

**MEMORIES
AND
LIFE EXPERIENCES**

**As written by
George Aberth**

A note to the Marshall Family,

It was such an honor to be able to translate these memoirs of you! For myself, I was boldly reminded what a proud people the Germans are, or at least were, back in my own father and mother's day. And I am so thankful to my father for being so stubbornly insistent that our family speak German. (Yes, Daddy, you were right! ☺) Even though I grudgingly gave in to him, I can now see God's hand in it.

My father recently passed away while I was working on this translation, and I know that he has now met all your wonderful family in heaven. What a blessing to know that they are all together, sharing stories, and watching over us with Jesus.

May God continue to watch over you and bless you and your families!

Angela "Geli" Cash

Memories and Life Experiences of George Aberth

I want to try to write down for my descendants, my memories and my life experiences as much as I think have meaning and that I can remember. Perhaps it will be of interest to someone who comes after me, just as I would be happy to have known more about my forefathers had it been possible.

Born in Steinselz, a village near Weissenburg in Elsass on the 26th of April 1857, the son of Michael Aberth and Juliana (maiden name Tregor), I was named George after both of my grandfathers whom I unfortunately never knew as they had already died. I can only remember my grandmother from my father's side – born Anna Maria Wolff – from whom I sprung away when she wanted to wash my face.

My loving parents who were poor but very honest and industrious, had just experienced and survived the horrible, wet period of hunger years of 1850-1857 when I was born. Along with my arrival into this world also came better times. My father was born in Steinselz on the 3rd of November 1817, also a hungry year – the prior year had brought a hard and heavy hail that battered and destroyed everything in this area, and there was no train service yet to bring in food from afar.

Mother came from the neighboring village, Oberhofen, born on the 4th of November 1821. As previously mentioned, both grandfathers died early, and Father still had two brothers and two sisters when grandmother was widowed.

At that time there was still a military draft, but not every boy had to become a soldier because the country did not need them all. So, each year, there was a military lottery, and whoever pulled a high number was exempt. Also, the son of a widow was exempt. But if a rich boy pulled a lower number and was supposed to become a soldier, he could pay off/ buy out one of the exempt boys and put them in his place. The length of service was 7 years-- that was the term of service. My father's older brother, Martin, was exempt as the son of a widow, but he sold himself and became a soldier, thus making my father exempt. My father, then, also sold himself for 1100 Francs so that the money would help his mother in her poverty. The younger brother, George, was then the one to be exempt – and he then also sold himself.

Father had to endure difficult times. After he was stationed in France for one year, he and his regiment were deployed to Africa where the French were at war with the Moroccans, trying to overthrow them. For four years he had to participate in this horrible slaughter. Later, during the long winter nights, he would tell stories to the people about his experiences and hardships, and they were so enthralled, they could never hear enough. You see, Father owned the local slaughterhouse, butchering pigs and making wurst (sausage), so he saw a lot of people when he made his rounds during the Winter.

Since I am just talking about the soldier's life, I also want to tell you what I know about one old retiree whom I knew well and who lived near us. His last name was Baal. He had served three terms with the French cannon regiment – that's 21 years. For this, he received 400 Francs per year of pension. He also earned a star, so this added another 300 Francs per year. He had earned this military honor, the star, during the time of the revolution in Paris. When they were retreating, there was a big celebration. He'd drunk so much schnapps, he wasn't able to flee with his comrades; so, instead, he passed out and fell sound asleep under a cannon. Later on, when the attack resumed, there he lay under the cannon. Awakened by the noise as the enemy passed by him, he jumped to his cannon and began fighting back. Thus, he was the first one on the scene - already in position when his comrades arrived. It was for this that he earned his star.

We saw for ourselves later that he was a hero when the war between France and Germany broke out in 1870. He, as an old soldier, crept away into the bushes with provisions of bread, ham and schnapps. The French lost the first battle, and it was then said that it was the Prussians who crushed everything. We lived right there where the first battle was fought.

At that time, there were no agricultural/farming machines – these first became standard use in 1870. Everything had to be done by hand – the grain was cut by hand with a sickle, and aching backs were the norm. In the Winter, you had to get up at 2:00 in the morning in order to have your 108 sheaves bundled in 4's, or 90 sheaves in bundles of 3, thrashed, finished and cleaned, working until 4 in the afternoon. (4)

At 16, I had to participate in this the entire Winter long. It frightened me to have to get up at such an early hour, and then in the coldest cold. The root fruits (tubers) were hoed and piled up by hand, and the hay and stubble weed cut with a sythe, etc., etc. Each farmer also planted for himself a piece of land with hemp. The seeds were made into oil, and the stems into yarn or thread which was then further made into fabric. This was a very long, drawn out process.

First you had to prepare a good piece of field. Then when the hemp grew and went to seed, you harvested it, dried it and thrashed it. Then the stems were spread out on a meadow to ripen, and after several weeks, they were dried again and driven home where they were broken down even more at a milling block (grinder) outside the village. There it was dried out again next to a fire where the frays(fine hairs) could be removed from the stems. It was then taken to the mill where it went through the millstone back and forth to rub it soft. And then, not before, it was ready to be taken to the Hegelbank where various steel 'combs' (course, fine, and very fine) were screwed on/attached to the Hegelbank, and the hemp was pulled through this. This resulted in varying degrees of finished hemp: coarse, fine work (thread), and the spinning quality which was then spun all Winter long by the ladies and girls.

Oh, it was like the Pleasures of Life and Living when these girls would go to the spinning room in the evenings, spinning wheels in hand.....the fine hemp being spun and woven together with beautiful colored silk threads.... The girls and the boys (5) would go to each other's homes, and wherever else they were invited. And there the girls would be busy spinning, the sound of the wheels humming around and around.... While the boys would be watching from behind the hearth, looking quite silly. There was singing... there was laughing...the boys would be goofing off and acting foolish. The time passes by quickly and everything's going well...until the night watchman announces 10 o'clock. (in verse:)

But if the man of the house brings out some schnapps
A quick little game is played
Until it's time to go apart
The spinning room is then made dark
And the boys and girls return to their homes.

In the Springtime, the hemp was processed further. It was boiled in lye, washed and dried. It was then spun onto reels and delivered to the Weaver. In many homes, you could hear the looms clattering. It was said:
(in verse:)

Back and forth the shuttle floats
Keep on weaving...just stay with it
For soon your efforts will pay off
And the Weaver will rejoice
Don't want to scold, Don't want to curse
When I have to trim off the frayed edges
Calmly, I must seek those fraying threads,
For swearing will only increase my annoyance.

The cloth is then thoroughly worked and bleached in the Summer so that it can be used the following Winter – the coarser material is made into clothing fabric and the finer, stronger hempcloth will be made into tablecloths, bed sheets, shirts, etc.

Now I want to write down how we crafted our transport wagons:

At that time, we still used a double yoke cross piece on the bovines. This piece was laid over the head and behind the horns and then bound securely over the forehead and around the horns with long straps. (6) The hole in the center was where the wagon/cart shaft was inserted. This was a torture to the animal in the summer, what with the raging mosquitos and horseflies. That poor animal couldn't defend itself other than to merely raise and lower its head...especially when it was pulling a two-wheeled, solid-shafted wagon. The swinging and swaying from loading the hay and grain also made it quite dangerous for the one standing in the wagon, doing the loading. After 1870, these two-wheeled wagons all disappeared and the double yokes were eventually thrown into the rubbish pile.

At that time you still saw a lot of open wells with a mere three foot high stone structure built around it. The bucket that was lowered down to bring up the water was on a rope that was hung from a wooden framework/structure. Our parents always warned us and scared us away from the wells by telling us that there was a troll that lived in there and if we looked down into the well, he would reach up and grab us and pull us down into the well.

Now I want to begin a new topic. Let's lay the antiquities to rest and change the subject to younger days.

One of my first experiences of which I still have fond memories of was the first wedding that I was permitted to attend. My father took me along to the wedding of his cousin, Martin Wolff. How proud I was with my little bouquet on my cap.

Then, another instance I've never forgotten was how my sisters sent me to the schoolmaster's apple tree to get them some apples that they needed for their game. We lived right next door to the schoolmaster, and his apple trees were so heavily laden with apples that the branches hung down to the ground. I had just barely gotten started picking the apples when that old field guard Lorenz slithered up behind me and tanned my backside so well that I had respect for him for a long, long time!

He was a very good field guard, and all the boys feared him. Oh he times when the young boys set out to aggravate him! When the cherries were ripe, the young boys would slip into the community cherry tress just outside the village perimeter, and old Lorenz would surprise them -- well, it wasn't long before those old wooden shoes were in their hands instead of on their feet as they rushed to get down out of the tree in time to escape! Sometimes, if there wasn't enough time, the shoes were sacrificed and left behind...and then it was nothing but RUN!!!! Boy, if he ever got his hands on you, there was sure nothing to laugh about!

I spent my first years of independence, before I started school, with my cousin Jacob Aberth who was my same age.
(in verse:)

Often I still must think about my childhood years;
How happy and carefree I was.
But then when the time came when I had to go to school,
Anxiety and troubles began along with learning.

