was always a lot of water spilled. Coats and boots were there, too, the boys' at one end and the girls' at the other.

There were 2 outhouses at the back of the lot, and they were cleaned once a year. When the temperature was about zero you didn't stay long. A Sears catalog served as toilet paper.

I had about a mile to walk, but some of the kids had over two miles, and in winter that was tough for the little ones.

Very few in the picture had ever seen indoor plumbing, electric lights, or had ridden in a car, and radio was unheard of. The teacher taught first grade through eighth. I have forgotten a lot of them, but most of the ones I know about are dead.

So you can see we have come a long way in about 75 years. That building is still standing, and my mind goes back a long way every time I go by it.

I am well and hope all is well with you.

Love, Uncle Art

Isolde Kneschke Writes about Christmas in the Erzgebirge

Keyword tags: Christmas, Erzgebirge, Germany, holiday, New Year, reminiscence, Saxony, Schreiter

Written by Isolde Kneschke Schenk in January 1997. Translated by Diane Stutsman Shuey. The Kneschke family home is in the village of Tannenberg, located in the top middle of the map below.



Figure 96: Erzgebirge (Geyer, Tannenberg, Annaberg)

Isolde is the daughter of Betty Schreiter Kneschke, who discovered the "letters home" written in Forestville, Michigan, by Alvin Schreiter and sent to her grandfather, Friedrich Wilhelm Schreiter. Isolde and her husband, Helmut, left Saxony during or shortly after World War II and resettled in Hamburg, Germany. Her mother and sister Gisela remained in in the Erzgebirge (a part of Saxony near the border of what is now the Czech Republic).

Although I haven't lived in Erzgebirge for 50 years, I always have genuine homesickness for the Christmasland of Erzgebirge around the time of Advent and Christmas. It was a time of secrecy and expectation.

In the homes, Christmas mountains were erected, which had been in each family's possession for generations. The lights, so-called "spinners," were made from wood or brass and were hung up. The pyramids were erected. The mountain men and angel lights were decorated with candles and placed on the window sills. Whoever passed through the village could see exactly how many children lived in each house: for every girl there was an angel and for every boy a mountain man.

At the beginning of December the stollen was baked. [See [Stollen](#) on page 115.] One told the baker how many pounds of flour he wanted and the completion date was agreed upon. The baker set aside a piece of yeast and on the agreed-upon date one brought the ingredients such as raisins, butter or lard, sweet and bitter almonds, candied fruit rinds, sugar, cardamon, and mace. The baker mixed these into the yeast dough in our presence. Then the stollen was shaped and marked with initials. The stollen was left to rise and was later baked. When it had cooled sufficiently, one could take it by sled or hand-carry it home. There it would be spread with butter and dusted first with sugar and then with powdered sugar.

The stollen was wrapped in parchment paper and packed in a large wooden tub in the cellar and covered with a wooden lid. There it would rest until Christmas. The last stollen would usually be saved until Easter. Many families (up to 12) baked 3 or 4 pounds of stollen. We usually did 6-8 loaves.

At the appropriate time one had the baker mix a portion of mature, cooked, mashed potatoes. One spread the mash on a baking sheet. On that came dots of butter and sugar mixed with cinnamon. After baking, the potato cake was eaten fresh from the oven. It was scrumptious.

On Sundays during Advent there were always fanfares from the church steeples. Inside one could always hear the old Christmas traditions [traditional music]. Many villagers gathered near the churches in the streets and listened to these melodies.

On Holy Evening [Christmas Eve] there was Christmas dinner. In the afternoon there were lentils and bratwurst. Lentils in order that the money would never run out. In the evening nine different dishes were served. Among these were roast goose with potato dumplings and red cabbage, fruit preserves, bread, salt, and one candle — the life light — celeriac salad, and something to drink. After the meal the bread, salt, and candle were left in the middle of the table wrapped in a napkin. That meant that one would always have bread and light. Afterwards came the long-awaited distribution of Christmas presents. We children always waited, full of impatience, for the meal to be over and the dishes washed.

On December 25 everyone got up early and went out, often in deep snow, to Christmas services in the church, which began at 6 a.m. There Christ's birth was reenacted, the stories of Christ's birth were told, and Christmas songs were sung. Father remained at home to make coffee and put the stollen, which would be cut for the first time, out on the table. He lit the candles on the Christmas tree. It was incredibly beautiful and festive when we all came expectantly from church and went home through the festively lit village. There the warm, candlelit room awaited us with its heavenly aroma of coffee, stollen, and candles.

Sylvester occurred at midnight with a blast from the church steeple. In the afternoon we again had lentils with bratwurst. The Old Year's Eve (Sylvester) was observed as the Second Holy Evening, and the 5th of January was the Third Holy Evening. The 6th of January was called High New Year. The nights between the 24th of December and the 6th of January were called the Inner Nights. Each night stood for a month. It was said that everything that one dreamed in the night would be fulfilled in the upcoming, corresponding month.

Besides this, one could not do any laundry between December 24 and January 6. It was customarily believed that to do so meant the family would become ill.



Figure 97: Gisela, Isolde and Betty in Tannenberg (1976)

Chapter

4

Remembrances

Keyword tags: remembrance

In this chapter are remembrances (written profiles) of people in the Riedel-Schreiter family.

Nan's Grandparents

Keyword tags: Dorsch, Joram, remembrance, Riedel, Schreiter

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst

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 20 first cousins on the Riedel side and almost 40 on the Schreiter side of my family, and Paul and I were among the youngest in each group.

Grandma Schreiter died when she was only 49 years old, many years before I was born. Grandpa Riedel died when I was only about three years old, and I don't remember him at all. The other two then lived on alone — Grandpa Schreiter in the little house that supplanted the log cabin, and Grandma Riedel in the hotel at the west end of Forestville. When I was little I thought that odd and 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.

From what I have heard, they all four had very short tempers. I was born with a short one, too, and it took me many years to learn to control it after I saw how much unhappiness an uncontrolled temper can cause.

I had one "encounter" — if you can call it that — with Grandpa Schreiter. He lived in Forestville and we in Minden City, only nine miles away. So we went to see him sometimes. Those visits were rather exciting, because the car had to climb a little hill, and the early cars had little power. For whatever reason, it was not certain that the car would get to the top of the hill without sliding down backwards. When that happened, we had to get out of the car to lighten the load, and all the adults in the car would push on the next try!

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 Schreiter, I urged her to ask him. She did, and he said, "Who wants to know?!"

This sounds very rude, doesn't it? I think that 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 St. Planitz [now Niederplanitz]. (When we were in East Germany, we went there. We saw the church where Mother was baptized.)

Both my grandmothers were small women in stature, though they had large personalities. My mother's old trunk stood up in the attic, and once we went through it and found a blouse that Mother said had been her mother's I was about twelve or thirteen at the time, and I was surprised that the waist was so tiny that it didn't

go around me. I might have been adolescent-pudgy, but Grandma was small, even though she had borne eleven children and had seen nine grow up.

She was a very meticulous housekeeper, and that included the yard. She made an old-fashioned "witch's broom" of branches, and they kept the grass swept clean with it.

She was innovative, as was my mother, her fifth child. They had almost no money, so she fed her big family with pots of edible weeds. She knew the plants and the edible mushrooms. She was a midwife, so she sometimes went away from home to help a baby get born.

Speaking of poverty: that was the Schreiter family in the log cabin in the woods. Grandpa walked from Forestville to the north woods to work at lumbering, but he came home at least once with completely empty pockets.

One of Grandma Schreiter's neighbors told me that she loved to dance, which Mother confirmed. She must have found log cabin life dull!

To clear their 40 acres they had a lot of heavy work to do, and no help except the children, who worked almost from infancy. My mother told how her mother managed with the babies, of which there were six born in the U.S. If the littlest one in the cradle fussed, Grandma picked up the next older one — about two or three years old — and put her in the cradle, too. Her job was to rock the cradle to soothe the baby. I think Grandma was clever! Since they had no playthings, the toddler probably enjoyed the job.

The older ones had to carry water from the spring at the foot of the hill, or tend the geese (Mother's job) or help Grandpa yoke the oxen and pull stumps — very hard work.

Sal Riedel Provides Genealogical Information

Keyword tags: remembrance, Riedel, Schreiter

Written by Selma (Sal) Riedel Bostwick on May 14 [year unknown]. Sal was apparently responding to one of Nan's (frequent) requests for family information. Some of it is not correct (as is often the case with genealogical information — formal or informal!).

Dear Nan:

Before your letter got off this A.M. it began to rain cats, and [the temperature] never went above 58, so nothing could be done either here or in Forestville, so I got in trouble by baking a pie, which I should not have — diet you know — but apples spoiling in the freezer — they get a brown core if kept too long — and I felt my old man should have one for a change. Then I at long last got out the family tree and gave it the once over and so herewith are the things I observed that could be corrected and/or verified.

