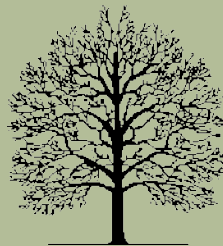


This Is Our Life

Family History Of The Willkes of Maria Stein, Ohio



By: Alfrida E. Willke





Alfrida and Edgar Willke on their 50th Wedding Anniversary. 1986.

This Is Our Life

This album contains the history of the life of Edgar J. Willke M.D. and Alfrida Kleinhenz Willke. It is preceded by a history of their ancestors, written for the benefit of all their descendants. History and pictures were written, compiled and edited by Alfrida Kleinhenz Willke. 1970.

Alfrida Kleinhenz Willke

Edgar J. Willke M.D.

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Introduction

When I began this album in 1964, it started with a picture album of Ed and my parents, our children, our grandchildren and ourselves, with names and dates written under it. I had no intention of making it so extensive until.... one day while taking a walk, I met Richard Pohlmann while he was working in the field, and he told me something about the history of his great grandfather, John Henry Pohlmann, who was also my great grandfather. I found what he told me so interesting that it gave me an incentive to put it in writing. Eventually, I was searching and writing the history of all our ancestors. I then continued with a detailed history of ourselves, our children, and about life in general. I wrote it mainly for the interest of future generations.

Around the 1830s and 1840s thousands of German immigrants came to America and hundreds of them were destined for the German city of Cincinnati, Ohio. From Cincinnati they moved northward until they found the fertile acres of southern Mercer County. This is my first knowledgeable history of my ancestors. When I wrote this history, I lived within a few miles from the farms where my eight great-grandparents settled when they came to Mercer County.

Ed's grandparents came to America one generation later, in the 1850s. When they left their homeland, they, too, were destined for the city of Cincinnati, Ohio. His grandparents came from Germany and Holland. When I wrote this history, I lived six miles from Minster, Ohio, and one hundred miles from Cincinnati, where his grandparents settled.

Since Ed and I remember very little of anything our parents told us about our ancestors, most of the history was obtained from other sources. Perhaps the most interesting was a letter received in the spring of 1970, from Miss Mary Sauers, 77 years, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In her letter addressed to Kleinhenz Ft. Recovery Stockyards, she wrote she was interested in genealogy, and was looking for information regarding her ancestors. She wrote it would make her very happy to learn something about her grandfather, whom she had never known. Her grandfather's name was John Kleinhenz. She wrote she had heard about a company in business in Ohio as Kleinhenz Cattle Co. or Cattle Moving Company, but had never been able to learn the location, nor find any member of the firm. She asked if I knew anything about this company or its address. This letter was brought to me by Robert Kleinhenz, manager of the Ft. Recovery, Ohio Stockyards.

After sending her all the information I had about my father, grandfather, and great grandfather, she returned to me the information that she was certain my great grandfather Joseph Kleinhenz, born 1816, and her grandfather, John Kleinhenz, born 1818, had been brothers.

She mentioned she had in possession two letters, dated 1859 and 1866 from Motten, Bavaria, Germany, that had been sent to her grandfather, by his brother Valentine. In both letters Joseph's name had been mentioned. Up until this time, to my knowledge, no mention had ever been made of Joseph Kleinhenz having had any brothers, or what part of Germany he came from. In her letters she also mentioned an abbott and monastery in Motten, Bavaria, Germany, by the name of Kleinhenz. My last letter to her was returned unopened, and marked, deceased. At the time of her death she was still writing to Germany trying to learn more about our ancestors. She knew that her grandfather had left many sisters and brothers in Germany.

Peter Kleinhenz, born 1793, and Barbara Kleinhenz, born 1800, and their daughter, born 1846, died in 1849 during the cholera epidemic. They are buried on St. Rose cemetery, St. Rose, Mercer County, Ohio. Peter Kleinhenz, evidently, was a brother to my great grandfather, Joseph Kleinhenz. Information was verified in 1978.