When I was still a young little fellow, barely six years old
I had to go to school (and it was through force);
I was stewing as I sat in the dirt-filled ditch of a pond
When my sisters came and (8) dragged me away from my game.

"Come, little brother, you have to come with us to school"
but I stubbornly refused to go along with them.
So they squeezed me between them, one on each side,
And dragged me, still struggling, all the way to school.

Then the teacher came to lend some help,
And, to my loathing, sat me on the bench.
He'd barely turned his back to me
When I, in full trot, disappeared out the door.

Now I'm no longer a child,
The years are passing by –
You can see it on my balding head and my stride.
Though I often dream that I still feel like a child
... with parents and sisters...how lucky I am!

The little house of my parents,
The pear tree in the yard...
I can sometimes see it, standing so lovely in my dreams –
Even the apples and the pears, so nice in the garden
And plums and cherries – I can see them over there.

It brought so much pleasure to my life,
Though sometimes also such sorrow and worry....
But that's life – you come and you go.
Just keep striving to overcome.

I've been in school a long time
It's been a long learning process
And I no longer fight it.
School is almost finished,
And I leave with a bow.
Will reconcile myself to be calm,
The way God wants me to be.

(9) The school years lasted from 7 years old to 14 years old. We had an efficient school teacher, old Father Zittel, whom I still remember with honor, even though he was very strict and sometimes caught me by my backside. We learned German and French together, since Elsass was all German speaking even though it belonged to France. The boys who became soldiers didn't learn French until they enlisted, but during my school years, French began to be taught in the schools.

In 1870 when I was 13 years old, the war between France and Germany broke out. We children were just reading at the Schafbuschhof Farm on Land Street, when the French advanced. This was in early August – the harvest had come very early that year. That was when I saw my first black man.

The first approaching regiment were Turks, black Africans. As then the various troops spread out, it was life encompassed in chaos. The soldiers immediately went on the hunt – they grabbed whatever geese and chickens they could catch, and helped themselves to whatever wood they could find to make their fires in their camps. My father promptly prophesied that they would lose the war – he said they had no organization or discipline....and so it was to be.

The General made his headquarters in our village, but was not anxious to start any battle as he'd arrived with only one Army division. However, as soon as the next morning, the 4th of August, (10) a group of black Africans slithered quietly, without Commando, through Weissenburg Rebberg and over the land boundaries to the Bavarian outposts. The outposts, however, pulled back. The General, by the name of Douai(?), had just ordered his breakfast, and the infantrymen were again on the hunt for chickens and geese, when the shooting began. Everything stopped to listen! The

soldiers stopped their chase/hunt and ran back to the camp to their units while the General sent a scout out to find out what happened. He returned almost immediately and reported that the massacre had begun.

The General's attention was no longer on his breakfast. Quickly, he had his horse saddled and then, shaking, mounted him. He rushed off to the top of the hill to oversee his troops. The shooting swiftly progressed as one detachment after the other joined in the battle. As the General arrived atop the hill, the battle was in full swing. He hadn't ridden very far along the ridge before a hostile bullet caught him and killed him.

The Bavarians had advanced quickly and were already nearby. In a short matter of time, the French were in full retreat as they were pursued by a Bavarian and a Prussian Army. The Turks who so boldly and arbitrarily started the fight, ran away the fastest. Just the evening before, they had been dancing around their campfire with their optimistic mindset that (11) they needed only the Germans to continue their campaign toward Berlin....as if they were on a rabbit hunt. The entire French army was a waste – no training and no discipline....and thus, one after the other, they lost battle after battle even though they had more modern artillery than the Germans.

This was then the first battle of Weissenburg-Geisberg on the 4th of August 1870. On the 6th of August, the second battle of Woerth-Froeschweiler began where the proud General MacMahon stood across from the Germans with a complete French army, and where it became more obstinate and more gruesome than in Weissenburg. In spite of the angry retort, the French once again lost the battle. Whoever has witnessed such a thing has no desire to ever live through it again. How cruel when mankind, who are all brothers and who have never harmed each other, stand against each other so full of rage, most especially when it comes to hand-to-hand fighting like at Froeschweiler. This is where the Bavarians and the Turks fought each other with bayonettes - eye to eye - and mutually slaughtered each other. (Shocking, cruel, inhumane!)

And so it went for the French, one battle after the other lost, until the Germans were in Paris, and the French Kaiser/Emporer Napoleon was captured. My heart aches even today when I think of the wounded moaning and wailing at the first-aid stations, and I saw how they were dressed. (12) The utter devastation on the battlefield. The townfolk had to help bury the dead their bloodsoaked bodies all blown up and distended from the big heat... the blood having already turned black.....they lay strewn everywhere. French and Germans alike were laid together in the graves.

Now I want to write down something that I really don't like to remember that was supposed to come together in the War of 1870. It, however, did not come to pass because of God's great mercy. It is how the Catholics intended to massacre all the Protestants and Jews just like they had done previously in France.

Everyone, of course, knows about the bloodbath of Bartholomew's Night where 30,000 Protestants were cunningly and cruelly massacred, and the Pope declared happiness and God's will be done. The Empress Eugenie, Napoleon's wife, was namely an intimate friend of the Jesuits and Bishops and in the same opinion with them to exterminate/eradicate the Protestants in France as soon as the war was won (which, by the way, was considered a 'given'). But it turned out very differently. As He says, "my thoughts aren't your thoughts, and my ways aren't your ways".

In our village lived at that time only six or seven Catholic families, many poor, fanatical, stupid people who already had the nicest houses in the village and had divided up the goods and happily awaited the day when (13) the battle would break loose. On the day before the battle, a division of Turks holed themselves up in our church, and as soon as the battle was won, our Catholics planned to assemble in the church, and the Turks were to go from house to house, break in, and kill whoever they found there. As children, my cousin and I would often come to the workshop of the Drechslers who were Catholic. We would search under the overhang for things to play with. How often would he come after us with his knife to our throats or at our chests, with murder in his eyes, saying, "Should I cut your head off? (slice through your throat?) or should I exterminate/eradicate you, you heretics!?" Those were frightful days for us. So when the French had to flee, they (the Catholics) believed that now it was up to them, and thus the retiree I spoke of earlier, hid himself because he also was Catholic.

On Palm Sunday in 1871, I was confirmed in the church by Pastor Camille Tournier along with other similar-aged boys and girls from Steinselz, Oberhofen, and Rott. I have never forgotten this celebration my whole life long, and the first question: "what is your only comfort in life and in death?" The answer was that I was the youngest of the nine boys and six girls who were confirmed. We were lined up in order of age. Even the verse I recited, I will never forget. (14) It was Psalm 34, the first verse:

" I will extol the Lord at all times, his praises shall always be on my lips"

which I, however, didn't always do. My teacher wanted me to continue my learning with a comrade, Friedrich Stephan, who was the nephew of the

teacher. I didn't want to though, as I didn't derive any joy from learning, but always wanted to be a soldier and become a "Gendarm" (not sure what level this is) .

I imagined how great the soldier's life must be. I never imagined, though, how you have to train and clean and mend... and how you come home late at night all dirty and wet and torn up, and then the next morning how clean and tidy and shiny everything had to be. And then there was the Calvary where the reins and saddles needed to be cleaned, and the horses themselves needed to be groomed twice a day, every day: their hooves washed and then smeared with fat/lotion, the eyes and even the ass hole had to be washed.

So, I stayed at home with my parents until I was eighteen years and five months old....until I joined the ranks of the military on the first of October 1875, having willingly enlisted for 3 years.

I lived the nice soldier life in Strassburg for two years with two other comrades who had enlisted at the same time with me – Peter Theilmann from Steinselz, and Fritz Eifried from Rott. These two have not been living for a long time now, as they both died at a young age.

(15)(in verse:)

So often have I thought of how I spent those first nights. Stretched out at the camp, covered with a rug. Under me, a handful of straw – such a bed I'd never had anywhere before. The bugs all filled with rage, sucked out my young blood. In the morning, full of knots and my eyelids swollen shut, I arose after the first night that I spent with bugs.

One loses their courage/cheer when things start out like this. And it was such a scare when I heard for the first time, the trumpet's shrill sound in the early morning before the day began, and we quickly had to report to the horses' stalls to groom them. The oatmeal like I've never tasted before, and then off to our duties – that's how the soldier-life began.

I would have quickly deserted, had only someone offered. But then, where would I go? There was unfortunately no escape! But, here I am now, I have to participate, whether I like it or not. It's truly difficult and hard, but I'm not with my mother anymore. I have to hold out, whether cold or warm, otherwise I'll never make it to "Gendarm"! Though different than I'd imagined, I did it anyway.

After one year, both our fathers in Steinselz became sick and (16) we were given an application/request to go home. We had both received commendations for good conduct, and were both released from duty after only two years instead of three. And on top of that, we were released as Reserve Subordinate Officers because we'd already had a previous year of service and had been promoted.

(in verse:)

When God arranges for a faithful wife
Whom He's honored with virtue, breeding and belief
He has the best sweetheart of all
And can be pleased over and over.
Her husband gets advice and comfort from her,
She is his hearts desire and his 'ornament',
Is his girlfriend and his refuge,
is tied to him with God's word.