I think Ruth is 8 or 9 mo. younger than Al which would make it Dec. 1, 1891. They were married in 1913 Al said recently.

I think Irma is 1 or 2 yrs. older than Louie. Shouldn't be surprised if it was 1891 or 1892 — about the same year as Art or 1 yr. later. Ruth and Irma often feuded over this.

Ray was married June 8th, 1918 in Harbor Beach, near midnight. Wish I could remember that minister's name. He was young and unmarried and he came all dressed as though it was noon. Sort of uplifting in a period of gloom. He married soon after that though. Maybe if I think hard it will come to me.

My birth date is June 15th 1897. Art's is Oct. 3 1891. There is from Oct. 1891 to Apr. 1892 between him and Al.

I think Paul's B'day was Oct 9th — I never heard anything different. If you can find what day the 9th was that year, he was born on Sunday or at least labor began on that day — what the hour of birth was I can't remember. If you know the hour we can find the proper date.

...

Under Wm. L. Bostwick — Gwendolyn Joan had a twin, Lawrence Arthur... This is an important record if you want to trace twins in the family. Tis said that it passes from female to male and skips one generation — but

in this case, did it? I get mixed up. It did skip me, so guess that would be borne out, wouldn't it. Uncle Paul had a set — which was not a skip, though. Randy's birth date is July 9, 1955.

...

In Uncle Max's family, Meta is the oldest and I think she is dead. Clara next, I think — don't know the order from there. If I see her I will try to get that straight. They had an auction recently we heard. Don't know if they sold the place. His name is Oswald. The kids' names were Meta, Clara, Dorothy, William, Max, Otto, and Fred.

Aunt Louise had Emma oldest I think, Otto, and Fred.

...

Uncle Dick says his birthdate is Mar. 18th and Aunt Mary's July 10th. I must look up the paper clipping and get the years down. It is quite a trick to keep records for a family the size of ours. The oldest son of theirs was named Willard.

This is all for the moment that I can give you.

...

Alton Moses died last Friday and was buried last Monday — age 58. He had cancer and was in Fla. when he died.

Can't find the clipping on Adolph Ullmann — think I may have sent it to Louie and Irma. I think he died in Nov. 67 at age 73 yrs.

Love again,

Sal

The Schreiter Family

Keyword tags: remembrance, Schreiter

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst in February 1999



Figure 98: Anna Schreiter (standing) with three of her sisters

There were seven sisters and two brothers in the Schreiter family, who, even after they were all married and living at a distance from one another were still close in their feelings, and all paid visits as they were able.

As a child, I always enjoyed having an aunt or uncle visit. We enjoyed being the visitors, too. Fillion was not much more than twenty miles from Minden City, and so there were more visits to Aunt Martha and Uncle Bob's farm than to most of the others, and when we did go to visit another uncle or aunt, it was the more exciting an event because usually Mother and Aunt Martha planned it as a joint venture. They went by boat together to Aunt Sophie's at Lake Brevoort, stopping over at Rogers City to see Aunt Louise. And I remember a visit to Detroit to see Aunt Lena and Uncle Dick [Riedel relatives].

So naturally when Aunt Martha was having a new baby in February of 1908, Mother took her baby and went to Fillion, probably to help out. I was the Riedel baby at the time, aged fourteen months, and the newly arrived at Goetze's was Frances, who is about to celebrate her 91st birthday. Amazing that we are both still alive, but less amazing than what it took for one sister to help another bring a new life into the world back at the beginning of the century.

Overriding all other considerations was the fact that this was February. In Michigan February can deliver some nasty weather problems. A late winter blizzard can snow you in completely and make everything difficult or impossible, and you have no advance warning.

So I wonder, first of all, how Mother got there. There were no cars as yet, so perhaps someone drove her there with horse and buggy. And I'm not sure they had telephones yet, to set things in motion.

When Mother left, she left a husband who had a business to manage and whose many skills did not include being handy around the house. Three meals a day cooked on a wood or coal kitchen range, laundry to be done mostly by hand for Dad and my four older siblings, ages about 15 to 11.

At the farm there was also a father, who had the farm animals to care for, and two children aged about 9 and 7, perhaps younger.

Taking on a household with a new baby involved managing daily life for a whole family, usually doing most of the labor yourself. Even bread and butter, the ultimate basics, were produced at home, and if there was any preserved food to fall back on, it was because you had had the foresight to preserve it. Milk you might have, but it had to be extracted from the cow, not poured from bottles. I don't know how they ever got Frances started in life! Congratulations on beating all the odds, Frances, and a very happy 91st to you!

I don't really remember anything about that visit to Aunt Martha's, but I remember being told that I apparently was most impressed about my baby cousin's feet. I still think babies' feet are delightful to look at: dear little feet with so many miles of travel ahead of them!

I remember some things about Fillion from later visits. It seemed a wonderful place where on summer visits we went there in the horse-drawn buggy to get ice cream.

Aunt Martha bought fabrics there for the family's clothes, which she made. She liked good quality and used to ask for "something a little better," until she discovered that the merchant was selling to her at a higher price the same items another neighbor got for less because she always asked for "something a little cheaper."

I think Ireland's religious differences were played out in Fillion, for I remember Orangeman's Day being celebrated there and everyone singing a rousing song that I only later learned was anti-Catholic. There were many Irish in Minden and environs, all of them members of one or another of the big Catholic parishes in our area.

Of Aunt Martha's house and life in it, I remember that they all took an afternoon nap on the living room floor after midday dinner.

For dinner we usually had lettuce from the garden made with a bacon fat and vinegar dressing that was a specialty of the house.

All the Schreiters were enthusiastic gardeners; the first thing they usually said to one another on our visits was "Come and see my garden."

I wonder if Frances remembers being attacked by their ram. As Mother told the story, she was only a toddler when she was playing in the yard, where the ram took strong exception to her being. He batted her down, and every time she got to her feet, he knocked her down again. The outcome might have been very bad, but Aunt Martha fortunately heard her saying, "Don't, Lambie! It hurts!"

We used to love looking at all the animals, though farm animals are not always friendly.

An exciting memory — and less dangerous — is one I remember personally. Frances was now helping with the farm work, and her father called her to go and bring in the cows for milking. And he added: "You can take the black horse."

When she seemed mystified, or perhaps unbelieving, he repeated, with the twinkle that sometimes covered a sort of comic gruffness, "You can take the black horse."

I still can't believe it! He was telling her that she could take the *car*! She, a kid! A girl! Wonder of wonders.

I liked Uncle Bob.



Figure 99: Snow in Huron County, MI (1936)



Figure 100: Louis Riedel standing on ice in Lake Huron

Nettie (Nan) Augusta Riedel van Raaphorst

Keyword tags: remembrance, Riedel

Written by Anna van Raaphorst Johnson in 2000



Figure 101: Nan and Anna (1998)

Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst was an amateur genealogist; family historian; writer; teacher of Latin, German, and English; and unofficial *mater familia* of her large circle of family and friends.

Born in Minden City, Michigan, on December 5, 1906, she lived half her life in Michigan and half in California.

In spite of complications from a stroke she suffered at the age of 82, she lived a full life until her death in June 2000 at the age of 93.

She was proud that the family history she collected all her life was published in two books sent to many family members and friends, and also donated to the LDS (Mormon) Church Family History Library in Salt Lake City, UT. [This book is the second edition of Nan and Anna's Riedel family history.]

Her intellectual curiosity, love of life, and indomitable spirit have been an inspiration to many people whose lives she touched.

Nan was thrilled to have her own website (www.newsfromnan.com, which continues in her memory) in "the age of technology."



Figure 102: Nan as a child



Figure 103: Nan in high school



Figure 104: Nan in 1987

Paul Schreiter Riedel

Keyword tags: remembrance, Riedel

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst on May 1, 1994



Figure 105: Nettie and Paul Riedel (about 1912)

Paul was always a man of action, full of life, forceful and dramatic. He looked ahead and lost no time getting there! Those are the qualities I'll always associate with him.

When he was born, Mother was 39, and in fact getting near her 40th birthday. She used to call Paul her "change of life" baby, and I think she was apprehensive lest this sixth child not be perfect. She told me once in later years that she went to him and looked him all over very carefully. While she was looking at him, he opened his eyes and looked into hers, and there was the spark she was seeking! "He's all right!" she told herself, and even in the telling she was exultant.

He was, indeed, a veritable dynamo. He walked at nine months, and soon afterward he was taking a trip around the block every morning dragging a garden tool on the cement to make a nice busy noise.

He liked machines and motor sounds. Mother and Aunt Martha went to visit their sister Sophie when Paul was about two or three. We took the lake steamer from Forestville to Rogers City, where we stopped over to visit Aunt Louise, another sister. On the boat, Paul was chiefly concerned with the engines, and my job was to take him to where he could see through a window into the engine room. I can still see pistons going up and down.