Other information about my paternal ancestors was obtained from Richard Pohlmann, and Marcella Pohlman Albers, who remembered their grandfather, Herman Pohlmann, talking about their great grandfather, John Henry Pohlmann.

Aunt Minnie Kleinhenz and Aunt Anna Kleinhenz (Mrs. Anthony) gave me information they received by word of mouth. They were both in their 80s when they gave me information.

Father Goubeaux, St. Rose Church, St. Rose, Ohio, let me look through church records, and also some information was received from St. Rose Cemetery tombstones.

I received information from Celina courthouse, where the Kleinhenz and Pohlmann deeds are recorded. The land was bought from the U.S. Government during President Van Buren's Administration.

Information about my maternal ancestors, Kremer-Seitz, was obtained from the following sources:

Mrs. Louise Bruns, Maria Stein, had an article, a newspaper clipping, about my grandfather Frank Kremer's death in 1916. It was written in German, and I took it to Sr. Friedburga at the Maria Stein Convent, who translated it to me in English.

Aunt Anna Meiering, Cincinnati, gave me a lot of information about the Kremer and Seitz families. She was my mother's sister and was in her 80s when she gave me this information.

Mrs. Luke Beckman (Lorine Stammen), a great grandchild of Detrick Kremer, gave me information from her family tree.

Father Vincent Parr, St. John Church, Maria Stein, let me look through church records, and also a lot of information was received from St. John Cemetery tombstones.

I received information from Celina courthouse, where the Kremer and Seitz deeds are recorded. The Kremer farm was bought from the U.S. Government during President Van Buren's Administration. The Seitz farm was not bought from the government.

Most of the history about Ed's maternal grandparents, Jacob Vanderhorst and Elizabeth Kroeger, was received from Herbert Vanderhorst, Celina, Ohio. He is Ed's cousin and he had a very good record of his grandparents.

Some valuable information was also received from Ed's sisters, Marie Goeke and Marcella Austing.

The history of Ed's paternal grandparents, Willke-Schaeper, was received from Marie Goeke and Marcella Austing. They remembered a lot what Tanta, their aunt, had told them. Tanta never married and lived in the same household.

The history book of Mercer County, dated around 1900 and loaned to me by Richard Pohlmann, had a lot of information about Ed's father.

This book was created from the family history album titled **This Is Our Life** by Alfrida E. Willke and from her handwritten notes. Alfrida's notes and photos were digitized in the autumn of 2012 to create this book. Alfrida's daughter, **Janet Willke Bolton**, transcribed and digitized the text. Alfrida's grandson, **Andrew Niekamp III**, scanned photos, text and created the layout of the book. Alfrida's grandson, **John Spitzer**, edited and enhanced the scanned photos.

This book and Alfrida E. Willke's autobiography, ***I Remember It Well***, are both online at:

<http://www.willkefamily.com>

Third Version - January 2022

Joseph Kleinhenz and Mary Meiner *Alfrida's great-grandparents*

Joseph Kleinhenz, born 1816, and Mary Meiner Kleinhenz, born August 9, 1816, were natives of Germany. They came to America in approximately 1830.

On March 16, 1837, Joseph Kleinhenz and Mary Meiner bought 80 acres of uncultivated land from the U.S. Government. This land is located directly across the street from St. Rose Catholic Church, St. Rose, Mercer County, Ohio. Mary Meiner, my great-grandmother, was an adopted daughter of Mary Meiner. Mary Meiner married Joseph Kleinhenz in 1832 at Springfield, Ohio.

In 1837 when Joseph Kleinhenz and Mary Meiner purchased the 80 acres of land in St. Rose, there was no courthouse in Mercer County, and therefore the transaction took place in Lima, Ohio. Mercer County was established in 1820.

I saw the original deed in the courthouse at Celina, Ohio, where it had been transferred from Lima. The name at that time was spelled Clihus. This farm remained in the Kleinhenz family for 113 years, or until it was sold to Clarence Stachler in 1950. At that time it consisted of 130 acres. This was the farm where I was born and where I spent my childhood days.