As I was home again in the second year and put my 22nd year behind me, I entered into marriage with Margaretha Salomea, born Biegler, 20 years old, on the 17th of June, 1879. Sie was the daughter of Jacob Biegler and Dorothe, born Schau, and lived alone with her mother - her father had died many years before, and her brother Martin (who was 6 years older than she) had moved away. Through his carefree life, after his father's death and a long, drawn out process, he accumulated debts and left everything in a lurch. He got married and moved to Paris with his wife where he became a wagon coach driver. We divided up the goods, and house, farm, cattle, agriculture equipment and house tools to pay off the debts.

(17) The mother still had a sister and a brother who both were deaf and dumb and lived next door, and also two other sisters who had their own families in the village. Both deaf siblings were the oldest of five and lived with each other. The brother, Martin Schau, the oldest, was 68 years old when we got married, and the sister, Margaretha, was two years younger. The parents had promised/bequeathed to the both of them, the living quarters next to their farmhouse; this was done through the court justice in effort to protect them from being cheated by their siblings, so that the two sisters and their families who were living in the village would not be able to take advantage of them and steal what and when they wanted. It seemed as if that they could foresee how the other siblings would treat them after the death of the parents. This, obviously, made the siblings very mad and hostile. It was a very lengthy process, as I said before, gave the opportunity for the two other sisters to file a complaint.

After long negotiations before the judge and many expenses, the process finally ended with the conclusion that the two deaf ones could do as they wished with their property ... however, after the death of the last one, the entire estate was to be split up equally amongst all the heirs. You could NOT let the two of them know that the (18) others would also get a share of their estate – and they have did learn this; they believed in all confidence that we were allowed to retain everything from them.

So, we worked in the fields together and got along well. Until now, the two of them (I'll refer to them an Uncle and Aunt from now on) had taken care of their agriculture together. They always had two cows and two or three calves, bred two pigs for slaughter each year, and had chickens, geese, dog and cat. From the cows they got their milk and used them as draft (pulling) cattle. The Uncle could emit various sounds that his cows heard and understood while driving and plowing, and they obeyed him well.

Every year the Uncle would plant a piece of field with hemp and worked it all the way through to cloth. He named his hemp breaker 'Dulfe', and had his own hemp working bench and a spinning wheel where he would finish the cloth after his sister spun it over the Wintertime. He would even make his own clothing from the cloth which he would have dyed blue. At that time, no one knew much about cotton fabrics and colorful shirt fabrics. When this first became known, the hemp workshops fell away, and the spinning wheels disappeared from the houses. A new era broke out. The old is gone – it has all become new. And the same happened with us, as we stepped into marriage.

(19)

Psalm 128

¹ Blessed are all who fear the Lord
Who walk in his ways

² You will eat the fruit of your labor,
Blessings and prosperity will be yours

³ your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house;
your sons will be like olive shoots around your table

⁴ thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord.

⁵ may the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life;
may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem

⁶ and may you live to see your children's children.

What followed were lucky and blessed years, even though there was much work and various un-wished-for circumstances. On the 17th of March 1880, our first son was born whom we named George Martin, and on the 31st of May 1881 followed our second son named Fritz. Then came Heinrich Jacob on the 25th of April 1884, daughter Maria Salomea on the 1st of September

GRAMM

Aunt Dora

1885. Next came Dorothe Juliana on the 30th of June 1888, and on the 1st of November 1890 came Martin Michael. After him came a son Louis Phillipe on the 15th of March 1892 and daughter ~~Carlin~~ *Caroline* Magdalena on the 12th of December 1893.

This was no child's play; it was a lot of care and work. In the meantime, the deaf Aunt, Margaretha Schau, died at the age of 75, and the brother-in-law, mother's brother in Paris, died at age 36. In 1890, we tore down our living quarters (house) only to build it anew – it was approx. 150 years old and was once a two-family house. Later, we built a cattle stall, new pig stalls and new wood shed.

(20)

Those were difficult, work-filled days for mother and me, for aside from the field work and the children, mother still had to cook for the craftsmen, carpenters, masons, shriners and sometimes the day-help, too. I had to manage all the building materials like the land, limestone, building stone and lumber – in those days it wasn't so convenient to build like here in America. You had to get your raw materials/stones at the quarry, your lumber had to first be cut down in the woods, and the masons and carpenters first had to be paid before they could even get their materials. How many times did I have a wagonload picked up early in the morning before the workers arrived. To build, I got money loaned to me – as much as I needed, for 4% interest per year because I was already well-known, always on time, and conscientious about paying my bills. We were grateful as we moved into our new house and could live there, with our nice new stalls, too... Little did we know how short-lived this time would be! That's why

You should love as long as you can love
Love as long as you like;
For the hour comes, the hour comes,
when you'll stand at the grave and whail!

In April 1894, my dear mommy died. 72 years and almost 6 months old. And almost immediately thereafter, my youngest sister. She had been a teacher for many years and then had gotten married. She was only 35 years old. She left behind her husband, an Evangelist, and a little boy.

(21)

Then it was on the 6th of May, as we awoke early to begin the days work -- I did my usual, and went to the stalls to feed the cattle and clean the stalls, while Mother dear cooked breakfast. When I came back from the stalls, she told me that she felt very bad and couldn't do anything more, and I told her to go lay back down. When I came back from the fields, she still wasn't

feeling any better, so I called the doctor. I had driven out a ways to plant some barley, and as I returned around midday, she hadn't gotten any better, but had actually gotten worse. I immediately called for the doctor who promptly diagnosed pneumonia. Just days before we'd been in good health and had so cheerfully planted red beet seeds and all sorts of vegetables together – we'd come home late and laid down to rest .. all in good health. Now, I made sure to be very punctual in giving her her medicine, and the doctor came every day. But it was all in vain – 9 days later, with a broken and bleeding heart, I had to close her loving, trusting eyes. She was just 38 years old. Her birthday was on the 14th of May, and she died on the 15th of May...1859 – 1897. When I had seen that all hope was lost and the end was near, I gathered up all 8 children, ages 3½ to 17, and brought them to her death bed to say their good-byes. That was a hard, cruel hour for me! Within a few short hours, she died in her sleep, gentle and blissful.

(22)

(in verse)

My God, I beg in the blood of Christ, take my life, too!
I wished I would have gone with her!

Several men, young as well as old, were also afflicted with this malicious sickness. Although I was inconsolable and depressed, it still calmed me that mother dear (Mutterlein) didn't have to suffer long. In the last days, she even told me that she was feeling better and could get out of bed, if I would just let her.

deaconess In these difficult times, I had a great deal of help and support from both my older sisters – the same ones who had dragged me to my first day of school, and who always stood faithfully by me. The oldest sister, Catherine, was a "Diakonissin" (?) in Straßburg, and took a long vacation to be with me. The second oldest was a widow with no children, so she stayed with me permanently as did my old father. These two had just been at my brother-in-law's for two years – the widower of my youngest sister – and had helped him out until he remarried.

From my old mother-in-law, I had no help. She was living with her deaf brother who had been alone since the other sister died in the house next door. Everything else we held together jointly. Nothing and no one could take away my homesickness, which (23) came with doubled force at night when everything is quiet and still – and many times kept me from getting any sleep.

(in verse)

Everything is asleep around me,
yet I sit alone with wounded heart and heavy sorrow
beside the dim lamp light.

I am so tired, my heart is so weak from homesickness and grief
No man can feel my pain that fell upon me so quickly.

Only a few weeks ago it was all so good! Mother-lein was still there
But then it all changed so quickly; so shockingly near
One morning Mother-lein exclaimed, "today I can't get out of bed!"
Though I did make the effort, it couldn't be helped.

The doctor did his best, I can't expect any more....
Death slowly draws ever close with grim eagerness.
She lies in gentle rest in her grave, released from all her needs;
Awaiting us at God's throne.
If only I were already dead, too!

So sleep in peace, my dear mother-lein. God to bless your rest!
With us you can be no more ; oh my dear, you!
Around me gather 8 mourning children, big and small alike
What's to happen to you, dear children?!

God, our Father, doesn't sleep,
His help is always here.
He knows our frailty, and helps in due time.(24)
Encourage my heart, renew my cheer!
God disciplines, of course, like a father
But he only means it well!

So I had to get myself through this horrible circumstance, even though
sometimes I didn't know how to get through it - what and how to start. My
oldest sister had to return to her job at the Diakonissen home as her time- *Deaconess*
off came to an end, and the other sister wasn't particularly healthy and
strong. As stable as my loving wife was, you just don't find many like that.
In the fields, she worked like a man; in the home, she could sew, crochet
and knit most beautifully; housework and cooking were a delight, when she
had the desire. Everything that passed through her hands was in kindness
and joy.

One year after Mother's death and after his confirmation, I allowed the third
oldest son, Henry to move to America. Friends who had emigrated to
America years before and were living on a farm in Creston Ohio had written
to me and asked me to send two of my sons to them. Since no one else

had the desire to go, he went alone. Oh how my heart ached as I sent him off – off into the big, wide world... so young, and so alone. He, however, headed off in joy, singing along his way. For his welfare, I pinned the address of his final destination to his chest so that anyone would be prepared to help him find his way. And so he arrived, grateful and good condition.