Aunt Sophie lived in the woods at Lake Brevoort, much too quiet a setting for Paul. When he heard the sounds of a machine in the distance we *had to* go and find it, and find it we did, in spite of battalions of mosquitoes that all but ate us alive.

Dad always brought us gifts when he went on business trips. One such gift was a little horse on a wheeled platform. I think that was for me originally, because horses were my passion. But Paul loved it and played with it, too. Somewhere there should still be a picture of him with his arms around it. The horse was especially cherished because Dad carried it home with him when he left the snowbound train to walk the last remaining mile home. He had been in Detroit to have a cataract removed.

Another time Dad brought a little truck for Paul with a man at the wheel that could be lifted out. The truck was a hit, and the little man removed at once, but then Paul's heart broke when he found he couldn't take the little man's place at the wheel. He was somewhat mollified by being allowed to push my new doll buggy, but it would have been better if he could have climbed in to drive it.

He was always dramatic. We had an Uncle Wiggly game, and he liked to declaim "The bad Pipsissewa shivered and shook, but Uncle Wiggly three steps took." We really enjoyed putting the Pipsissewa down.

We tried the Children's Dance from Hansel and Gretel, but that was too formal for Paul's style, so I made up an Indian song with lots of heavy Boom, Boom, Boom in the bass to beat the rhythm, and Paul made up his own uninhibited dance to that.



Figure 106: Paul Riedel as a baby



Figure 107: Paul Riedel as an adult

Paul Riedel Remembers the Bostwicks

Keyword tags: Bostwick, remembrance

Written by Paul Riedel on April 22, 1984

Dear Bill:

Thank you for including me on the mailing list of your account of your father's final days. This is a wonderful Memorial to a wonderful man, Bill. It pleases me to see that you recognize the qualities he had that made him great.

One hears of lessons of accomplishment and humility, and how these are qualities to strive for, but your father was a man who lived this way every day. It never occurred to him to be anything other than what he was. And what he was made him a friend to all who came in contact with him. I can never recall him raising his voice in anger or profanity. There may have been times when, like all of us, he may have been outraged or put upon, but you would never hear a complaint from him — just a quiet attention to the business at hand.

And, what a sense of humor both he and your mother had. I recall being at their home in Port Huron one time when an insurance salesman hadn't paid your mother for a claim. I never heard anyone put so cleanly and sharply in his place, and your dad sat by with a quiet smile, supporting her all the way. The guy really got off easy.

I never had an opportunity until now, either, to tell you how much I enjoyed being with your brother Bob during his visits to Forestville. He seems to have inherited many of the good qualities of both your parents. Somehow, he and I were becoming better friends each time we met, and his passing was a serious loss to me. Maybe it was because both of us had some Maverick in us, and we both seemed to understand without going into detail about it.

Your family is shrinking, Bill, and you are now its titular head. You came from wonderful stock which in part accounts for your success in the world. We never had much of a chance to meet after you left to go to Detroit, but I have always been proud of your accomplishments, Bill, and I am proud to be your uncle.

It is hard to say when or how often our paths will cross from here on, because as the world progresses, the distances seem to grow, and the times to meet get fewer. However, when we get the opportunity I shall always welcome the chance to see you and compare yarns about our experiences, in much the same way as I enjoyed talking to your father.

With Love and Best Wishes,

Your Uncle Paul

[For photos of Bill and Bob Bostwick, see [Anna's Comments on Art Bostwick's Letter](#) on page 103.]

Chapter 5

Letters

Keyword tags: letter

For the letters from Ehregott August Albin (Albin) Schreiter to his brother in Germany see [Letters Home](#) on page 37. Additional letters written by family members are in this chapter.

Letter from Art Bostwick to Jennie Ridley

Keyword tags: Bostwick, letter, Ridley, World War I

The following letter was written from France in 1919 by Arthur (Art) Bostwick to Jennie Ridley Bostwick (his mother) in Michigan

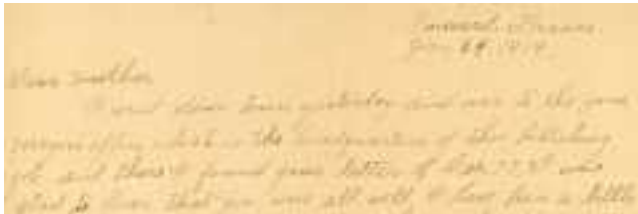


Figure 108: Letter from Art Bostwick

Anaard [?], France

Jan 19, 1919

Dear Mother,

I went down town yesterday and over to the zone major's office, which is the headquarters of this billeting job, and there I found your letter of Dec. 17. I was glad to hear that you were all well. I have been a little anxious to get my mail since I heard the flu was so bad, was sorry to hear of so many deaths, it was sad about Elsa Zwicker's dying. [Elsa was one of Art's mother's (Sal Riedel Bostwick) first cousins on the Schreiter side.]

Well I went out to what is left of our Co. at the camp and got another coat and pair of pants, a hat, a pair of leggins and a jerkin, which is a kind of padded jacket covered with imitation leather but has no sleeves. After I got my stuff I went down town and had my dinner at a restaurant, had beefsteak, fried potatoes and green peas. I thought I would go around to the French bathhouse then and take a bath, but when I got there I found it was not open yet so I was standing there waiting when along came Walt Derosia. Gee but I was glad to see him, and he was glad to see me. Neither of us had seen anybody from home for a long time. He is coming over to see me and stay all night next Friday if he can get away. He told me that Baughman went over the top twice and never got hurt; I thought Bill was in Russia but he says not.

This old Frenchman that owns the place where we stay is a great joker. This morning I was going to put on my new shoes and change my pants, so I sat my shoes down and sat down for a minute, and when I went to get my shoes they were gone. I looked all over and could not imagine where they went to and then he came strolling in with a smile on his face. I took my bayonet and jabbed him in the seat of the pants and told

him to get those shoes "toot sweet" (very quick) and he went and got them. He is always doing something around here.

There is nothing new to write about today, everything is just about the same. I don't know any more about when I will come home than I did when I last wrote, but I hope it won't be long. I never felt any better in my life, and I hope this finds you all well.

Will close now with love and best wishes to all.

Arthur

Many thanks for that Xmas present which I am to see when I get home.



Figure 109: Art Bostwick



Figure 110: Art Bostwick and Earl Wyman

Anna's Comments on Art Bostwick's Letter

Keyword tags: Bostwick, comment, Franco-Prussian War, letter, Riedel, van Raaphorst, veteran, World War I, World War II

Another veteran of World War I was Raymond Robert (Ray) Riedel.



Figure 111: Ray Riedel, World War I veteran

A number of members of the Colonia Saxonica were veterans of the Franco-Prussian War, but I don't believe either Adolph Riedel or Alvin Schreiter was among them. However, I have found some evidence that one of our German relatives who didn't immigrate to the United States was a Franco-Prussian War veteran.



Figure 112: Franco-Prussian War veterans (Colonia Saxonica members)

I know of four descendants (or descendant in-laws) of Louis and Anna Riedel who were veterans of World War II:

- William Louis (Bill) Bostwick (Art's son)
- Robert Arthur (Bob) Bostwick (Art's son)
- Louis Kelley (Kelley) Riedel (Ray's son)
- Bennett Meyer (Ben) Stutsman (Shirley Ann Bostwick's husband and Art's son-in-law)



Figure 113: Bill Bostwick



Figure 114: Bob Bostwick



Figure 115: Kelley Riedel



Figure 116: Nan with Ben and Shirley Stutsman

Letter from Louis Riedel to Nettie (Nan) Riedel

Keyword tags: letter, Riedel

This letter was written to Nettie while she was on her trip to Europe in 1934. It is dated August 23, but it must have actually been July 23, because John Dillinger was shot and killed on July 22 (see the reference to Dillinger in the letter).



Figure 117: Letter from Louis Riedel

August 23 [must have been July 23], 1934

Dearest Nettie,

Monday morning and a nice day by all the looks.

I will just go over a few news items. Last week we were busy building a float for the Sanilac County Centennial, which was held in Lexington last Saturday. We wanted to be in the parade, so we built a nice homestead farm with the old log cabin on it and a rail fence... We had grain such as wheat, oats, barley, and corn all growing on it. It came within one [point] of getting the first prize. It was Paul's idea and we worked it out with all the help we have here. You just ought to see it. It was sure good. The time is too short for me to tell you everything, but you may be able to see it yet as it is at Frank Obee's [?] yard. When you get home you can see it. The Croswell Fair wants it at the fair this fall. So you may know it was good.

This morning we heard over the radio that they shot Dillinger in Chicago last night.

We received a card [from you, Nettie] this morning and we also have your letters, and it looks as though you are having a good time of which we are glad. Well, we will soon be seeing you and can tell you all about it.