Several acres of land purchased from Joseph Kleinhenz were used to build the first Catholic Church, or log church in St. Rose. Prior to this, Mass was held for sometime in the home of Joseph and Mary Meiner Kleinhenz.

The first church in St. Rose was consecrated on November 24, 1844 by Rev. Louis Navarron, native of France. Joseph Kleinhenz and Mary Meiner Kleinhenz were the parents of 10 children:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Elizabeth Duwell, Delphos, Ohio | 2. Catherine Bomholt, St. Rose, Ohio |
| 3. Philomena Fahrig, Dayton, Ohio | 4. Amelia Lochshetter, Columbus, Ohio |
| 5. Mary Pohlkamp, St. Rose, Ohio | 6. Arnold (<i>Alfrida's grandfather</i>) |
| 7. Gerard, Fort Loramie, Ohio | 8. John, Decatur, Indiana |
| 9. Anton, Portland, Indiana | 10. Paul. Died in infancy |

Joseph Kleinhenz passed away August 8, 1866 at the age of 50 years. Mary Meiner Kleinhenz passed away August 14, 1894 at the age of 78 years. Both are buried at St. Rose, Mercer County, Ohio. **Additional information in Part II.**

John Henry Pohlmann and Catherine Hagman

Alfrida's great-grandparents

John Henry Pohlmann was born in Osnabruck, Germany in 1799. He and his wife, and apparently one or several children came, to America in approximately 1833. They first located in Cincinnati, Ohio. Sometime later John Henry came by canal to Piqua, Ohio, and then walked to Maria Stein, Ohio, where he purchased 80 acres of land from the U.S. Government. It was uncultivated and was a woods. John Henry had to walk 50 miles to Lima, Ohio, to get the deed. He and his family stayed in Cincinnati 3 to 4 years before coming to Maria Stein to clear the land he had bought previously. This farm is located 1/4 mile south of the new high school in Maria Stein, and is presently owned by his great grandson, Albert Pohlman, a direct descendant of John Henry and Herman. I saw the original deed at the Celina Courthouse dated March 15, 1837. John Henry was married three times. His first wife and four of his five children died during an interval of one year, apparently of cholera or typhoid fever. His son Herman survived. His second wife died in childbirth. He and his third wife, Catherine Hagman, were the parents of 2 children:

Bernadine (*Alfrida's grandmother*)

Henry, Maria Stein, Ohio

Henry, age 50, was deaf and was killed by a train while walking to church. John Henry passed away June 12, 1888, at the age of 89 years. Catherine Hagman Pohlmann passed away October 27, 1877. Both are buried at Maria Stein, Ohio.

Arnold Kleinhenz and Bernadine Pohlmann

Alfrida's grandparents

Arnold Kleinhenz was the son of Joseph and Mary Meiner Kleinhenz. He was born December 30, 1842, at St Rose, Ohio. He was a farmer. Bernadine Pohlmann, daughter of John Henry and Catherine Hagman Pohlmann, was born December 2, 1846 at Maria Stein, Ohio. They married June 2, 1868, at St. Rose, Ohio and were the parents of 7 children:

Mary – died at age 88 (Mrs. Ben Fleck), Dayton, Ohio

John (*Alfrida's father*)

Anna - died at age 14

Regina - died at age 89 (Mrs. Joseph Meyer), Minster, Ohio

Catherine - died at age 4 months (Regina's twin)

Anthony - died at age 78 (Anna Lochtefeld)

Minnie - died at age 86 (never married), Minster, Ohio

Arnold Kleinhenz passed away on December 25, 1893, age 50; death was due to typhoid fever. Bernadine died on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1893, age 47, during her menopause. They are both buried at St. Rose, Mercer County, Ohio. **Additional information in Part II.**