At the beginning of the year 1899, the deaf Uncle died at age 88, and his house, his farm and his goods were (25) auctioned off, and the profits were equally divided amongst the surviving sisters. I bought the house with farm and garden from the auction myself so as not to get a mean neighbor.

Around this time, I received a letter from Paris from my brother-in-law's wife that she was having such great difficulty making it with her three children since her husband died. Couldn't I acquire a home for them here in the village? She could get by much cheaper here than in the city, and it would also be healthier for the children. My old father promptly tried to talk me out of it, saying that one day I would regret it – he knew what kind of a mean, bad family she came from. I, however, couldn't be so coldhearted – it was, you know, the children of my dear wife's brother. I answered back, "let it come as it may"; I will let them come, as it would give me bad conscience if something bad would happen to those children.

So I let them come and live in the house I'd auctioned for Uncle Schau....I could make use of the barn, since they didn't have any agriculture themselves, and the in-laws or grandmother would live with them.

"it's not good to have any joy in this world
if your mean neighbors don't like it!
Though worse than a mean neighbor
Is a mean neighbor full of cunning and hate!"

This I had to learn the hard way – in full measure. Just such a person, you see, lived right across the street from me. (26)

Since I didn't give in to her the way she wanted, she became enraged and tried to do me harm and make me a suspect in any way, shape or form she could find possible. It was so bad, that I finally had to forbid her to use the path on the side of our house which she used almost every day.

So she turned her friendship toward the grandmother and the Parisian in an effort to convince them of her lies and deceit and get them to be on her side --, which I'd already anticipated. The old lady (the grandmother) got to be so wild and crazy at us that my old father and my sister were afraid of

her and would get out of her way whenever they even saw her coming toward our house. Up until this time, I'd left the door open for her to come and get whatever she wanted or needed.

Once, on a beautiful Sunday, my sister begged me to drive her to a fairly distant neighboring village to do some visiting. As I was getting the horse prepared in the stalls, she came over again and promptly asked me what my intentions were. I told her that my sister wanted to ride over to Hunspach. She immediately started scolding and cursing at me, saying that my sister only wanted to go out joy-riding, and she would be left to care for and feed my father. Then she came at me, pummeling me with all kinds of curse words and names.... saying that I'd poisoned the old Uncle, and more such horrible things. I paid no attention to her and did not respond. I knew it was (27) just the work of the neighbor. When I'd finally heard enough, I took her by the arm and led her back to her home and told her to go inside and leave me in peace. After that, I went back home, changed my clothes and prepared myself to leave.

Didn't she think of another surprise – as we passed in front of her house, there she stood, fixed, in the road, bidding me to stop – she wanted to go along. My sister let out a scream, and rather than stopping, I prod my horse with my whip to continue on and left her standing here in the road. Now she had enough time to curse and swear and to go to the neighbor to vent and get more dirt. Had she just been a little bit more civil, I would have gladly taken her along.

The Parisian still remained quite friendly – because she wanted to buy the house she was living in off of me. She begged and pleaded with me daily. She'd brought money from Paris and wanted to use it as a downpayment on her own home. Of course, I could continue to use the barn. Finally, I gave in and sold it to her at the auction price I'd paid. As she held the sales receipt in her hand, the weather suddenly changed, and the thunderstorm that had been forming itself for a long time now, let loose in a tremendous boom. No longer was I the nice uncle who provided everything for them – now I was called the murderer, thief, rogue, liar, sloven and immoral dog, etc., etc.

(28)

I let her rant on and let it go in one ear and out the other as best I could; I knew she'd been listening to the neighbor who'd told her tales of how I took the deaf Uncle's income and got rich off of it when half of it belonged to the Parisian --as if I'd cheated her out of something... She kept going on and on and on. Oh sure, that would have been nice....we do all the work, looking after of the old folks, taking care of them, feeding them, watching

over them when they were sick, and then we send half of their income to her!? The neighbor would have brought it to pass that that she was compensated and then bequeathed the grandmother's estate, and my children would get nothing!

During these outrageous, upsetting times, my sister watched quietly from the sidelines as these events transpired. She saw the danger lurking. She was well-known and had a very good reputation in the nursing care field, and she didn't want me to give up my home and my agriculture.... as I'd planned. It was my plan to find the three youngest children an institution or some other care facility and to take them there, and then find some kind of work for myself. The oldest son had moved out long ago to a big farm in Mühlhausen by Elsass, the third oldest was in America, and the others were already taken care of. It was no pleasant mission for my sister to find a wife for a house of eight children – I certainly wouldn't have taken on that task myself (29). I mean, who would come into such a situation? But, she accomplished her mission- she found me a wife.

We were married on the 4th of April 1899 in the church in Steinselz - where a mere 20 years ago, I'd married before. She was Swiss. Her name was Rosina Klossner, born on the 11th of March 1868 to the Dietigens in Canton Berb, and was ~~not~~ 31 years old. She had worked many years as a cook for a rich family in Gebweiler in Elsass. That was how she'd met my sister. Although it has been a long time since she'd lived out in the country and worked the land, it didn't take her long to pick it back up...and she got along well with the children. Had she stayed in her current position, her boss made the comment that "whoever takes this girl from me, will also take me with her!"

Now, if only this crazy neighbor wasn't around. But there she was, playing her cruel and hostile games. She and the Parisian kept busy causing trouble, and both worked together to turn my children against their new mother at any opportunity they could. The grandmother got very nasty and horrible with my wife, constantly ridiculing and abusing her, calling her curse names, etc. I was so enraged, I saw red! I took it so far as going to the Burgermeister (mayor)! He sent his "Gendarm" to the house and gave her a warning that the next time she pestered, scolded or swore at my wife, she would be fined. (30) That worked, and we were finally left in peace.

Both of my oldest sons were already soldiers; the oldest, George, was stationed with the Ulanen in St. Johann, and the second, Fritz, was in the infantry in Germersheim Pfalz. I still had quite a quantity of hay sitting in the barn that was the property of the Parisian. Since she was being so hostile, I thought it would be best to remove the hay from there. As I went

to the barn, the ladies were in the room across the way, gossiping with two other like-minded women. The older son of the Parisian was in the farmyard with the carpenter and mason who were making repairs in one of the stalls. I told the boy, 19 years old, that I would kindly like to pick up my hay. He went along with me and opened the big gate for me. There was a wagon filled with wheat in the way, and he said that would need to be moved out of the way. I, however, told him that was not necessary – we would toss the hay out of the upper floor onto my garden/property, and he agreed with me.

But, as we began to get started, there was the grandmother standing down in the yard yelling that it belonged to her. As my son Fritz who'd just returned home on vacation made his way upstairs to toss out the hay, she grabbed his pantleg and pulled him down. I helped him back up, though, and he began tossing the hay down into the yard. My other children were already standing in the yard, ready to take the hay away, when she grabbed onto me, screeching that the hay (31) belongs to her and barraged me with her curse names. I took her by the arm and took her outside and told her that she should go back in her house and leave me alone – the hay was none of her business. I hadn't gotten far on my way back to the barn when she was hanging on my arm and started again with her name calling. Again, I took her back to her house, and again, the same thing happened, except this time, she hung onto my back and started beating me with her rock-hard shoes.

Now I'd had enough. I shook her off me so that she fell backward into the ditch. Immediately, she began to whail. I didn't believe that she'd actually hurt herself, so I picked her up and set her back on her feet. She just continued her whailing and moaning. Then came the others. The Parisian came at me with a big rock in her hand. Her son, Leon, was more understanding and sympathetic and took the rock away from her and told her to go back in the house. What would happen next?

We hurried to get our hay moved to our house and waited for what would come next. Had I anticipated what would happen next, I would have just let them keep the hay, because now they had rationalization to support their lies.

They ran to their friends, the sisters of the grandmother, and their families who had always been my enemies, and (32) told them how I'd abused the grandmother. Right away, they called for the doctor and reported this "horrible" act to the authorities in effort to have me arrested, and rejoiced and celebrated in my face that "now we've got you!" and I wasn't going to get away with it.

They had previously filed a complaint against me about how I'd taken trees from the Uncle and sold them as building lumber. They were, however, turned away by the court, who ruled he could do as he wished with his own property. "This time! This time," they said, 'if there was any God in Heaven', I would get what I had coming! They never had anything to do with this God, but of course, this time he was going to stand by them.

The courts, however, ruled first with the executive committee, and since I was in good standing and received a good report, they did not take this matter to court but gave the instruction that if they had any quarrel or fault with me, they'd have to pursue it on their own time and their own dime. Otherwise, the court would be the plaintiff and they would be presented as witnesses; oh woe unto me! In their hatred and anger, they strained to file further charges against me, and when it came to the court proceedings, witnesses for the other side had to be presented.

On that fateful day, they presented the mason and the carpenter, and I presented my son Fritz who had had to take a leave from his military duties. The charges which were heard first (33) were those of the wonderful committee of women – the grandmother, the Parisian and her sister, and my nasty neighbor who was always stirring up trouble. When they were finished, it was my turn, and I told it exactly as it had happened. Then came the witnesses, one after the other, to be heard, and each told about how the old lady was so enraged, and poured out all sorts of curses and bad names, and how I just tried to turn away.