With lots of Love, Your Dad and Mother



Figure 118: L. H. Riedel Co. float



Figure 119: Tim and Ellen with log cabin (1976)

Letter from Anna Schreiter to Anna van Raaphorst

Keyword tags: letter, Riedel, Schreiter

This letter was written from "Anna Marie" to "Anna Louise" when she was a baby, probably in early 1941.



Figure 120: Letter from Anna Schreiter to Anna van Raaphorst

Dear Anna Louise,

I came to see you the other day. You look nice and fat, but your mother tells me you keep her awake nights. Now be a good girl and don't do that any more.

Grandpa is a little under the weather this morning.

I am sending you some old napkins for your mother to put under your gown. They will be softer than the washcloths.

Well I have to iron yet this morning...

Uncle Charley had a stroke. He is up with Martha; he won't be better.

With love to you and your papa and mamma, Grandma and Grandpa



Figure 121: Anna Schreiter and Anna van Raaphorst

Letter from Dorothy Slack to Jean Riedel

Keyword tags: letter, Riedel, Slack

This letter was written by Dorothy Slack Riedel to Jean Riedel Westman to congratulate her on the birth (on September 2, 1944) of her first child, Gretchen, who was the first great-grandchild of Louis and Anna Riedel.

September 8, 1944

Dear Jean,

So you finally got around to having that little girl you were talking about all summer. We had just about given up all hope on you when the good news arrived. We are so glad for you and aren't you lucky to get what you wanted. It certainly is no picnic having them, but after they get here you would give up everything else in the world for them.

Dad and Mother Riedel are strutting around here like a pair of roosters over being great-grandparents, and we are all very anxious to see the newest member of our family. How are the new grandparents taking the event? There are so many questions to ask but guess they will have to wait until we see you.

We moved in from the lake Monday afternoon and I guess it's a good thing I did as it has rained every day since. You picked a good time to be in the hospital as it isn't as hot as it was. Don't you like that hospital and don't you think they have good food? Anyone I have ever known who was there just raved about it.

Danny started to school Tues. morning so now I only have Andy at home in the morning. I got the funniest feeling in my throat when I saw him trotting off the first day. He now owns a book, a tablet, a pencil, and a box of crayons, so he is a man of property. Both he and Andy are very anxious to see the new little baby.

Well Jean this letter is rather short but the breakfast dishes are still on the table and I have 2 bushels of tomatoes waiting for me in the basement, so you know what I will be doing today. Take good care of yourself and don't worry if things seem pretty impossible right now as they all straighten out. After Andy came I was sure I would never live thru the year, but here I am hale and hearty. If you need help just holler as I am a woman of experience (especially on baths and diapers). I really must close now.

P.S. Say hello to the new little grandniece for us too.

All our love, Dorothy



Figure 122: Dorothy and some of her descendants (2003)



Figure 123: Jean and Arnold Westman



Figure 124: Gretchen Westman (1993)

Letter from Bill Bostwick to Nettie (Nan) Riedel

Keyword tags: Bostwick, cemetery, letter, Riedel

This letter was written by William Louis (Bill) Bostwick to his Aunt Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst. I recall that Bill and Joan did (and reported on) this annual trip many times through the years.

Pleasant Ridge, Michigan

May 16, 1999

Dear Aunt Nan,

Just a note to relate to you the "High Adventure" of our grave decorating trip made on Saturday, May 15, 1999.

We used your flower money (thank you very much) to buy eight beautiful geraniums at the Royal Oak, Michigan, Farmers' Market. This year Joan drove her car (a 1988 Honda Accord). The weather forecast was sunshine all day, but as we got into the Thumb area we drove through showers; however, it didn't rain while we were in the cemeteries.

Our usual route is Pleasant Ridge to Minden City, to Forestville, to Harbor Beach, to Bad Axe, and then home. We leave at 9:00 a.m. and get home at 4:00 p.m. This year Michigan has a lot of highways under construction. Saturday was the last day we could drive our usual route before roads we drive would be shut down.

At Minden City we planted one geranium at the graves of Edwin and Lucy Bostwick. Lucy died in 1899 (100 years ago). That impressed me. Driving through Minden City always brings back memories as we go past the drug store where Grandpa Riedel bought us ice cream sodas, and past the hotel and lumber yard. En route to Forestville, we pass Dad's school house [Kelley School], Grandpa Bostwick's farm, the church where Grandpa Riedel's funeral was held, and on to the cemetery.

At the Forestville cemetery, things are quite orderly. We swept leaves away from the marble slabs covering the graves and planted two geraniums (one for each). It crossed my mind that I am probably the only family member left to visit this grave site now that Phyllis Symons has passed on.

The water level in Lake Huron is down this year. As we drive along the shore toward Harbor Beach, we can see how far away from shore the water line has moved, with sand bars and rocks protruding. Many boat owners' docks are high and dry.

At Harbor Beach, the Rock Falls Cemetery has put out a new sign that is clearly visible from the road. As we turn in, the Bostwick graves are right there, just off the road and next to a large tree (all the graves we visit are next to trees). Grass has overgrown the grave markers. I spent considerable time cutting back the sod so the grave markers are visible for Grandma and Grandpa Bostwick, Mom and Dad Bostwick, and Bob Bostwick. Joan planted four geraniums at the base of the tree in the center of the grave complex. As I am working, I am thinking of all the funerals I have attended at this cemetery.

We move on to the Ray and Gladys Riedel grave site, which is by another tree near the Lake Huron shore line. Again, we clear the sod away from the grave markers and plant our last geranium (their graves are close together)...

We drove through Harbor Beach on the way to Bad Axe, where we will have lunch. To my eyes, Harbor Beach seems to have deteriorated. It doesn't look like the town I remember when I lived there, although the town has grown. Fifth Street used to be on the edge of town. Now there is a new section of town that has grown to the west of Fifth Street by one mile. But I don't think there is as much business and commerce as there used to be.

By contrast, Bad Axe is booming and prosperous. We had lunch at a restaurant called "The Peppermill." The ambiance and food were good; we thoroughly enjoyed our stop there.

Last year we discovered some County roads that take us across farm land and avoid the main highway. We took them again this year and enjoyed the drive back to our city. We saw some lovely farms and were impressed by the massive farm machinery being employed in the fields.

When we arrived home, Gwen [their daughter] was parked in our driveway. After a short visit, we went out to dinner and spent the evening together. That pretty well sums up this year's grave decorating trip.

Love,

Bill and Joan Bostwick



Figure 125: Adolph Riedel tombstone in the Forestville cemetery

Chapter 6

Recipes

Keyword tags: food, recipe

Edited by Anna van Raaphorst Johnson.

This chapter contains a few favorite family recipes. I copied most of them from my mother's 3x5 recipe cards, but some originated further back in the family or from another source, which is indicated, if known.

Some of the most popular recipes have multiple versions. For example, I have 4 versions of the *Stollen* recipe and 5 versions of *Springerles*. In the case of *Stollen*, Mother labeled one as THE ONE, so I've chosen that one to share.

Potato Dumplings (*Grüne Klösse*)

Keyword tags: food, potato dumpling, recipe

Dumplings are a specialty of the German states of Saxony and Thuringia. This version of the recipe uses only boiled potatoes, but some versions call for half boiled and half raw potatoes ("green" in the German name means "raw"), and some use only raw potatoes.

Serves 3.

2 cups ground boiled potatoes
1 cup flour
1 egg
1-1/2 tablespoons bread crumbs
1-1/2 tablespoons butter, melted
Salt

The dumplings can be filled with prune plums or plum jam.

Combine potato with flour and egg. Season. Form long thin rolls on a floured board. Cut each roll into small dumplings. Cook for 5 minutes in boiling water in a large kettle. Remove with a colander spoon onto a warmed serving platter. Add bread crumbs to butter and fry for a few minutes, stirring (or use fried bacon crumbs and drippings). Pour over dumplings.

Duck and Greenies

Keyword tags: duck and greenie, food, recipe

Written by Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst on September 9, 1990

One dish that always brought all my brothers running was "duck and greenies." The "greenies" were *Grüne Klöss'*, or "green dumplings." The "green" ones are made of raw potatoes, grated, drained, shaped (with croutons in the center) and steamed.

Dorothy Slack Riedel, who learned how to make them and deserves a badge for her success in heritage foods, tell me that the potatoes need to be just right for success. Idaho bakers are too dry and fall apart in the kettle. Dad used to try to get potatoes from Mr. Obee, who farmed swampy land west of Minden.

While the hard work of grating has been going on, the duck has been in the oven, in pieces, browning, with just enough water to make liquid for gravy. During the last hour, a good layer of onions, cut in slices, has blanketed the duck, and mouths have been watering. The onion gravy over the "gum balls" is what gives the delectable flavor. How many onions? A good thick layer, to cook to translucence. If you haven't a duck to roast, a chicken makes a good second-best.