Detrick Kremer and Elizabeth Bueder

Alfrida's great-grandparents

Detrick Kremer, born September 4, 1807, and Elizabeth Bueder Kremer, born November 10, 1808, were natives of Ankum, Hanover, Germany. They came to America in 1835 with their daughter, Elizabeth, age 2, and Detrick's father, Henry. Prior to coming to America, Detrick served three years in the German Army. They were very poor when they arrived in America with only the clothes they were wearing and one dollar they received from a sponsor. After remaining in Cincinnati, Ohio for one-half year and where their second child was born, they came to Minster, Ohio. They remained in Minster for six months until Detrick selected a farm in Maria Stein, Ohio. This farm consisted of 40 acres which he purchased for \$75.00. It had never been cultivated, and it was nothing but a wilderness. He first put up a rough log house, which was replaced with a better one, and still later with a comfortable frame house. To this purchase Detrick added 120 acres, so that at the time of his death he left an estate of 160 acres. This land is located 1 1/2 miles north of the new retreat house in Maria Stein. It is presently owned by Paul Kremer, his great-grandson. Paul, son of August, is a direct descendant of Henry and Detrick Kremer. This land was purchased from the U.S. Government. The original deed in Celina, Ohio, gives the following record: Land purchased by Henry Kramer (spelled Kramer) May 13, 1836. Transferred to Detrick Kremer on January 14, 1839. They became the parents of 8 children:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Elizabeth (Mrs. Gerhard Stammen) | 2. Mary (Mrs. Henry Vonderhaar) |
| 3. Caroline (Mrs. Henry Will) | 4. Anna (Mrs. Joseph Reichert) |
| 5. Philomena (Mrs. Joseph Kramer) | 6. Katherine (Mrs. John Buehler) |
| 7. Agnes (Mrs. Joseph Roeckner) | 8. Frank (<i>Alfrida's grandfather</i>) |

Detrick passed away March 9, 1886 at the age of 78, and Elizabeth passed away November 26 at the age of 70. Both are buried at Maria Stein, Ohio. **Additional information in Part II.**

Max Seitz and Anna Maria Fecher

Alfrida's great-grandparents

Max Seitz and Anna Maria Fecher Seitz were natives of Germany. The deed at the courthouse in Celina, Ohio gives the following record: Max Seitz, spelled (Zeit) bought from Augustine Buehler some land dated November 29, 1850. This land is located one-third mile south of Chickasaw, Ohio. There was no church in Chickasaw so they went to St. Sebastian, Ohio. This farm remained in the Seitz family until 1918 when it was sold to Henry Kramer. Joseph, their son, farmed this land after the death of his parents. Joseph, age 58, died 1910 at Chickasaw. This farm was purchased in recent years by and Mrs. Richard Bruns. Mrs. Bruns (Alice), daughter of Frank Kremer Jr., is a great-granddaughter of Max and Anna Maria Fecher Seitz. They were the parents of 4 children:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1. Joseph - Chickasaw, Ohio | 2. Mary (<i>Alfrida's grandmother</i>) |
| 3. Teresa - (Mrs. Henry Knapke) Maria Stein, Ohio | 4. August - Dayton, Ohio |

Max Seitz passed away in 1869 and Anna died sometime before that. They evidently died at an early age. They were both dead when Mary married Frank Kremer in 1872. **Additional information in Part II.**

Frank Kremer and Mary Seitz
Alfrida's grandparents



Frank Kremer Family 1907.
Standing: August, Catherine, John, Anna, Anthony, Elizabeth & Frank Jr.
Seated: Reverend Sebastian and Frank Sr.

Frank Kremer was the son of Detrick and Elizabeth Bueder Kremer. He was a farmer and was born in Maria Stein, Ohio, on March 10, 1849. Mary Seitz was the daughter of Max and Anna Maria Fecher Seitz. She was born on a farm 1/3 mile south of Chickasaw, Ohio on October 5, 1853. They were married November. 26, 1872. Frank Kremer and Mary Seitz Kremer were the parents of 11 children:

John D. - died at age 71 (Elizabeth Menker and Agnes Menker) Maria Stein, Ohio

Elizabeth (*Alfrida's mother*)

Catherine - died at age 78 (Mrs. Frank Evers) Carthagena , Ohio

Anthony - died at age 81 (Mary Evers) Carthagena , Ohio

Joseph - died at age 74 (Reverend Sebastian C.PP.S.) Carthagena, Ohio

August - died at age 64 (Catherine Bertke) Maria Stein, Ohio

Anna - died at age 93 (Mrs. Joseph Meiering) Cincinnati, Ohio

Frank Jr. - died at age 69 (Regina Bertke) Chickasaw, Ohio

Three children died in infancy.