And so it went. Their demands were refused, I did not go to jail, and the grandmother, who had lain in bed ever since her fall and had to use a cane, was suddenly healed and laid her cane to her side, and we had to split the court costs.

I want to share something now about my neighbor.

We had been very good friends, since childhood, and it was after I turned her away after I was widowed that her hate began. She had her husband, who was a very good neighbor to me, though he wasn't very good to look at. He was short and fat, which is why he was called Stumpy by most. Furthermore, his face was full of pockmarks from an illness he'd had previously. But he was strong and tough and could work better than most could ever attempt to work. They came together poor and had only the money they'd saved from their work to start off with. (34) After several years and a lot of hard work, they bought the house across from me and then also one piece of field after another.

Now, that would have been all fine and good, but it was just their luck that it was taking too long to get rich; so, they reached over the fence. They were once observed during the turning of the wheat out in the field, taking a chunk of their neighbor's portion and from time to time, putting it in with their own. Also, when the hops were being sold, people were always so astonished at how they had accumulated so much to sell from just their own little field. One early morning before daybreak during the time of harvesting the hops, a man happened to be walking through the fields and saw this neighbor in the Mayor's hops field (which was next to theirs), busily cutting down/harvesting the hops. The man, who knew the fields very well, reported this to the mayor. The mayor very delicately brought this up in conversation and called the neighbor on it. He swiftly talked his way out of it, and the mayor didn't cause him any more difficulty. But word spread quickly through the village. The neighbor lady got very mad at the mayor and came at him when he said how he had often wondered about his hops crop being lesser and lesser when he'd bring it home.

Since she'd always had such a foul mouth toward my wife, I decided to play a trick on her. (35) One day when there was a wedding, many people gathered on their way to the church to watch the wedding procession march through town. I'd hung a big bunch of hops on a huge tree limb that hung across the path where the people had to pass through. So, as the church bells began to ring, the people began rushing over to the church, and the old lady sent her son out with a long stick to knock down the bunch of hops. She knew that the people would understand the significance.

My dear wife, though, would not allow herself to have any bad blood for the neighbor's slander, but she held herself more sternly to my side. She cared for my old father as if he were her own, and had as close a relationship with my sister who was living with us, as if it were her own beloved sister.

In March 1901, my dear father died. 83 years and 4 months old. We buried him next to my mother who had been laid to rest there 7 years previously. (in verse:)

So rest your weary dead legs until the day of the Lord appears!
Rest in peace in your tomb!

In November 1902, after a difficult and bitter day when I had to call for the doctor, our son Albert Jacob was born, and in November 1904, our son Daniel. Then in April 1906, our son Herman Gottfried. Around this time, the grandmother also died; we had visited her during her last illness and

had reconciled before she passed on. The Parisian and her second oldest son had died of consumption prior to this.

Late in 1906 (36), our son Martin went to Henry in America. Henry had gotten married and lived in Akron. Fritz was in Saarbrücken where he'd also gotten married; George stayed in the military, Salome was in France, and Dörtel (Dorothe) got married too.

And so passed a few more years with toil and work. It was in the Summer of 1912. I'd been out harvesting hay during the heat of the day, sickle on my shoulder. and tired and weary from cutting, when I came home and saw a strange man standing in our yard. He greeting me friendly and quickly explained that he had come from America and was bringing greetings from my son Henry. He was originally from Hunspach and was named George Niess. He had come to visit his former homeland.

We went into the house and had lunch as he continued to report to us. We immediately instilled a trust in him as he was so simple and charming, and you could see and hear that he exaggerated nothing. He told us that Henry's wife was his brother's daughter (he was her uncle), and they had commissioned him to bring us back with him.

This was, for us, quite a surprise -- we'd never thought of this in earnest. Yes, just a short while before this, Henry had written to us about coming over, and I had, jokingly, written back to him that we were coming and sent along a picture of us. We, of course, didn't know that we would need to make our decision and send our answer so promptly! Uncle Niess indicated that we should think about it overnight, and he would come back to us in the morning. If we decided to go along with him, we would need to make up our minds very quickly -- his ship was scheduled to set sail on the 24th of August, and it was now already early July. So it came down to we either would go or not.

After a short but earnest consultation, we agreed to go along. The sweat and strain and maltreatment we'd endured here certainly couldn't be as harsh in America! Yes, the Uncle agreed, here you have a beautiful home, but there, in America, you will also find one.

So, now we had to rush to get our affairs in order. In the following days, we went to the Notary to arrange for auction of our house, land, farm and goods, and then to the ship to arrange passage. By this time, the ship was already filled up to 4th class (between decks), but it was just the same to us. Now it came down to packing everything up so we could send it ahead

of us. Dear Uncle Niess became more endeared to us every day as he faithfully stood by us.

Now this was a big Event in our town, and many sought to talk us out of it saying, "You have America here with your beautiful house and your goods. You'll regret it!" and so on and so forth. We, however, had no time to entertain those thoughts – we had to hurry ourselves. Of course, it pained me to leave everything – my home that I'd had from childhood and where I grew up....my many fruit trees which (38) I had planted as seeds, tended to as they grew, and then transplanted. My pair of enemies, however, were happy to be rid of me, as I was a constant thorn in their eye, especially because they couldn't get anything on me and, on top of that, I was a church elder and was in charge of the church monies for 18 years until we emigrated.

And so the time passed quickly until our departure. The goods were sold and the large travel trunks filled with bed clothes, linens, clothing, books, pictures and clock was shipped ahead of us. We had our farewells with friends and acquaintances, and then the last day in my old homeland (which I will never forget) arrived.

For our last meal, my cousin invited us over. I sent my wife and children... then for me, eating was the last thing I had in mind on this last day. So I stayed behind to be alone and undisturbed in the house where I'd experienced so much of life in Some happy times, and then also some bitter sorrow. I knelt down and let the memories and thoughts flow through my spirit, reliving everything that had happened to me ... all my life experiences.....and I begged God to stand by me into the future just like he had been with me in the past and had helped me through many difficult hours.

As I left, I cried out, (in verse:)

"so live in happiness my dear house;
I go grievingly through the door.
So live in happiness you sisters of mine,
to you I must also bid farewell.
And you, my dearly beloveds in the cemetery,
from all, from all I must depart!"

It is not good to transplant an old tree, (39) because it is hard for it to re-establish its roots – I've known that from experience – so I prepared myself for anything. I was already 55 years old, mother was 44, Albert 10, Daniel 8 and Herman 6. Our friends were so kind to us and did whatever they could for us, especially the innkeeper George Regula and the castle guard

(Jacky) who did us the last big favor and drove us and all of our many pieces of hand luggage to the train station in Weissenburg.

We departed at 8 o'clock in the evening on the 22nd of August 1912. We rode through Frankfurt am Main and Hannover to Bremen where we arrived at 10 o'clock the next morning. There, we had to find and retrieve the trunks we'd shipped ahead. This was quite an undertaking, searching through a mass of other baggage and parcels. When we finally had all of our things together, it was first made ready for the ship's transport. We had to arrange the shipping documents. And were also medically examined and vaccinated. This brought on much distress and crying to our boys, as the doctors were quite wild and coarse.

Our accommodations were at the Hotel Strassburg, and we thought we would be here a while. But the next morning, we were awakened early and told to gather up all our hand baggage and take the railcar to Bremerhafen. We arrived after about two hours, and went on board the ship directly from the train. 'Hui' (oh my gosh!), what it looked like (40) on the between-deck where we had to go. There was a filthy ruckus there, and we were afraid to walk through there with all of our hand luggage... and we were even more afraid to leave it there! A ship official came by and saw immediately there was a problem, and asked if we didn't like it here... For 30 DM more, per person, he could arrange a room for us where we would be alone and would have a young bellhop serve/help us. We gladly took him up on this offer, and I paid him 90 Marks; we were immediately taken to a room at the very front of the ship. We had excellent service and were well taken care of the whole trip.

On Saturday morning the 24th of August 1912 at 10:00am, the anchors were lifted with a loud crash and were wound up in the air as the ship left the port and sailed out to sea. But first, as the anchor lines were loosened—it seemed as if the engines of the giant ship George Washington started running on their own, and soon we saw nothing more than water and sky.

In Bremerhafen I saw my first seagull – I thought at first it was a pigeon, and wondered about why it would dive almost into the water. Another day, we sailed along the coast of England and stopped in Southampton where more passengers boarded, and then we went on to France where, once again, we stopped in Cherbourg to pick up more passengers. From then on, it was off to the big blue ocean.

Up until now, everything had gone well, but (41) Tuesday night it began to storm and the water spritzed in through our porthole. A sailor quickly came to close it up. This brought on seasickness – little Herman began to throw

up and kept whining "oh, we should have stayed at home!", and Mother was right behind him. It was deathly bad. We all crawled onto our beds and held on tight as the ship rocked violently and practically lay on its side to a point where you couldn't hold yourself upright. This went on through the entire night and the next day until Thursday morning when it became calmer and the weather cleared up. The windows were opened up again, and we went up on deck to get some fresh air and recover.