Mashed potatoes are a good accompaniment, or other vegetables. Carrots and rutabagas mashed together make a good — and pretty — vegetable. Cranberry sauce or baked squash are also good. Mother's homemade rolls are delicious, and cole slaw or pickled beets. Corn on the cob with butter would make a feast! Cucumber in sour cream is a seasonal treat. Medium or small cucumbers are tender and tasty. Peel the cucumbers and slice thinly. Sprinkle with salt and let stand. Squeeze them dry and put in a bowl. Add a small spoonful of vinegar and a bit of sugar and pepper. Add a dollop of commercial sour cream or soured cream. Mix together and eat. Ummm. Windmill cookies [a Dutch specialty] would make a good dessert, and some homemade applesauce would go well in there somewhere, as would cottage cheese.

Aunt Glad's Brown Bread

Keyword tags: brown bread, food, recipe

This recipe is from Gladys Kelley Riedel.

Makes one loaf of bread.

1/3 cup molasses

1/3 cup sugar

1-1/3 cup buttermilk or sour milk

1 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup white flour and 1-1/2 cup graham flour OR 1 cup white flour and 1-1/4 cup wheat flour

1/2 cup raisins

1/2 cup chopped nuts

1 teaspoon soda (dissolved in a little of the milk)

Mix the molasses, sugar, milk, and salt. Add the flour next, and then the raisins and nuts. Add the soda last. Turn quickly into a greased bread pan. Let stand quietly for 1/2 hour and then bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes.

Anna Riedel's White Cookies

Keyword tags: food, recipe, white cookie

This is Anna Schreiter Riedel's recipe passed down from Selma (Sal) Riedel Bostwick.

1-1/2 cups sugar

1 cup shortening

1 cup sour milk or buttermilk

2 eggs

1 teaspoon soda

1 teaspoon baking powder

3-1/2 to 4 cups flour (enough to roll)

1 teaspoon nutmeg

1/2 teaspoon salt

raisins

Sprinkle tops with sugar. Bake at 375 degrees for 10 minutes, or until lightly browned.

Springerles

Keyword tags: food, recipe, springerle

Anise-flavored German Christmas cookies. Makes 3 large cookie sheets.

This recipe is a combination of the recipes of Anna Schreiter Riedel and Selma (Sal) Riedel Bostwick. It comes out soft enough for instant eating.

6 eggs, beaten till light
 1 pound powdered sugar, added gradually
 2 cups granulated sugar
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar

Beat together until the mixture is smooth and shiny — almost as thick as whipped cream, or better, taffy.

1/2 teaspoon anise oil, OR 2 teaspoons anise extract
 4-1/2 cups unsifted or presifted flour, or enough to make it workable
 anise seeds

Flour the board generously. If the dough sticks, add flour and roll out again. Roll out the dough with a regular rolling pin, and then roll the designs into the cookies with a springerle pin. Save all scraps till end so dough gets done over only once. Grease cookie sheets and sprinkle with anise seeds. Cut the individual cookies apart, and put on the cookie sheets. Let sit 6-8 hours or overnight (to let the design dry into the cookie.). Bake at 325 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes, or until *lightly* browned.

Stollen

Keyword tags: food, recipe, stollen

Sweet bread baked at Christmastime.

Apparently Mother [Nan] thought this was the best version from among the several used by various members of the family.

1 cup milk
 4 tablespoons sugar
 1 teaspoon salt
 2 yeast cakes or packages
 1 cup flour
 2 eggs, well beaten
 2/3 cup melted butter
 1 cup raisins or currants
 1/2 cup candied cherries, cut up, or a mixture of cherries and citron
 2 tablespoons orange peel pieces
 2 tablespoons lemon rind (grated)
 4 additional cups of flour
 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
 1/4 cup sliced almonds (to mix with fruit or sprinkle on top)

Scald the milk and add sugar and salt. Cool to lukewarm and add the yeast cakes or packages dissolved in tepid water or a little of the liquid. Mix thoroughly and add 1 cup of flour.

Stir till smooth. Cover and set in a warm place (80 degrees) till double in bulk; then add eggs, butter, fruit, and the additional 4 cups of flour sifted with nutmeg and cinnamon. Knead till dough is smooth. Return to bowl and let rise till again double in bulk.

Divide dough into 2 parts. Roll each part lightly to about 3/4 inch thickness and fold over as you would an omelet. Place on well-greased cookie sheet; let rise about 2 hours.

Just before putting loaves into the oven to bake, sprinkle tops with sliced almonds. Bake at 350 degrees for about 45 minutes.

Schoolhouse Ranger Cookies

Keyword tags: food, ranger cookie, recipe

A specialty of Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst

This recipe was originally published in the *Los Angeles Times* and was used extensively in the LA school system cafeterias.

Makes 24 to 6 dozen cookies, depending on how big you make them.

1 cup butter
 1 cup granulated sugar
 1 cup brown sugar, packed
 2 eggs, well beaten
 2 cups sifted flour
 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 2 cups rolled oats
 2 cups cornflakes or other flake cereal
 1/2 cup coconut
 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Cream butter and sugars. Add eggs. Blend in flour sifted with baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Add vanilla and the rest of the ingredients. Mix till blended.

Drop by *big* tablespoonsful on ungreased cookie sheet. Flatten with fork to 4" diameter and bake at 350 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes. Do not overbake: the cookies should be somewhat pale and slightly soft when removed from the oven. Makes 24 cookies.

OR drop by rounded teaspoonfuls and do not flatten. Bake at 375 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes. Makes 6 dozen cookies.

Chapter 7

Descendants

Keyword tags: descendant, Dorsch, Joram, Riedel, Schreiter

This chapter lists the names and dates of birth (if known) of the children and grandchildren of the following people:

- Heinrich Adolph (Adolph) Riedel, born 13 July 1842 in Falkenstein, Bavaria, Germany
- His wife, Marie Augusta (Augusta) Joram, born 25 August 1839 in Marieny, Saxony, Germany
- Ehregott August Albin (Alvin) Schreiter, born 8 January 1843 in Geyer, Saxony, Germany
- His wife, Friederike Luise (Louise) Dorsch, born 7 March 1845 in Schleiz, Saxony, Germany

The information is provided as an overview and roadmap for family members and genealogists; it is not meant to duplicate more detailed information recorded in Family Tree Maker and other sources.

Children of Adolph Riedel and Augusta Joram

Keyword tags: descendant, Dorsch, Goepner, Joram, Riedel, Schreiter, Ullmann, Unknown, Zwicker

Following are the children of Heinrich Adolph (Adolph) Riedel and Marie Augusta (Augusta) Joram.

1. Anna Selma Riedel, born 3 Mar 1864 in Falkenstein, Saxony, Germany (died before the family migrated)
2. Bertha Lina Riedel (married Emil Zwicker), born 24 Aug 1865 in Falkenstein, Saxony, Germany
3. Selma Lena (Lena) Riedel (married Karl Frederick Ullmann), born 29 Jun 1867 in Falkenstein, Saxony, Germany
4. Louis Herman Riedel (married Anna Marie Schreiter), born 16 Feb 1869 in Meerane, Saxony, Germany
5. Adolph Max (Max) (married Emma Goepner), born 30 Jan 1871 in Meerane, Saxony, Germany
6. Infant, born 16 Sep 1874 in Forestville, Michigan, USA (died shortly after birth)
7. Adolph Arthur (Arthur) Riedel (married Amalie Unknown), born 1 Oct 1883 in Forestville, Michigan, USA



Figure 126: Adolph Riedel Family (1890)



Figure 127: Tintype of Louis Riedel



Figure 128: Portrait of Louis Riedel



Figure 129: Portrait of Louis Riedel



Figure 130: Louis and Anna Riedel



Figure 131: Louis and Anna Riedel



Figure 132: Louis and Anna Riedel (50th anniversary)

Grandchildren of Adolph Riedel and Augusta Joram

Keyword tags: Bauerle, Bieth, Bostwick, descendant, Dorsch, Engel, Goepner, Harrison, Joram, Kelley, Kramer, Miller, Pfaff, Popp, Riedel, Rush, Schaaf, Schreiter, Slack, Ullmann, van Raaphorst, Wagner, Wendt, Zwicker

Following are the grandchildren of Heinrich Adolph (Adolph) Riedel and Marie Augusta (Augusta) Joram.

