

(WRITE YOUR FAMILY HISTORY, continued)

Still another told her story of growing up on a Wyoming ranch. She called it, "I Rode A speckled Pony." Her grandchildren loved that title, and they love to read about what their grandmother did after she grew up and left the ranch. Which is where they came in.

One man I know told me that his parents died when he was very young and he was reared by strangers. He had often wondered about the history of his family. When his grandmother died at age 93, he found that all through the years she had tucked into her Bible scraps of paper on which she had written down accounts of incidents as they occurred. He had in his hands a family history written in bits and pieces.

There are as many ways to begin a family history as there are stories to be written.

2) Make word pictures as you write. There is always the tendency to get so involved in dates and facts that your story seems hurried, or difficult to follow. Stop every few paragraphs to bring your words to life.

Rather than write only, "We got our first automobile in 1916," give its make and model. Make the youngsters really see that old-time car that was so high off the ground and had side curtains to put on in case of a storm. Tell of how every few miles the radiator would boil over and you would have to stop for water, or how the tire blew out and had to be patched before you went on. Give a word picture of those muddy roads you skidded around in, and the hub-deep sand you tried to drive through.

Mention that those early automobiles brought about better roads, with now and then a tourist cabin for those brave enough to travel long distances. Then came narrow paved roads and auto courts. And finally superhighways with luxurious motels every 100 miles. You might even add that the sum total of those fine cars contributed to our air pollution, one of today's big problems.

Since you have lived to see the coming of radio, television, travel by air, and all of the other things which young people take for granted, mention your first introduction to them.

Try, too, to bring in a few word pictures on seemingly unimportant things, such as the family's sitting on the porch steps on a warm summer's evening, watching the fireflies light up the valley.

Children will like to know that grandma and grandpa took time out to appreciate the wonders of nature long before the word *ecology* came into common use.

But if you were to describe everything in great detail, your story would never be finished. Yet do get in a few word pictures from time to time. Every family history is really a family album done in words.

3) Write in a hopeful tone. Every story must establish some kind of mood. In writing the history of any family, the mood could honestly reflect faith and hope and family pride. The kind of faith that made our ancestors go on in spite of great obstacles. The hope that you yourself have in all young people, and in their ability to overcome their problems. You believe in a better future. You need not say all this in as many words. But if you feel in your heart that, whatever happens, life is good, that mood is certain to come through between the lines.

In reporting any life span, there will be sad events to record. But why dwell on them? It is better merely to state them and let it go at that. "It was hard to have our youngest boy die in the Battle of the Bulge, but we were only one family out of thousands who had to endure such losses. And we were proud that Dennis was man enough to do his duty," one grandmother wrote.

If you lived through the Great Depression of the 1930's you may be tempted to stress what a hard time you had when corn sold for 8 cents a bushel and men simply could not get work. Go into whatever detail you like, but end on a happy note if you can. "Anyway, we skimmed our way through those years, and lived to laugh about the red jumper dress that every one of the girls had to wear when she grew into it."

Your story may be read years later by some young member of the family who feels discouraged about his future. You can show him that if he has faith in God and in himself he will know which way to go and what to do. But when all is said and done it is your story. Go ahead and tell it as it was, and how you see it, whether you follow any of my tips or not. Even if you misspell a few words or get tangled up in your sentences, your family will love what you have done.

The thing is to start now, jotting down those memories. You will be proud that you did.

—by Louvica Richardson

CARL/EMMA SCHUKAR FAMILY

Carl Wilhelm August Ernst Schukar was born in Bernickow, a small village on the edge of the city of Koenigsburg, Neumark, Brandenburg, about 50 miles northeast of Berlin. He was the son of Wilhelm Schukar and his wife Maria Prinz.

As a young man Carl emigrated to the US arriving in

Boston June 13, 1874, on the S.S. Batavia. As far as we know, he came alone. (His uncle Carl Henry Schukar had come in August of 1873. The uncle lived first in Fayette Co., Illinois, but later moved to Buffalo County, and finally settled in Custer County, Nebraska, living there until his death in 1926. On April 30, 1885,

(CARL/EMMA SCHUKARA FAMILY, continued)

Herman Schukar and Wilhelm Schukar, presumably Carl's younger brother and father, arrived in the US on the ship America. Herman lived in Marshall County, South Dakota in the early 1900s apparently dying there in the 1920s. Wilhelm was living at the Fayette county, IL, poor farm at the time of the 1900 and 1910 censuses, and died there in 1915. Further research is needed to confirm the connection between Carl and these latter two men.)