It went on smoothly then, and on Sunday, the second one on the water, we began to look for land. It never was to be seen, but as evening neared, now and again we would see a bird. That was how we realized that we were nearing land. On Monday morning, the 1st of September, at 4:00 am, we sailed into New York Harbor. That was a magnificent and unforgettable sight! It wasn't yet daybreak, yet the many lights shined and glimmered and they reflected in the waters of the harbor – it was beautiful sight to see!

After breakfast, it was time to prepare to disembark, and each of us sprang to retrieve our bags. We stepped out onto firm ground, and our baggage was then thoroughly searched. Everything (42) had to be opened ... this caused much difficulty and effort to have to repack everything. Then it was back onto a steamboat – we had landed on an island first so that our things could be searched through. Now we were underway to the real terra firma – New York. Our baggage was again weighed and transferred to the railcars – we had to pay an additional \$3.80 (USD) because the American weight was different from the German. It was not until 9:00 in the evening that everything was organized and we boarded the railcar ourselves. The train rushed through the night and another full day without stopping, taking us to our final destination, Akron Ohio. It was the evening of the 3rd of September 1912 when we happily arrived.

Henry was at the train station already waiting for us – I didn't recognize him anymore, – along with Salome who had come over two years previously with ^{Caroline} ~~Carlin~~. Once more, we were loaded into an automobile with all of our bags, and the last transport was to Henry's house on Brown Street where we were joyfully welcomed and could finally rest and recover from our arduous travels.

In October, we bought two houses on Grant Street – one to live in and the other to rent out. I had to find work, and found various opportunities, but nothing was to my liking -- until I found work at a garden center/nursery where I then stayed for a long time. Later, I came (43) into a bakery to work, and I stayed there as long as I could continue to work. My wish was always to buy myself a farm here - I came from the land and would have

preferred to return to the land, but I didn't like what I found. One place was dry, meager gravel, another was swamp land – and everywhere so many weeds and the repulsive wilderness. I was used to the well-groomed fields and meadows of Elsass. And so, as time passed, we stayed in the city.

In March 1913, there was a big flood where for 3 days we had thunderstorms and uninterrupted rain, which brought utter devastation. I saw a train stuck in mud and slime right where it needed to go through a cave/tunnel. And then there was another train that derailed because the tracks were flooded. One house stood in the middle of a river, and the neighboring street was completely washed away in spots. Huge trees had slid down the hills - roots and soil in all. It was a long time before everything returned to normal.

On November 9th that same year, there was another horrible storm – but this time, a with snow. The trains weren't able to run for 3 days because of the snow drifts. And then another storm was to follow that was even more terrible – it was the storm of war that broke out in 1914 and shook the whole world.

(44) How shocked we were when the news came that war had broken out in our old homeland after the murder of the Austria-Hungarian Crown Prince couple of Serbia. And how my heart trembled when it truly did break out -- I still had three sons, a son-in-law, and the youngest son of my deceased sister who were still there and had to participate.

(in verse:)

On the back of this land of freedom, I stood filled with worry,
looking through the eyes of sorrow at my homeland full of hurt.
When we'd gone our separate ways,
who would have thought of war and troubles.
Everything went well in peace – we had our daily bread.

But it came like a mean storm, this war; the gales blowing.
And how bitter it arrived – hard and harsh.
How so many mothers groaned
Filled with hurt for their sons;
Clinging to them as they had to leave for war.
And so many children watched as their fathers left,
Lost was their trust when they never returned home.

Oh mankind! So proud and foolish – always boasting,
And so quickly they became wild...to robbery, murder and atrocity!
Oh, is it not something to cry about—
These lies, hate and jealousy?
Can't this folk unite?

Not even in Christianity.
When the love of Christ doesn't shine again from the Christian's
heart,
Mankind will never unite
And it will remain hate, war, and pain!

Who would have believed that America would get itself mixed up in this war? (45) At first it was in secret, and then as they looked for the cause, they openly and deliberately got involved.

I was so pleased that my son Martin, who'd been drafted and was supposed to go overseas, refused to fight against his brothers and did not go along. The law allowed him this because he had been born in Germany. He did have to deal with the mockery and ridicule, but he held fast and did his time here on the land.

"Guard them, Lord! My heart is heavy – I can guard them no more;
though I send to you, like a guardian angel, prayers with wings!
Guard them, oh Lord!"

Soon we became the sorrowful news of those who had fallen in the war – those we knew and loved, and we lived in constant fear of bad news of our family members. First came the report of my nephew – the son of my deceased sister. A splendid young man, only 22 years old – he was dreadfully injured and died in Lazaret of his wounds. Next was my son-in-law, a dear, good man – he was killed by a grenade in France. Oh how that pained me! My three sons made it though unhurt, even though they had at times looked death in the eye.

On Good Friday, the 6th of April 1917, America declared war on Germany, and stepped in, full force. (46) Oh how the lies and deceptions were spread about the Germans, just to stir the folks up. And they believed it all, and prosecuted the Germans wherever they could! I can never forget how they 'sat on top of us', and how we had to duck down and swallow the many curse words: Murderers and such...and more of the same - that's what came at us from all sides. On the street, you couldn't speak German or they'd spit in your face. And where the government buildings stood, you couldn't even attempt to walk. You had to have with you, along with the

spit, your passport with photo and thumbprint at all times. And this enraged me, too...because German was forbidden as well as drinking a glass of beer or wine. THAT is why I would never be mayor.

All methods were used to inspire the people to help win the war against Germany. Liberty bonds were pushed on the people; those who didn't want them were forced to get them. Even the school children were included with savings stamps. Many church communities had their preachers stirring up the hate and the lies against Germany and its Kaiser. And the disgraceful pictures of the Kaiser and the Germans were passed around - especially through the Cleveland newspaper, the Plain Dealer. One German newspaper (47) after another had to stop appearing. All Germans must get registered, and they were required to have their passport with picture and thumbprint with them at all times...etc., etc. Enough of that - it disgusts me just to think about it.

On the 11th of November 1918, the war ended and the glorious victory of the conceited, righteous folk against the barbaric German was celebrated. There was no end to the foolishness. And for another 12 years, the fruits of this disastrous lie and slanderous war continued - the whole world whines and is in misery and doesn't know where to or where for. No one knows anymore how to help themselves.

In 1917, we sold our two houses, 860 and 864 Grant Street where we lived for only 5 years. We bought a house at 231 Abel Street where we lived 6 years. In 1920 we bought 435 E. Thornton Street which we rented out, and then in 1923, we bought the house at 15 E. Mapledale Ave. where we live now. In 1926 I exchanged Abel Street for a larger house on 611 Kling Street which we also rented out.

In 1922, I had a small stroke which paralyzed my right side for a while so that I could no longer work. From the beginning, it was hard for me to stay home, but I found ways to occupy my time. I had several chickens, I hunted rabbits, I planted a small garden, and I helped mother as much (48) as I could. Sometimes I could help out on Henry's farm, too. Now, however, as I am writing this all down, in the year of 1931, I am 74 years old and cannot do any more heavy/difficult work - my arms and legs deny my duties.

On the first of September this year (1931), it has been 19 years since we landed in New York. Oh how things have changed here in Akron in such a short time. Where we now live, in Firestone Park, it was once farmland and woods all the way to the railway bridge on Brown Street. And that's how it was all around the town where there is now a new downtown area. Where

Henry's bakery stands was once a deep ditch where the canal was built. The bakery was built just after our arrival, just not as large as it is today. Across from the bakery on Grant Street stands a large beer brewery from Burkhard's – this has also been added onto up until the time of the Prohibition.

It was back then that I admired the stalls with the nice sturdy horses. They were brand new and built well. Underneath was the wagon storage and up above were the big stalls where the horses had to walk up and down. This had always amused me. And then over the stalls were the feed troughs with hay, straw and oats. There was a stallboy employed to care for the almost 20 horses. But now the stalls stand empty; the horses have disappeared and have been replaced with machines.

(49) Such things in this country I don't like and do not agree with, mostly the school laws, the prohibition and the many millionaires. These three components are the country's ruination. What is with this schooling that goes until the age of 19? This is the destruction of the youth – a terribly huge risk.

(In verse:)

What one must witness, God have mercy!
With these school statutes/laws –
boys and girls, arm in arm,
going to school now –
and what risks they pursue behind the scenes...
many girls become mothers before they're even 19!
Yes, if it were severed, this sexual pursuit,
useful and good teaching,
then it would be alright –
but they're paired up over this long schooling period,
and instead of preserving the girls' youth,
it's lost to shame and stupidity.

And then there's the Prohibition, set in place for the poor.
The whole world laughs mockingly, ridiculing such stupidity.
The rich man drinks what he wants, thinking nothing of it
But the poor man has to acquiesce to this disgrace and humiliation.
And if he doesn't want to obey this national plague,
He is punished frightfully in fines and arrest.
How some innocent men, and even some women,
Had their lives affected by this hypocrisy!
It's no wonder the poor despised such laws (50)
-- it didn't bother the rich ... they were the ones who made the laws!?