Children of Bertha Lina Riedel and Emil Zwicker

1. Elsa Frieda Zwicker (unmarried), born 1884 in Michigan
2. Ida Zwicker (married Paul Engel), born 1886 in Michigan
3. Frederick Emil Zwicker (married Edna Unknown), born 1887 in Michigan

4. Milda Emilie Zwicker (married Ed Rush), born 1889 in Michigan
5. Herbert Alexander Zwicker (married El Unknown), born 1891 in Michigan
6. Clares Camilla (Camilla) Zwicker (married Warren Wagner), born 1893 in Michigan

Children of Selma Lena (Lena) Riedel and Charles Ullmann

1. Martha Helena Ullmann (married Arthur Popp), born 25 Apr 1887 in Michigan
2. Lena Anna Ullmann (married Charles Wendt), born 8 Jan 1889 in Michigan
3. Anna Bertha Ullmann (married Bill Schaaf), born 23 Apr 1890 in Michigan
4. Henry C. Ullmann born 13 Jan 1892 in Michigan
5. Gustav Adolph (Adolph) Ullmann (married Genevieve Kramer) born 17 Dec 1892 in Michigan
6. Ella Martha Ullmann (married Otto Wendt) born May 1895



Figure 133: Karl Frederick (Charles) Ullmann family



Figure 134: Riedels and Ullmanns

Children of Louis Herman Riedel and Anna Marie Schreiter

1. Albert Louis (Al) Riedel (married Ruth Harrison), born 21 Apr 1892 in Michigan

2. Louis Albert (Louie) Riedel (married Irma Pfaff), born 17 Dec 1893 in Michigan
3. Raymond Robert (Ray) Riedel (married Gladys Kelley), born 16 Apr 1895 in Michigan
4. Selma Louise (Sal, Sally) Riedel (married Arthur Bostwick), born 15 Jun 1897 in Michigan
5. Nettie Augusta (Nan) Riedel (married John van Raaphorst), born 5 Dec 1906 in Michigan
6. Paul Schreiter Riedel (married Dorothy Slack), born 8 Oct 1911 in Michigan



Figure 135: The Louis Riedels with three of their children



Figure 136: The four oldest Riedel children



Figure 137: The Louis Riedels with five of their children



Figure 138: The Art Bostwicks on their 60th anniversary

Children of Adolph Max (Max) Riedel and Emma Goepner

1. Meta Riedel (married Carl Bauerle), born 5 May 1902 in Michigan
2. Otto Riedel (unmarried), born 8 Aug 1904 in Michigan
3. William Riedel (unmarried), born 21 Jan 1906 in Michigan
4. Max Herman Riedel (married Helen Bieth), born 16 Jun 1907 in Michigan
5. Clara Selma Riedel (married Oswald Miller), born 13 Aug 1908 in Michigan
6. Dorothy Riedel (married Gustave Obrigkeit), born 25 Jul 1910 in Michigan
7. Frederick (Fred) Riedel, born 2 Feb 1912 in Michigan



Figure 139: Meta Riedel Bauerle



Figure 140: Fred, Max and Otto Riedel (1987)



Figure 141: Oswald Miller in front of the Wahla Store



Figure 142: Obrigkeit Wedding: Gustave, Dorothy, Oswald, Clara

"I Did It My Way": Multigenerational Pride and Independence in a German Immigrant Family

Introducing Al Riedel, Corporate Executive and Community Leader

On April 21, 1982, the friends and family of Albert Louis ("Al") Riedel gathered at the Saginaw Club in Saginaw, Michigan, to celebrate his ninetieth birthday. His immediate family sponsored the event, which was attended by more than one-hundred people, many of whom had been Al's business associates during his illustrious career as one of the founders and eventually president of the Michigan Bean Co., a prominent agricultural concern in the region.

The event's sponsors wrote and published a little booklet that chronicled Al's personal life and his rise to fame and fortune. The booklet (see Figure 143)¹ focuses on Al's success as a self-made man who did it "his way."

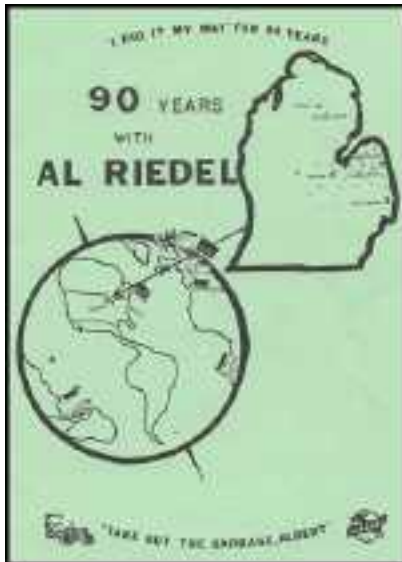


Figure 143: Booklet chronicling the life and career of Al Riedel

In the booklet nothing is mentioned about Al's ancestors: the economic hardships they suffered in the Old Country, the wrenching leave-taking that occurred when Al's grandparents left their families and sailed for the New World, or the sacrifices made by his parents to ensure the general well-being and education of Al and his siblings. Why would Al and his descendants not be proud of such illustrious roots? What might have caused such a glaring omission in the retelling of Al's story?

Al's Immigrant Ancestors

Al was the son of Louis Hermann Riedel (1869-1951) and Anna Maria Schreiter Riedel (1872-1960), Germans who immigrated to the U.S. with their parents in 1873. The families, who traveled with a group known as "Colonia Saxonia," purchased land in what is known as the "Thumb" of Michigan.² In coming to the New World they were trying to escaping the economic, social, and political ills of Germany in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Their negative experiences in Europe made them hungry to own their own property, be their own boss, and pursue a better standard of living for themselves and their children, characteristics and values that are also strong among their descendants, including Al.³

The early years in Michigan were ones of extreme hunger, poverty, and the back-breaking work that was required to clear the land for farming. However, in spite of the difficulties, most of the immigrant pioneers persevered and eventually achieved a modest success in their New World lives. Al's families (both paternal and maternal) were some of the more successful ones.⁴

Al's Pursuit of the American Dream

Al's ninetieth birthday booklet mentions several examples of his early personal and business activities as "proof that he was destined for success." Al attended school through the eighth grade and graduated with a diploma that said he could enter Michigan State College, if he so chose. He formed a club for the young men

¹ "'I did it My Way' for 90 Years," 1982. The primary author was probably primarily Al's daughter, Phyllis Margaret Riedel Symons (1918-1997).

² So called because the state is shaped like a mitten, and the Eastern part is its thumb (see the drawing of the state in Figure 143).

³ A detailed version of the story of the German immigrants is told in *Old Forestville and the Saxon Colony* by Edward J. Wahla (a first-generation American descendant), published in 1965.

⁴ Details about the Riedel-Schreiter immigrant families is recorded in the "Letters Home" section of this book.

of Minden City (Michigan) and was its first president. He courted his future wife, Ruth, “in grand fashion in a Hupmobile ‘Runabout’ with twenty horsepower.” (“Always a winner, he talked his childhood sweetheart into leaving her Nurse’s Training Course, and they were married October 13, 1913.”) In 1915, at the age of twenty-three, Al and several other men founded the Michigan Bean Co. He was elected secretary and a director, and four years later was named general manager and treasurer (figure 144 shows Al at an early point in his career).⁵



Figure 144: Al Riedel as a young businessman

"Retirement Is for the Birds" -Al Riedel, 1962

In 1962, when Al reached the Michigan Bean Co.'s mandatory retirement age, he tried to flaunt the rules and stay on. When the company's board of directors denied him that opportunity, he opened an office in downtown Saginaw, Michigan, and hung out his shingle as a business consultant. He was proud of being, as he sometimes called himself, “an independent cuss.”⁶



Figure 145: Al Riedel in retirement

⁵ “I Did It My Way,” pages 2-7.

⁶ “I Did It My Way,” pages 7-9.

How Al Felt About His Immigrant Roots

For most of his life, Al preferred to ignore his German heritage. Sometimes he was downright dismissive of the accomplishments of his immigrant grandparents. And Al wasn't the only family member who found his or her German ancestry a bit of a burden. As they began to grow up, all the Riedel children were critical if they heard their parents or grandparents speak German, which the children themselves had learned as their first language.⁷

Attitudes and events in the history of the United States during the World War I era (when Al Riedel had just reached his teen years), reveal why this might have been so. Theodore Roosevelt was one of the first to raise the issue of whether the German-American communities were more loyal to their mother country or to the United States: “[Some of] those 'hyphenated Americans'... are engaged in treason to the American Republic.”

Once the U.S. entered the war, a search for spies and saboteurs escalated into efforts to suppress German culture. Many German-language newspapers were closed down. Public schools stopped teaching German, and Lutheran churches dropped services that were spoken in German.⁸ And the nervous silence of their parents about the family's culture and history prevented the Riedel children from learning much about their roots, or even about their still-living grandparents, all of whom had become naturalized citizens.

Alvin Schreiter's "Letters Home" Are Discovered

Years later, in 1965, letters from Alvin Schreiter (Al's maternal grandfather) to Alvin's brother in Germany were discovered in a relative's attic in Germany and translated into English by Al's sister, Nettie.



Figure 146: Alvin Schreiter on his farm, shortly before his death

Alvin's fascinating letters proved him to be an astute observer and gifted storyteller. He wrote down the key dates and events of the immigration voyage to the New World and the early years in Michigan, including details like who was seasick and how much they paid for a loaf of bread. Here is an example:

The next day 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 were aboard ship and at 1:00 the ship set sail. At sea

⁷ Interview with Al's sisters Selma and Nettie, July 1973 . Transcribed by Al's niece Anna van Raaphorst.