Frank Kremer passed away July 22, 1916 at the age of 67 years. Death was due to an asthmatic-heart condition. Mary Seitz Kremer passed away February 22, 1888. Her death at age 34 was due to childbirth. They are both buried at Maria Stein, Ohio.

Jacob Van Der Horst and Elizabeth Kroeger
Ed's grandparents



Jacob Van Der Horst and Elizabeth Kroeger

Jacob Van Der Horst was born on January 3, 1836, in Germest, Holland. He came to America in 1856. His brother came with him but died on ship after contracting pneumonia, and he was buried at sea. The ship landed in New York. Soon after his arrival in the United States, Jacob Van Der Horst married Mary Witte, a young girl from Germany whom he had met on the ship while coming to America. Three children were born to this union: Mary (Mrs. Casimer Kunkler) 82 years; Bernard, 66 years, and Henry, 1 ½ years. Mary Witte Van Der Horst passed away at the age of 23 years. They were living in Minster, Ohio. Sometime after her death, Jacob Van Der Horst went to Cincinnati, Ohio, and visited an agency which was instrumental in helping European immigrants settle in this country. He was interested in securing a wife. He was introduced to Elizabeth Kroeger, daughter of John Henry Kroeger, before Mass on a Sunday and had a date with her on Monday. After telling her the history of his life and all about his financial condition (not having his first wife's funeral expenses paid for), they left on Wednesday of that same week for Minster, Ohio. He promised her that if everything was not as he had represented, he would pay her expenses back to Cincinnati. They came by train to Houston, Ohio.

Miss Kroeger stayed in Houston while Jacob walked 8 miles to get a farmer to take them to Minster, as there was no livery stable in Houston. Miss Kroeger kept house for Jacob for 3 to 4 weeks before they were

married. The public, however, thought they had been married in Cincinnati before coming to Minster. They were married on January 15, 1862, and were the parents of 7 children:

Frank - died at age 60, Cincinnati, Ohio

Henry - died at age 76, St. Marys, Ohio

Elizabeth - died at age 43, California (Mrs. Knapke)

Jacob - died at age 81 , Antioch, California

Joseph - died at age 41, Celina, Ohio

Caroline (*Ed's mother*)

Cecelia - died at age 65, St. Marys, Ohio (Mrs. Frank Bergman)

The name was spelled with three capital letters "Van Der Horst," the first and second words being titles. Jacob's father, being a stone mason in Holland, earned these titles by establishing an enviable reputation as a mason and builder. Horst, the proper name, means Eagle's Nest. The easiest way to offend Jacob was not to write his name with three capital letters. Jacob learned the stone mason trade from his father before coming to America. He followed it until his 52nd birthday. All the stone was transported from Bluffton, Indiana until brick was manufactured.

Jacob was an apiarist and was the first apiarist to have Italian queens which he imported from Italy. After a normal stand he would sell and ship his queen bees to all parts of the East and Middle West. The Italian bees had a sucker long enough to extract the honey from red clover, while the American bees could not reach it, and therefore had to gather white clover. His business thrived to such an extent that it became necessary for him to build a large building, which was used for building crates and extracting honey. His production ranged from 6000 to 8000 pounds a year. For many years he was the sole supplier of bees wax for the Maria Stein Convent, where it was used for making candles. Jacob Van Der Horst died May 31, 1910, at the age of 74 years. He is buried at St. Augustine Cemetery, Minster Ohio.

Elizabeth Kroeger, daughter of John Henry Kroeger, was born on September 14, 1843, in Duiklage, Germany. She came to America with a companion in 1859. They arrived in Baltimore, Maryland, after being on the high seas for 60 days, via sailboat. Miss Kroeger and her companion expected to be in Cincinnati, Ohio three days after their arrival in Baltimore, and were given a three-day supply of food from the ship. For some reason, they were delayed in Baltimore, and a week later found them without food and very little money. They were placed in a box car which took them to Cincinnati. Elizabeth arrived with only 13 cents left in her purse. Her aunt was there to meet them.