America, the richest country, with lots of money and goods,
For them it is a genuine shame how the nation cannot tolerate
necessity.
What good is it for the nation to have so much gold, there in the
Capital?
Locked up tight and all rolled up, that does the nation no good;
That's why the taxes rise every year
And if you don't pay on time and in cash, there's another fine added
on top.
There are many millionaires, but are they benefiting the nation?
They suck it out of the people almost to the blood, without shame or
honor!
They are the rulers of the country
They stand as the leaders, making all the laws;
It's a shame and joke on the people.
They live full in the overflow with their big wages
Expecting to receive even more, even taking it with force
And many the poor many stand in the surrounding factories,
Coming every day to beg and implore for work.
The few who have work are exploited till almost dead;
And others with wife and children suffer from starvation.

This is how it is in America!
Free after hard-fought wars,
Though there it is again – the old slavery!

In regard to Prohibition, I want to share a little bit. I attended a wedding (51), and after the church ceremony and nuptials of this young couple, we left the church and went to the reception hall for the banquet. As we dispersed among the tables, I saw at each place setting stood a large glass filled with spring/well water – so we could all recognize that "God's spring is filled with water!" If, however, no one took mine away, it would still be standing right there on the table where I left it! I mean, we were at a Christian wedding where you're served wine, just like Hana in Galilee, where they must have drunk well or they wouldn't have run out of wine and Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer, made wine that was even better than they'd had before (John 2:1-10)

(In verse:)

Were those supposed to be Christians who thought up the laws?
Didn't Jesus drink wine himself and even made it?
You Hypocrites! The truth of the Lord still applies to you.
(Matthew 23)

You're taking on a heavy load, yet you yourselves remain distant from Him! Beware, you scribes; Hypocrites, He calls you, because you've turned the wrong way inwardly, and outwardly, most especially.

But now, back to where I was - at our "water wedding". Several more water-filled glasses were left on the table even though you could see the thirst in the people's faces - especially the men. A long time was spent on eating until it would no longer slide down our throats.... (52) And it was so quiet - almost sad, like at a funeral.... And then I suddenly noticed that the men, one after the other, silently disappeared and never returned....until I was the only man left sitting there with the women and the water glasses. I thought they'd gone outside to refresh themselves - it was Summertime, and I went out to look for them. How astounded I was to find that they were nowhere to be seen. Where had they all disappeared to? I walked through the reception hall with no luck. Then suddenly I heard sounds wafting up from the basement. I went down the stairs, and as I opened the door, there they all were - drinking beer and wine... 'refreshing' themselves! I, of course, had to join them. The women could stay upstairs and jabber with their water. Here's to Prohibition!

In our town, there lived a man, a bone-dry one at that, who was the richest man in town. He drank beer or wine or brandy, or water or coffee. He had two sons and two daughters. The two sons were married, and they both drank themselves to death, just as his son-in-law also did. When you force someone to give something up, it is generally gets even worse. I'm not a fan of drunkenness, but I'm neither when such a law is put into force like the Prohibition. Fine the scamps and leave the others be. (53)

Now I am at the end of my remembrances and experiences. I've had many joys but also many sorrows; I even had several times in which I was in danger of dying. One Spring, I had a heavy wagon load of manure and was driving it over to the hops field over a dirty path that was soft and full of holes. I had a young three year old horse paired up with the old horse. As we proceeded along the path through the many holes, the wagon bouncing up and down, the old horse consequently got her back leg up over the wagon shaft, and because she couldn't tolerate this between her legs, she sat her hind quarters down on the shaft, and the wagon came to a halt. Since they were both very tame horses, I went in between the two to try to get her leg back up and over the shaft. Failing, however, to release the pull chains so they couldn't pull them as I freed her leg, they immediately stepped into gear because they were now frightened, and ended up tearing me apart. Fortunately, I had kept the lead in my hands, so as they dragged

me through the dirt, they couldn't get very far with their bridles and had to stop.

As I crawled out from between the horses hooves and the wagon wheels, I looked like a sow that had been waltzing around in its sty. My first thought was "thank you, God!" that nothing worse had happened. Had one of the wheels caught me, I would be sure as dead. (54) As I got up to walk, though, I couldn't put any weight on my one foot, so I had to hop along on one foot. It was a good thing it happened close to the field where I'd dumped the dung. So I mounted the empty wagon and drove myself back home. For two weeks thereafter, I was bedridden with immense pain.

Later in the Summer, I drove with the same horses over an hour to Dorf Street in Kalksteinbruch to pick up frohnsteine (a particular brick/stone). Here and again, back and forth, there came this huge horse fly buzzing around the horses. My younger horse couldn't tolerate it and reared up all of a sudden, kicking up over the wagon shaft. I was sitting on the wagon with the reins in my hand. But the horse didn't sit down on the shaft like the older one had done previously, instead, he took to his heels with one leg still over the shaft, and took the old one along with him. I couldn't stop them as they headed over a deep ditch for the field. I held on for dear life, or I would have flown under the horses when the wagon wheels slammed into the ditch and the rear flung up high into the air. Such was my luck, that as the forward wheels fell into the ditch, the wagon shaft slammed into the ground, allowing my horse's leg to be freed, and I was able to continue on my way.

Many such instances came my way where death stood at my doorstep. But through how many dangerous situations did the merciful Lord spread his wings out for me!

(55)

Now something about our old night watchman and how the bad boys got him mad. At that time, there were nice boys, too, just as there are today. I often went to his house, as he was my uncle, and his youngest son was my favorite companion. Oftentimes, the two of us would light the 9 o'clock hour, tend the fire in the watchhouse, and then announce the 10 o'clock hour like he had to do in the Wintertime as he walked the night guard through town (if he didn't sleep through it!)....and then we'd go home. He also had to chase the young drunken boys home from the bars if they were out past curfew and were causing a ruckus.

When he announced the 10 o'clock hour at each station around the town, he would sing in his deep baritone voice, "listen townfolk what I have to

say, our clock has struck 10; keep watch over your fire and your candles that there is no fire tonite." He would announce closing time in both pubs, and then it was back to the warm watchhouse where the big armchair next to the stove stood beckoning him. He placed his spear in his arms as he sat down and took his well-deserved rest and slept.

Once, a pair of mean older boys snuck into the watchhouse and very quietly took his spear away, gently carried him - in his chair - out the front of the watchhouse and into the center of the school yard. (56) They then eased the spear back into his arms....all without ever waking him up. Then they ran a stretch ahead and made a big ruckus until he woke up and got all mad and started yelling at them.
(they got a kick out of aggravating him!)

And now why our priest had a lock put on his woodpile:

In our town each Spring, the priest, the teachers and the midwives got their special wood for making their books delivered from a community forest. It was brought in, reduced into small pieces, and then prepared for use in the oven, and dried in a nice breezy spot, where it was kept until it was needed.

My property was on the border of the priest's garden and church, and on the opposite side of the priest's house lived a friend of mine. Every year I would order a case of limburg cheese, and we would split it between the two of us. When once again, a case of this cheese arrived, I picked it up at the nearby train station.

It was early Winter, and my friend came over with a big basket to pick up his half. We talked with each other for a while - until 10 o'clock - and then he loaded up the basket, filled with his half of the cheese, heaved it onto his shoulder, and made his way home. He was barely at the back of my house and practically at the church, when he heard someone coming directly toward him.

(57) It was a dark and gloomy night, and in order to avert anyone from thinking him to be a thief, he stood in the open hall of the church where the stretchers with the dead people were kept and the sparrows spent the night, waiting for whoever it was to pass by.

It was two siblings - one boy of about 18 years old, and a girl of 15 who were also on their way home. As the two passed by the church hall, the boy said to his sister, "wait a moment, Saelmel... I want to quickly see if the sparrows are hiding under the roof here", and he jumped over in his

wooden shoes. He lit a match to scare off the sparrows....but a scream of fright came out of his mouth as his match lit up a man standing in the corner with a basket on his shoulder! He dropped the match, flung his wooden shoes off, and yelled, "Saemel, come!" and they ran head over heels back home.

Soon thereafter, the blacksmith had to make a strong lock for the priest's woodpile because the shepherd's children had encountered a man near the priest's house at 11 o'clock at night with a big basket of wood on his shoulder. "Now I know why my wood has been reduced so sharply" said the priest. "What kind of bad people there are, even hiding in the church with their stolen wood!"

(58)

How my mother was once a witch

Yes, most will ask, are there still witches in today's world? I don't want to discuss this question in particular, but instead focus on the fact that there are still people who believe in witches and tell how it went for them, since I personally knew them all and will report as follows.

It was a Sunday morning. I lay in bed sick with a cold. I was still single and living with my parents. I was told that the neighbor's daughter was also sick, so I asked my mother if she didn't want to go to the neighbor's and find out what she was sick with. She answered that she would stop on the way to church, so she got herself ready and left a little earlier. Had we known that these people believed in hexes/witches, my mother surely would not have stopped by.

Just the day before, they'd had an exorcist from another town come by to see the sick child. When my mother then stopped by to inquire about the sick child, the family and relatives were all gathered together because the exorcist had told them that the child was indeed cursed, and he arranged that the witch had to come into the house. He said, 'Whoever was the first to enter the home was the witch'....

...and this honor unfortunately befell my mother.

In answer to her question of how the child was doing, they gave her only incorrect and evasive answers and proceeded to stumpled all over each other as they ran around the house like they were possessed. When my poor mother saw that something just wasn't right there, (59) she didn't spend much time there at all.

