

OBERWEISS  
FAMILY

OCCGS REFERENCE ONLY

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF HERMAN OBERWEISS  
OFFERED FOR PROBATE AT THE JUNE TERM, 1934  
ANDERSON COUNTY, TEXAS

ED. NOTE: This will, apparently authentic, was originally published in an out-of-state genealogical journal. It was given to me by Sue COCHRAN and, although I can't cite the journal reference, I'm going to share it with you anyway. Some of the unfamiliar words appear to be German; others may be an misspelled attempts to use an American or other ethnic word (underlined words will be translated at the end of the article). The sentence structure in the will is typical of the style attributed to the "Pensylvania Dutch" (or "Deutsch"). Enjoy!

I am writing of my will mineself...that dam lawyer want he should have too much money. He ask too many answers about the family. First thing I want...I don't want my brother, Oscar, to get a dam thing I got. He is a mummer. He done me out of fortie dollars foreteen years since.

I want it that Hulda, my sister, she gets the north sixty acres at where I am homing it now. I bet she don't get that loafer husband of hers to break twenty acres next plowing ...the gonoph don't work. She can't have it if she lets Oscar live on it. I shold have it back if she does.

Tell momma that six hundert dollars she been looking for for ten years is berried from the backhouse behind about ten feet down. She better let little Frederick do the digging and count it when it comes up.

Pastor LUCKNITZ can have three hundert dollars if he kisses the Book and he don't preach no more dumhead talks about politiks. He should a roof put on the meetinghouse with, and the elders should the bills look at.

Momma should the rest get, but I want it that Adolph should tell her what not she should do so no more slick Irishers don't sell her no vakum cleaners. They noise like hell and a broom don't cost so much.

I want that mine brother Adolph be my executor and I want that the judge should please make Adolph plenty of bond put up. And the judge should watch him like hell. Adolph is a good business man, but only a dumph would trust him with a busted Pfennig.

I want dam sure that schliemiel Oscar don't nothing get...tell Adolph he can have a hundert dollars extra if he prove to the judge Oscar don't get nothing. That dam sure fix Oscar.

/s/ Herman OBERWEISS

TRANSLATION OF UNDERLINED TERMS:

1. mummer: (not a German word) perhaps he means "mumper" which, according to The New A to Zax genealogical dictionary, is a "beggar"
2. dumph: probably "dummkopf", or "dummy"
3. pfennig: penny
4. schliemiel: sneak; one who causes trouble, but not in a malicious way

Thanks to Barb HEGGEN for translating the German terms.

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second-hand clothes. Sometimes the old tools are made over for them as the old clothes are. With such tools as these, as a matter of course, poor work is done, and mortification is the consequence.

Is it any wonder then, that a boy under such circumstances becomes discouraged and tired of his way of life? Is it a marvel that he sighs for the village machine shop or the city store? There are few men who can constantly work on without a word of approbation or encouragement. And if in the place of these there is stoical indifference or constant fault-finding, the case is so much the worse. We are inclined to the opinion that if most farmers were obliged to do the work they impose upon their boys, and to do it with the tools they furnish to them, they would become so disgusted with the drudgery of farming that they would change their business the first opportunity.

There are many things about the farm that boys delight in doing and a part of these pleasant employments should be assigned to them. For them to take a pride in their work, it must be done well, which can only be affected by having good tools to use. Boys like those employments the doing of which requires some skill and involves the exercise of judgment. They are ordinarily delighted with the management of horses, the use of machinery and the practice of mechanical operations. - In short, they have a great desire to become skilled laborers and not to be accounted mere underlings. To give a boy nothing but mere drudgery to do is the surest and most effective way of causing him to form a dislike for farming, which he will never in another life get rid of.

Of course, no boy, "the first time trying," will plow as straight a furrow, make as good a run with a mowing machine, or build as good a garden gate as his father can, who has had years of experience; but most boys will do much better at their first attempt than certain cautious and very well meaning people think(;) they will do most kinds of men's work as skillfully as those who are many years their seniors. A boy feels no honest pride when he is employed in doing work that requires some skill and judgment, and which has generally been monopolized by persons of mature years. This sort of pride is a good thing to appeal to if you want to bring up your boy to be a farmer, who shall be contented with his occupation. The rule that applies to putting a boy early to learn a thing in books, if you want him to acquire a knowledge of it easily, is of equal applicability in the case of learning the more difficult operations in farming, though many persons seem very slow in learning that such is the case.

Your boy of fourteen will quite likely learn to graft a tree quicker than you can if you give him a chance. What if a few scions do fail, and a couple of seedling apple trees never leaf out again? The result is no more than you see in orchards where older persons have practiced. Next year your boy will have success equal to the average grafters, and in two years' time you can trust him in any orchard. He will learn to grind a scythe or an axe, too, if you will turn the grindstone as long and steadily as you require him to, and you amuse yourself - for you will need something to break the monotony - by giving him some instructions from time to time.