In the 1880 census of Wilberton Township, Fayette County, IL, Carl was listed as a boarder in the home of John F. Louis Gerke. He was naturalized on May 9, 1882, in Fayette County. Emma nee Schukar was born in Mayville, Dodge County, Wisconsin, August 15, 1860, the daughter of Fred Schukar and Maria Sasse. The Sasse family had come from Nahausen, about 5 miles from Koenigsburg, Neumark, Brandenburg, to the US on the bark Russia with a group of Old Lutherans in 1846, when Maria was only 4 years old. Fred Schukar, born in Bernickow, had arrived in the US in 1852 with his parents and siblings on the ship Julie. Fred and Maria were married in WI in 1859, and moved to IL in March 1865. Emma was the oldest of 12 children, 8 of whom survived to adulthood.

Emma was remembered by one of her brothers as always being an active and hard-working child who helped her father with all the farming. Another story tells that she helped with the haying right up until the day before her first son was born.

When Carl and Emma were married December 2, 1880, it was by Rev. Meier, first pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church (now called Augsburg) near Shobonier, IL. Witnesses were her sister Anna Schukar and cousins Hermann Sasse, Carl Sasse, and Hermina Sasse. One report says the marriage was at her parents' home; another says it was a big church wedding. Carl and Emma were second cousins.

Carl and Emma began their family in Wilberton Township, Fayette County, IL, where their two sons were born. In 1884 or 1885 they moved to Buffalo County, Nebraska, where other Wilberton families were going or had gone. Those families included Wuehler, Adelung, Oertwig; Luehr. Later Uncle Carl Henry and Aunt Lena Schukar, and Uncle August and Aunt Bertha Schukar also moved from IL to Buffalo County, NE. Emma's cousins Robert Fellwock, J.F. Louis and Augusta (Schwan) Gerke, and August and Mary (Schwan) Horstmann were also in Buffalo County for some time.

In July, 1894, after a scorching wind dried up the crops in the fields, the Schukar families and several other families from the area decided to move to Texas. We are unsure of just who traveled together in the trip; even though the families of Carl and Emma, Carl Henry and Caroline, and August and Bertha each have stories of trips to Texas. They may not have all been in the same caravan. But we know that Carl and Emma, along with some others, loaded their wagons and went

south, eventually stopping at the El Campo area of Wharton County, where they remained until 1897. Conditions in Texas were not as profitable as they had hoped, so they sold out and moved right back to NE. Emma and the two youngest children, who could ride free, took the passenger train, but Carl and the three older children rode in the "emigrant car" with the household furniture, machinery, and six head of horses.

Carl and Emma settled in Watertown, just a few miles from their former home, where Carl farmed and tended the railroad water tower that gave the tiny town its name. Emma boarded railroaders and a number of teachers that served the Watertown School. Their house was a residence until about 2000 when it was razed.

Carl Henry and Caroline Schukar and their family settled in Callaway in Custer County, NE. He became known as "Callaway Carl Schukar" to distinguish him from his nephew, "Watertown Carl Schukar." August and Bertha and their family remained in TX until the autumn of 1900 when they went to IA.

In 1904 Carl and Emma went to the St. Louis World's Fair and visited several of Emma's sisters and youngest brother who lived in the St. Louis area. Within a few years after that, two of the sisters and their families moved to Buffalo County, also.

Carl and Emma celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1930. On August 4, 1938, Carl drove off to go fishing. He apparently had a heart attack, and according to his death certificate, "was instantly killed by the automobile accident resulting therefrom." His car had run off the road and over an embankment, and over-turned in the dry creek bed.

Emma lived to be nearly 96 years old. She was well known over a wide area for her hospitality and her apple pies. Because her first grandchild had difficulty saying "Grossmutter," German for grandmother, she was called "Muna" and was known by that name throughout the community. Carl was similarly called "Gopati" by his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Carl and Emma had 5 children, all of whom survived into their late years.

1. Adolph Schukar, born 28 August 1881, married Alma Sohrweid.
2. Fred Schukar, born 9 October 1883, married Lucinda Hannemann.
3. Pauline Schukar, born 10 March 1887 married James Duncan Stubbs.
4. Johanna Josephine Schukar, born 30 December 1888, married Carl Labs.
5. Eleanore Schukar, born 13 October 1893, married Robert Oertwig.