Whatever these crazy people had done against the witch, I have no idea. Did they catch and put her in a sack and thrash her, or did they burn her in the fire and dump her in the garden at midnight?

As the child continued to get sicker and sicker, they finally called for a doctor who immediately diagnosed kidney disease. She got well again, but in later years she went mad and this lasted until she died. Her father had to take care of her for years – day and night without rest or peace. Everyone who passed by the house could hear him moaning and groaning. Though we never held anything against them, they always kept their distance from us.

I knew another family that believed in hexes. They had two sons and one daughter. One son sat by me at school, the other was two years older than us, and the daughter was two or three years younger. This classmate of mine often told stories about witches – how you can recognize them and how to catch them, and all that other stupidity. I never paid much attention to it all.

Their father taught the kids other ridiculous things, and when the boy had a fight with someone (which happened quite often), the old man would come to his aid – they lived right next door to the school. The father himself was always fighting with someone, even with his own wife. Then as the boys got stronger, they would take their mother's side, and (60) the dissention grew and grew until it became violent attacks and the boys beat up the old man.

And so it got worse and worse every day, until one day the man stabbed his wife in the heart with a kitchen knife. I still remember it as if it happened yesterday, even though it's been over sixty years. The authorities were quickly called. They found the murderer hiding under the bed where he'd retreated to after he stabbed her, and they dragged him off to jail.

He was sentenced to ten years in the penitentiary, and when he returned, both boys had fled – one to Africa and the other to America. Only the daughter stayed in town. She had gotten married to a cousin of her father's brother's son – the same type of person as she, and they lived together like cat and dog. So this was the only place he could go. There he was treated like a slave – he was a burden to them. After a short time, she sent him off to America to his youngest son, and he didn't live much longer after that.

Psalm 1:

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful, etc., etc.

That is also confirmed in the following which I also experienced and saw with my own eyes.

In the 73rd Psalm, the psalmist laments (61)

"Do not fret because of evildoers nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb."

I thought this over and wanted to comprehend it, but it was too difficult for me until I entered the sanctuary of God and remembered her end. How quickly they become null! They go down and have an end of fright.

In our town lived a man who was two or three years younger than me. He was a bully, a liar, a fortune teller and was skilled in all kinds of evil doings. In younger years, all the young people were afraid of him because he always grabbed for the knife he kept on him. When he told one of his big lies, he would corroborate it every time with this horrible saying, "the Devil come get me if this is not the truth!"

He got married and became a wealthy farmer. He wasn't exactly a drunk, but he like to drink, and he had a cellar full of wine and brandy. On the summer side of the town lay a big vineyard, and all along the paths of the field stood many fruit trees which any farmer could access for his wine. This particular man had only one son. The man got unexpectedly sick, and little by little his whole face turned black until he looked just like a devil and the people ran from him. On top of that and until his death, he would become so enraged that it would take four attendants to hold him down. His wife who also liked to drink, died (62) one year later, and the son who'd married young, also died shortly thereafter.

Don't be confused, God will not be mocked!

Another man, fairly older than me and a neighbor of this man I spoke of, was such a horrible curser, you would be frightened just listening to him. This man got to be so far in debt, that he lost his house, his farm, and his merchandise/goods and it was all auctioned off. On the day of the auction, everyone searched for him everywhere, until they found him – he hung himself in his barn.

I knew another man, a blasphemous man, who lived with his family – wife, two sons and a daughter – near to my parents' home. He beat his poor wife sometimes until her face and back were black and blue, and she would flee to the neighbors to find refuge. He finally took a wood ax and locked himself into an adjoining room. After about three days of being holed up in this room, the neighbors demanded that he open the door....which he did not do. They threatened to knock down the door with an ax. On the fourth day, when everything was nice and quiet in the room, one of the neighbors put a ladder up to the window to see what was going on. He'd hung himself. His oldest son later fell into a creek in a drunken stupor and drowned, and the other son also hung himself later on. They all had an alarming death!!!

(63)

Exodus 20:3 The 2nd Commandment:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me"

In my former homeland, we were very familiar with a miller family who had a good operating mill in the neighboring town. There was a large, well-known creek that flowed through there. We had our grain milled there, and the lady of the family always bought her requirement of eggs and butter from my mother. They had two big, strong horses hitched up to the mill wagon with which the boy drove from town to town to pick up the whole grain and drop off the milled grain. Next to these two horses, they had another nice, strong, brown-black thoroughbred that they used for pleasure rides, or, when necessary, they would also hitch him up to the mill wagon. This horse was their favorite, and they named it 'little god' – other than that, they never asked much of God.

One day, the boy had a special load of wheat to pick up in the neighboring town, so he hitched up this horse on its own onto a smaller wagon. On the way home with the wagon loaded, the brakes shattered, the horse got skittish, reared up and broke his bones on his rear legs, and the "little god" had to be put down!

(64)

The Town Butcher

On November 11th (known as Martini) the swine slaughter began where the poor little pigs were dragged with force to the butchers' block and where under horrible frightened cries, their nice little pigs lives were ended. From that day on, throughout the Winter and until Spring when the work in the fields began again, you would hear this frightful death cry daily....one day here, the next day there.

In the mornings, a large kettle was filled with water and brought to a boil until the town butcher arrived. Then a door or a large board was laid down, and a neighbor was summoned to help if there weren't enough men available. One of the men would go to the pig sty, grab the selected pig by his hind feet and tail (no pig will bite his hind side), and the butcher would grab its ears, and then with all force and lots of squealing, it was heaved onto the board, and all the men held it in place.

The blood was kept for sausage (wurst), and when the pig bled to death, it was laid into a special hollow, feet facing down, and the boiling water was brought over to pour over it (brew) so that the bristles could be plucked out. After that, it's laid onto a scaffold/frame, cleaned further with sharp knives, thoroughly rinsed off, and then hung up. It is then cut open and cleaned out. The butcher cleans out the intestines thoroughly in order to use for the sausage; heart, lung and liver are cooked for sausage (wurst) meat, and then the blood and liver sausages are immediately made.

(65) After this, the pig is sectioned off for ham, bacon, etc. and preserved in a meat preserver with salt, garlic, pepper, and the like. After 4 to 6 weeks, the ham, sides and hindquarters are hung in the smokehouse. In the evening after everything is in order, a wurst soup is made. All of those who helped with the process are included, even the good neighbors or friends are invited. First is served the wurst soup, then sauerkraut with bacon and potatoes, and finally the grilled wurst. Even the wine cannot be forgotten – the best one in the cellar, because with sauerkraut, you cannot drink water. Afterward, there's story telling and pleasant conversation, sometimes until midnight.

I remember all these things quite well because my father was the town butcher, and I sometimes went along with him when it wasn't a school day. Next to my father, there were two other men in town who would also butcher for folks, but they got only a few jobs. The one was an avid tobacco snuffer – he always seemed to have a black droplet hanging under his nose that oftentimes fell while he was working – sometimes even when he was making the wurst. The people didn't like this. The other man sometimes couldn't bring the pig to death because he couldn't stab it properly. It even happened once that after the pig was laid into the hollow and as the boiling water was brought over to help pluck out the bristles, the pig came back to life and ran away.

I would have liked to have become a butcher – if only the killing part wasn't necessary.

(66)

Jacob or "Jockel"?

You are a dumb "jockel", that's what you say when someone says or does something stupid. There lived a family in our neighboring town with an only son who was named Jacob. As the parents got older and the boy made no preparations to get married, his father took him aside and said, "Listen, Jacob, you're old enough (and have been for a long time now) to get married. Your mother is getting older and soon cannot do her work alone anymore. Go and find yourself a wife so that Mother gets some help in the house." "Yes, father," replied Jacob, "you can say that – you did well my marrying mother, but finding a wife is not so easy!" But when he finally found someone, she had already had a child when she was single, but it had died. His friends mocked and ridiculed him. "Oh! She already had a child!" Jacob heartily replied, "And if she hadn't had a child, I would have taken her anyway!"

The City Man and the Farmer

A farmer was looking at a newly erected building in the city when a City man approached him and said, "whatcha lookin' at, farmer? That's the new insane asylum for the crazy farmers." "Oh yes," replied the farmer, "that's what I thought – because for the City folk, it's much too small!"

(67)

The Professor and His Servant

The Professor went on an outing with his servant. He had two pairs of shoes – one with heels, and the other without. Deep in thought, he inadvertently put on one shoe of each. After they'd walked quite a distance, the Professor got tired of walking around with one leg higher than the other. So he called his servant over and said, "Johann, I cannot go one more step in these shoes. Run back home and get me other shoes." After a long while, the servant returned, but without any shoes. The Professor asked, "Johann, where are the shoes?!" to which Johann replied, "Mr. Professor sir, I can't help it....back at the house are the exact same pair you are wearing!"

In Sunday School

The teacher ordinarily asked her students, "Did you make someone happy this past week?" Little Fritz was typically quiet, so the teacher asked him specifically, "Fritzy, did you make someone happy?" "yes", answered Fritz. "I was at my aunt's visiting, and when I left to go back home, then she was happy!"