Miss Kroeger, and most people who migrated to America those days, applied for entry to the United States through a Commission Agency, which was located in Cincinnati. The Commission Agency would loan them the money, so they could come to America, and they assured them employment upon arrival. After they were employed, the Commission Agency would collect a weekly fee until the debt was paid. Miss Kroeger worked for 3 to 4 years before she met Jacob Van Der Horst. About 12 years later her father and mother came to America, and Minster, with funds received from Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Van Der Horst.

Elizabeth Kroeger Van Der Horst died January 12, 1927 at the age of 84 years. She is buried at St. Joseph Cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Gerhard J. Willke and Theresia Schaeper Willke
Ed's grandparents



Gerhard J. Willke and Theresia Schaeper Willke

Gerhard J. Willke, born in 1818, and his wife Theresia A. Schaeper Willke, born in 1822, came to America in 1857. They were natives of Osnabruck, Germany, but lived in Holland when they left for America. Osnabruck is located not far from the Holland border. They were married and had three children when they came to America, and they settled in Cincinnati, Ohio. Gerhard J. Willke and Theresia A. Schaeper Willke had 7 children:

Adelaide (Mrs. Charles Schunck)

Anna (Mrs. Thomas Unger)

Carolyn (Tanta)

Alois J. (Ed's father)

Three children died.

Four years after the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Willke and three children to America, the Civil War started. Adelaide's husband, Charles Schunck Sr., became a war prisoner and contracted a disease which caused an early death. Adelaide died sometime later, and their only child, Charles Schunck Jr., was raised by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Unger, his uncle and aunt.

Charles Schunck Jr. used to visit us, and he was about the same age as Ed's father. The three children who died were born after Tanta and before Ed's father was born. They supposedly died of cholera. The descendants of Anna are located in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Carolyn, called Tanta, never married, and lived with Ed's parents all her life. She was one year old when her parents came to America. She was born in 1856 and died in Cincinnati on June 1, 1937. She spent several summers with us when we were first married and took care of Marilyn and Bill when they were babies.

Alois J. was Ed's father.

Gerhard J. Willke died in 1873 at the age of 55 years.

Theresia Schaeper Willke died in 1886 at the age of 64 years. Theresia operated a rooming house in the West End of Cincinnati after the death of her husband. Gerhard J. Willke and Theresia Schaeper are buried in St. John's Cemetery, St. Bernard, Cincinnati, Ohio.



*Tanta Willke, Carolyn (Vanderhorst) Willke, Dr Aloys Willke and Charlie Schunck, Jr.
Tanta and Aloys are children of Gerhard and Theresia, Charlie Schunck is son of Adelaide.
c. 1935-1936*

Dr. Alois J. Willke and Caroline Vanderhorst
Ed's parents



Alois J Willke M.D.



Caroline Vanderhorst Willke

Dr. Alois J. Willke was the son of Gerard J. and Theresa Schaeper Willke. He was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on January 8, 1865. He spent his childhood days in Cincinnati attending schools of that city. After some studies under private teachers, at the age of 23 he entered the Medical College of Ohio, now known as the University of Cincinnati and graduated in 1892 after three years of study. After his graduation, he entered Good Samaritan Hospital, Cincinnati, Ohio, where he interned from 1892 to 1893.

While interning he met Elizabeth Vanderhorst, a nurse from Minster, Ohio, who advised him that the town of Minster was in need of a doctor. He then came to Minster, roomed and boarded with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Vanderhorst, and practiced medicine there for a short time. On October 1, 1893, he bought Dr. Renneker's practice in Maria Stein, Ohio, and started to practice there. While still in Minster he fell in love with Caroline Vanderhorst, a sister of Elizabeth, who had been instrumental in bringing him to Minster. Caroline was the daughter of Jacob and Elizabeth Kroeger Vanderhorst, and she was born at Minster, Ohio on April 7, 1876. On May 8, 1894, Dr. Alois Willke and Caroline Vanderhorst were married at St. Augustine Catholic Church, Minster, Ohio.