This is one of three articles on Mona Houser's ancestors who settled in Buffalo County. Two more will appear in later issues of Buffalo Chip.

GENEALOGY GOES HIGH TECH
NEWSWEEK November 3, 2003

"SUDDENLY SWISS"

Once genealogy was the pastime of the Burke's Peerage, blue-haired, blue-blood set. But now new advances in DNA technology are opening ancestral doors so both orphans and heirs to the throne can find where their families are from.

Business is catching on. For just \$330 and a swath of saliva in the mail, Britain's Roots for Real runs customers' DNA strands through a worldwide database of 20,000 samples. Key evidence lies in mitochondrial DNA whose mutations vary by geographic region, making a Sudanese sample easy to distinguish from a Scottish one. More recent mutations are easier to track: 500-year-old strands can be traced nearly to the town of their origin. Since its 2002 launch, Roots for Real has signed up 330 users, and can expect more customers (and competitors) as word catches on. The technology isn't perfect. Only 10 percent of Roots for Real's customers get a geographic placement that's smaller than continent-wide. Sorry, dads, mitochondrial DNA is passed from mother to child, so paternal lineage remains hard to trace.

Genetic-tracking technology will improve, and people are using it to rewrite their family histories today. Dorothy Lockhart of Rodgers, Ark., always thought her family was British, till at the age of 81 she got startling data from Roots for Real, making her suddenly Swiss. Lockhart probably won't make it to her newfound country of origin, "But," she says, "maybe one of my grandchildren will."

OBITS May I Rest in Peace

When Thomas Dahlberg passed away last fall he got a grand send-off, the sort of obituary befitting a distinguished CIA agent, two-star general and Pulitzer Prize finalist. But after it was printed in a Pennsylvania newspaper, editors learned that the only completely accurate part of the piece was the name of the deceased. Not that they could complain to the author; the obituary had been written by Dahlberg himself.

He wasn't the only person penning his own goodbye; obit watchers have noticed a recent increase in self-written death notices. Carolyn Gilbert, founder of the International Association of Obituarists, says she's seen obit trends come and go over the past few decades, but "not like this. I think this one's here to stay." Scores of Web sites and even some funeral homes now offer tips on writing your own obituary (some with fill-in-the-blank "templates.") Some motivational speakers have adopted the practice, touting the self-written obit as a life-affirming road map for the still living. Why take matters into your own hands? Sometimes the dearly departed want to send out a fond farewell from beyond the grave; other times the aim is to settle old scores. A big selling point is artistic freedom. "If you're reading this," read one recent Winston-Salem (NC) Journal obit, "I'm probably already dead." —From NEWSWEEK March 8, 2004

MY SILVERSMITH ANCESTOR

Being a newcomer to the world of genealogy I stumble along in the dark sometimes. For the most part we are fortunate to have my father's side of the tree fairly well documented, except for the one mysterious gggrandmother's family. For over 40 years now my father has searched on and off again for her parents. He has been researching off a note that his mother made after a conversation with her mother back around 1908. But, alas, nothing ever turned up. As much as I cuss the internet it has been quite helpful in more ways than one.

My gggrandfather Pulaski Scovil married a Sarah Jerome of Onondaga County, NY, (or so the story goes). He was a "traveling merchant" and after moving to Cincinnati, Ohio, in the early 1830s, he started a silversmith business. They lived there for a few years before moving on to the Havana/Mason City, Illinois, area. Sarah Jerome Scovil passed away in either the Fall or Winter of 1840; the exact date is in debate. They had five children together. Mr. Scovil remarried several more times and over the course of years had a number of children.

Well, one day my sister called me and said, "Type in Pulaski Scovil on your search bar on the internet." I did, and lo and behold, an antique dealer's website popped up. He was selling a silver ladle made by my gggrandfather Pulaski Scovil. I wrote to him and asked how he was so certain that the "P. Scovil" on the back of the ladle stood for Pulaski, as the Scovil family is an extremely large family. He wrote back immediately and said "There is only one Pulaski Scovil in my silversmith trademark book." Needless to say I couldn't whip that credit card out fast enough!

The package arrived and in it was a small sauce ladle that is simple in design, yet beautiful. To be holding something that was made by my ancestor, plus its surviving the turmoil of the Civil War and other problems in the South over the course of 170 years, simply blows me away at times.

If my father had not asked me to help in his search, this precious family treasure would never have made it back to us.

—From FKGS member Mary Rishel, Feb. 2004



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