⁸ "Over Here: World War I on the Home Front," Digital History (digitalhistory.uh.edu); "We Had to Be So Careful,' A German Farmer's Recollections of Anti-German Sentiment in World War I," History Matters (historymatters.gmu.edu); "German-Americans and World War One," FAST-US (www15.uta.fi); "Anti-German sentiment," Wikipedia (Wikipedia.org).

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 [a lot of] vomit and diarrhea.⁹

Al was one of the first to receive a translated copy of his grandfather's letters, and his thank-you letter to his sister clearly shows his excitement:

TERRIFIC! TERRIFIC! I don't know when I have been so thrilled as with the copies of correspondence written by our grandfather... I think you have done a marvelous job of translation. It surely is close enough to know all about what he was thinking way back when.

Looking back, knowing something of the hardships he endured and being responsible for a motherless family in part¹⁰ -- one has a clearer understanding of how these "believed-to-be" odd things in people's characters came about.

Can't help but be proud of an old guy that had guts enough to do what he did, mind his own business, and get to be a respected citizen in a strange country -- nothing spectacular, honest, paid his bills, and a credit to the community. He was charitable, considerate, asked no favors, and last but not least, no handouts from the government.¹¹

So, thirty-six years after his death, Alvin Schreiter, through his letters, won over his grandson (and many other members of the family, as well). The story is both a good example of the old adage "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree," as well as proof of the power of a rousing yarn. And both grandfather and grandson "did it their way."

Children of Alvin Schreiter and Louise Dorsch

Keyword tags: Burley, Coulter, Crystal, descendant, Dorsch, Feil, Goetze, Hiller, Joram, Munro, Riedel, Rieger, Schreiter, Unknown

Following are the children of Ehregott August Albin (Albin) and Friederike (Luise) Dorsch.

1. Luise Friederika Schreiter (married Otto Rieger), born Mar 1866 in Germany
2. Eduard Paul (Paul) Schreiter (married Hanna Jane Coulter and Elizabeth Munro), born 1870 in Germany
3. Lily (?) Schreiter (twin), born 1871, stillborn or died shortly after birth, 1871
4. Lydia (?) Schreiter (twin), born 1871, stillborn or died shortly after birth, 1871
5. Anna Marie Schreiter (married Louis Riedel), born 26 Mar 1872 in Niederplanitz, Saxony, Germany
6. Lena Anna Schreiter (married Fred Feil), born Aug 1875 in Michigan, USA
7. Alma L. Schreiter (married Louis Hiller), born 13 Apr 1877 in Michigan, USA
8. Martha Schreiter (married Robert Goetze), born 1879 in Michigan, USA
9. Sophie Schreiter (married John Crystal), born 20 Feb 1881 in Michigan, USA
10. Bertha Schreiter (married Eber Burley), born 18 May 1883 in Michigan, USA
11. Richard Schreiter (married Marie Unknown), born 13 Mar 1884 in Michigan, USA

⁹ For more about the Riedel/Schreiter migration voyage, see the "Letters Home" section of this book.

¹⁰ Alvin's wife Louise died at age 49, leaving him with several minor children.

¹¹ Letter from Al Riedel to Nettie Riedel van Raaphorst, 5 April 1965. The complete letter is in the "Letters Home" section of this book.



Figure 147: Portrait of Anna Schreiter



Figure 148: Portrait of Anna Schreiter



Figure 149: Anna Schreiter (standing) with three of her sisters

Grandchildren of Alvin Schreiter and Louise Dorsch

Keyword tags: Beedon, Bostwick, Brown, Burley, Carrier, Coates, Coulter, Crystal, descendant, Dorsch, Feil, Goetze, Harnisch, Harrison, Hill, Hiller, Hiltz, Joram, Kelley, Leonard, McCullough, McDonald, Munro, Pfaff, Riedel, Rieger, Sanders, Schreiter, Shubel, Slack, Slavin, Timmins, van Raaphorst, Widdis, Young

Following are the grandchildren of Ehregott August Albin (Albin) Schreiter and Friederike (Luise) Dorsch.

Children of Luise Friederika Schreiter and Otto Rieger

1. Otto Albert Rieger (married Ethel Unknown), born Jan 1887 in Michigan
2. Emma Rieger (married Phares Harnisch), born 4 Mar 1888 in Michigan
3. Fredrick C. (Fred) Rieger (married Helen Unknown), born 22 Aug 1892

Children of Eduard Paul (Paul) Schreiter and Hanna Jane Coulter

1. Violet Beatrice Schreiter (married), born 28 Oct 1898 in North Dakota, USA
2. William Edward (Eddie) Schreiter (married), born 23 Nov 1899 in North Dakota, USA

Children of Eduard Paul (Paul) Schreiter and Elizabeth Munro

1. Margaret Schreiter, born about 1905
2. Anna Schreiter, born about 1907 [Ethel's twin?]
3. Ethel Schreiter, born about 1909 [Anna's twin?]
4. Paul Schreiter (moved to Canada and took his mother's maiden name, Munro), born about 1911

Children of Anna Marie Schreiter and Louis Herman Riedel

1. Albert Louis (Al) Riedel (married Ruth Harrison), born 21 Apr 1892 in Michigan
2. Louis Albert (Louie) Riedel (married Irma Pfaff), born 17 Dec 1893 in Michigan
3. Raymond Robert (Ray) Riedel (married Gladys Kelley), born 16 Apr 1895 in Michigan
4. Selma Louise (Sal, Sally) Riedel (married Arthur Bostwick), born 15 Jun 1897 in Michigan
5. Nettie Augusta (Nan) Riedel (married John van Raaphorst), born 5 Dec 1906 in Michigan
6. Paul Schreiter Riedel (married Dorothy Slack), born 8 Oct 1911 in Michigan

[For pictures of these descendants, see [Grandchildren of Adolph Riedel and Augusta Joram](#) on page 120.]

Children of Lena Anna Schreiter and Fred Feil

1. Alvin Feil, born 7 Jul 1904 in Michigan
2. Harold Feil (married Minnie Unknown), born 9 Apr 1906 in Michigan
3. Hertha Feil, born 12 Jun 1908 in Michigan

Children of Alma L. Schreiter and Louis Hiller

1. Raymond Larry Hiller (married Marguerite Slavin), born 23 Mar 1905 in Michigan
2. Leona Hiller (married Cecil Widdis), born 14 May 1907 in Michigan
3. Helen Hiller (married Jake Hiltz), born 14 Apr 1912 in Michigan

Children of Martha Schreiter and Robert Goetze

1. Ella Goetze (married Elmer McDonald), born 22 Jul 1899 in Michigan
2. William Goetze (married Bertha Unknown), born 10 Apr 1901 in Michigan
3. Frances Goetze (married Sidney Shubel and Mike Hill), born 9 Feb 1908 in Michigan

Children of Sophie Schreiter and John Crystal

1. Dorothy Crystal (married Henry Carrier), born 1903
2. Lorna Crystal (married Harry Beedon), born 1904
3. Fred R. Crystal (married Catherine Unknown and Bea Coates), born 1907
4. Willard (Willie) J. Crystal (married Elsie Unknown), born 1908
5. Harald Crystal J. (married Jean Unknown), born 1911
6. William (Billy) G. Crystal (married Opal Unknown), born 1915
7. Margaret E. Crystal (married Harry Sanders), born 9 May 1918

Children of Bertha Schreiter and Eber Burley

1. Harry Eber Burley (probably not married), born 2 Nov 1902
2. Grace Irene Burley (married Jack Timmons and Robert Young), born 16 Nov 1904
3. Charles Burley (married Eleanore Unknown), born 6 May 1907
4. Alvira Annette Burley (married George Leonard), born 3 Jul 1910
5. Floyd Ellis Burley (married Annie Unknown), born 5 Oct 1912
6. Wayne Sherman Burley (married Jean Unknown), born 28 Sep 1914
7. Ruth Alda Burley (unmarried), born 7 May 1917
8. Ilah May Burley (married Alden McCullough), born 16 Sep 1919
9. Elaine Louise Burley (married Meddie Brown), born 5 Sep 1924

Children of Richard Schreiter and Marie [Mary?] Unknown

1. Willard Schreiter, born 1909
2. Douglas Schreiter, born 1910

Descendants of Nettie (Nan) Riedel and John van Raaphorst

Keyword tags: Blomquist, descendant, Dienst, Dorsch, Finch, Hunter, Johnson, Joram, Livengood, Margulis, Riedel, Schreiter, Tichenor, van Raaphorst

Following is a list of the descendants of Nettie (Nan) Riedel and John van Raaphorst. For descendants of other branches of the Riedel-Schreiter family, see *Riedel-Schreiter Family Tree*, referenced in [For More Information](#) on page 147, and other genealogical sources.

Child and Step-child of Nettie (Nan) Riedel and John van Raaphorst

1. William John (Bill) van Raaphorst (married Helen Ruth Finch), born 31 Oct 1918 in Michigan
2. Anna Louise van Raaphorst (married Richard Harold Johnson), born 12 Dec 1940 in Michigan

Bill is the child of Johanna Dienst van Raaphorst and John van Raaphorst, and step-child of Nan Riedel van Raaphorst. For more information about Bill and his descendants, see *van Raaphorst-Metsch Family History*, referenced in [For More Information](#) on page 147.

Anna is the child of Nan Riedel van Raaphorst and John van Raaphorst.



Figure 150: Anna and her grandparents (1945)



Figure 151: Anna and her parents and nephew (Easter 1946 or '47)

Grandchildren of Nettie (Nan) Riedel and John van Raaphorst

1. Ellen Margaret Anne Elizabeth van Raaphorst Johnson (married Richard Hayward Livengood), born 14 Sep 1965 in California

2. Timothy Richard Nikolaas John van Raaphorst (Tim) Johnson (married Colette Ruth Hunter and Elizabeth Anne Tichenor, significant other to Clara Margulis), born 23 Dec 1966 in California
3. Gillian Allison Catherine Anne van Raaphorst (Jill) Johnson (married Michael Henry Blomquist), born 3 Nov 1975 in Santa Clara, California



Figure 152: Ellen and Tim with their grandparents (1968)



Figure 153: Gillian with her grandparents (1976)



Figure 154: Tim, Anna and Clara (2011)

Great-grandchildren of Nettie (Nan) Riedel and John van Raaphorst

1. Hayward Matthew Johnson (Matthew) Livengood, born 17 Jul 1996 in California
2. Miranda Anne Johnson Livengood, born 23 Jun 1999 in California
3. Archer Michael Richard Henry Blomquist, born 29 Dec 2005 in Minnesota
4. Helena Allison Anna Margaret Blomquist, born 1 Nov 2007 in Minnesota



Figure 155: The Livengood family (2011)



Figure 156: Matthew and his great-grandmother, Nan (1996)



Figure 157: Miranda and her great-grandmother, Nan (2000)



Figure 158: Four generations: Miranda, Nan, Anna and Ellen (1999)



Figure 159: Matthew, Miranda and Dick (2006)



Figure 160: Matthew and Anna (1997)



Figure 161: Miranda and Anna (2000)



Figure 162: The Blomquist family (2012)



Figure 163: Archer and his four grandparents (2006)



Figure 164: Archer and Anna (2006)



Figure 165: Helena and Dick (2008)



Figure 166: Helena and Anna (2009)

Chapter

8

Keywords

Keyword tags: keyword

Category keywords

- ancestor
- art
- book
- brown bread
- Bunny
- business
- cat
- cemetery
- childhood
- Christmas
- comment
- cottage
- descendant
- dog
- duck and greenie
- education
- epithet
- Erzgebirge
- family
- farming
- food
- Forestville
- fowl
- Franco-Prussian War
- gardening
- genealogy
- Germany
- Halloween
- Hamburg
- holiday
- Hull
- image
- Johnson-Robins Family History
- Johnson-Moseley Family Tree
- letter
- L. H. Riedel Lumber Company

- Livengood
- Liverpool
- Lutheran Church
- Michigan
- mealtime
- migration
- Minden City
- Moseley-Rebmann Family History
- Munising
- music
- nature
- New Year
- New York
- News From Nan website
- pet
- potato dumpling
- rabbit
- ranger cookie
- recipe
- reference
- remembrance
- reminiscence
- Riedel-Schreiter Family History
- Saxony
- science
- sport
- springerle
- steamship
- stollen
- Thumb area of Michigan
- tradition
- travel
- United States
- van Raaphorst-Metsch Family History
- van Raaphorst-Riedel Family Tree
- veteran
- white cookie
- World War I
- World War II

Surname (last name) keywords

- Bauerle
- Beedon
- Bieth
- Blomquist
- Bostwick
- Brown
- Burley
- Carrier
- Coates

- Coulter
- Crystal
- Dorsch
- Engel
- Feil
- Goepner
- Goetze
- Harnisch
- Harrison
- Hill
- Hiller
- Hiltz
- Hunter
- Johnson
- Joram
- Kelley
- Kramer
- Leonard
- Livengood
- Margulis
- McCullough
- McDonald
- Miller
- Munro
- Pfaff
- Popp
- Ridley
- Riedel
- Rieger
- Rush
- Sanders
- Schaaf
- Schreiter
- Shubel
- Slack
- Slavin
- Tichenor
- Timmins
- Ullmann
- Unknown
- van Raaphorst
- Wagner
- Wendt
- Westman
- Widdis
- Young
- Zwicker

Chapter

9

For More Information

Keyword tags: information source, reference

Following are references to additional information about the Riedel-Schreiter family, and general information about the locations and events described in this book.

Information About the Riedel-Schreiter Family

News From Nan website

<http://www.newsfromnan.com>

News From Nan is a family history supersite dedicated to the memory of Nettie (Nan) Riedel van Raaphorst. The website owners, developers, and content creators are Anna van Raaphorst Johnson and Richard (Dick) Johnson. The site has been in existence since 1998.

News From Nan is the place where we post current information about ourselves and our family, as well as family history and genealogy. We like to think of it as a place where our family's current events and past history come together.

PDF versions of this book and various genealogy reports (for example, ancestor reports, timelines, and media reports) are available on the News From Nan website.

Nan's 1934 European Diary

Available on *News From Nan*.

This is a slightly abridged and serialized version of Nan's 1934 European diary. If the school where she was teaching had been able to pay her on time every month, she probably wouldn't have made the trip -- but this was the year of the bank failures, and she got almost a whole year's salary in the late spring. Her mother (wise person that she was) said, "Don't fritter it away. Do something special with it!"

At the time of this trip, "Nan" was Nettie A. Riedel, teaching school somewhere in Michigan, and staying summers with her parents in Minden City.

Nan's 1938 Alaskan Diary

Available on *News From Nan*.

In the summer of 1938, Nan and a female friend drove from Minden City, MI (a little town in the "Thumb") to Seattle, took the Inside Passage cruise through southern Alaska, and then drove back.

The account was written up for either the Minden City or Harbor Beach newspaper. The information was "sanitized" for general consumption, I believe — I remember her telling me that on this trip she got a bacterial infection from eating improperly refrigerated beef and nearly died! For the time such a trip would have been a daring adventure for two unaccompanied young ladies — they even camped on their own and must have changed a number of flat tires along the way.

van Raaphorst-Riedel Family Tree

Family Tree Maker / Ancestry.com. Detailed genealogical information about Anna van Raaphorst's Riedel-Schreiter and van Raaphorst-Metsch families. A portion of the tree has been published as an interactive ancestor report on the News From Nan website.

Anna's Informal Family History Collection

These binders include photos, copies of original records, letters, newspaper clippings, original writings, and family recipes.

General Information

Fiery Trial

Lincoln, Judge James H. (ret.) and James L. Donahue, *Fiery Trial*, Historical Society of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1984.

Story of the 1881 fire that swept the Thumb of Michigan. This fire was apparently far worse than the 1871 fire that had opened up the Forestville area for farming and was referenced in Alvin Schreiter's letters to his brother in Germany. Anna Schreiter Riedel told stories of the 1881 fire: of going down to the lake to escape the flames, and of the crying of the burned and otherwise injured wild animals.

Nettie Riedel van Raaphorst was acquainted with the Lincoln family.

Forestville - Delaware Township Bicentennial Souvenir Program

Forestville - Delaware Township Bicentennial Souvenir Program, July 10-11, 1976.

Stories and pictures of the early years in the Thumb of Michigan.

Michigan History and Genealogy of Sanilac County, Forestville Bicentennial History

http://www.usgennet.org/usa/mi/county/sanilac/forestville_bicentennial_history.htm

Interesting, informative history of the early years of Forestville, Michigan. Includes references to news items of the day and a number of pictures.

Minden City Herald (Souvenir Edition)

Souvenir Edition of the Minden City Herald (One of the Thumb's Most Prosperous Towns), 1901-1902.

Stories and pictures of Minden City. Profiles Louis H. Riedel, "a newcomer in Minden Who is Rapidly Gaining Prominence," and the founding of the L. H. Riedel Elevator Company (later known as the L. H. Riedel Lumber Company).

Old Forestville and the Saxon Colony

Wahla, Edward J., *Old Forestville and the Saxon Colony*, 1965.

A fascinating history early Forestville. Covers the village's most active period of growth, from 1871 to 1885. Begins with an account of the 20,000 acres of pineland in Sanilac County, Michigan, bought by Eber B. Ward in 1852, and sold off, in pieces, to members of the Colonia Saxonica and others.

Some of the material is based on the reminiscences and observations of Ferdinand Schaff, who came to Forestville with his parents in 1874.

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