They rented a house and office for several years in Maria Stein, and in 1900 they built a new house with

adjoining office about 1/4 mile west of St. John Church. It is the same house and office Ed and I occupied in 1931. To this union 10 children were born:

Adelaide (Mrs. Harry Limke and Mrs. Clarence Beckman)

Gerard (Marie Wuenneman)

Marie (Mrs. Al J. Goeke)

Lucille (Mrs. John H. Vehr)

Edgar (Alfrida's husband)

Alois H. (Ann Fette and Marcella Witterstaetter Wilhelm)

Marcella (Mrs. Carl Austing)

Margaret (Mrs. J. Hains Landen)

Twin boys, born July 19, 1899, died in infancy.

In 1893, when Dr. Alois J. Willke started his medical practice, there were no automobiles, so he visited his patients by using a horse and buggy, or often he would walk because of poor road conditions. There were a few gravel roads, but most of them were mud roads. At one time he owned a sulky. In 1913 he bought his first automobile.

The practice of medicine was entirely different than it is today. There was no preventive medicine, so no shots or vaccine could be given for typhoid fever, diphtheria, cholera, lock-jaw, polio, measles, whooping cough, etc. Insulin had not been discovered for the treatment of diabetes. Tuberculosis was very prevalent because the contagiousness of it was not recognized, and there was no specific treatment, so it was almost always fatal. Very little surgery was performed because it was always dangerous. Asepsis was very poor, and the techniques had not been perfected as we see it today. Many people died of appendicitis because they didn't operate. Some, however, recovered without surgery. Operations that were absolutely necessary were performed in the home. In extreme cases, patients were taken by train to Dayton, Ohio, 50 miles away to the nearest hospital. The first hospital in Mercer County was Otis Hospital, established in 1915 and located in Celina, Ohio.

Twenty to twenty-five people out of 100 died of pneumonia, and many women died in childbirth because there were no miracle drugs like: sulfonamides, penicillin, or antibiotics. Minor cuts remained unsutured. Pregnant women had no pre-natal care. Babies were delivered in the home without an anesthetic. One hundred percent of all babies were breast fed. There was no such thing as pasteurization of milk and no refrigeration. Life's expectancy in 1900 was 40 years compared to 72 years today. Dr. Willke had two small office rooms. The one was a waiting room and the other a treatment room. His office was not heated, and in cold weather he would see his patients in the house. He dispensed all his medicine.

In 1922, after almost 30 years of practice, Dr. Willke moved his family to 1017 Lockman Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio. He practiced medicine for a short time, having the office in the house. George, called Gerard, took over his father's medical practice in Maria Stein.

Dr. Alois J. Willke passed away on January 27, 1941, at the age of 76 years. Death was due to a coronary. Caroline Vanderhorst Willke passed away February 25, 1951, at the age of 75 years. Death was due to cancer of the bowel. They are both buried in St. John Cemetery, St. Bernard, Cincinnati, Ohio. All three sons, Gerard, Ed, and Al followed the medical profession.

John W. Kleinhenz and Elizabeth Kremer
Alfrida's parents



John W Kleinhenz and Elizabeth Kremer. 1895



John W Kleinhenz and Catherine Tuente. 1917

John W. Kleinhenz was the son of Arnold and Bernadine Pohlmann Kleinhenz. He was born on the Kleinhenz farm at St. Rose, Ohio, on July 21, 1871. Elizabeth Kremer was the daughter of Frank and Mary Seitz Kremer. She was born on the Kremer farm where her grandparents and great grandparents had lived in Maria Stein, Ohio, on October 19, 1874. When my father was courting my mother, he walked, cutting across the fields, from St. Rose, to Maria Stein, to see her. They were married on November 6, 1895, at St. John Catholic Church, Maria Stein, Ohio. To this union 10 children were born, all at St. Rose, Mercer County, Ohio.

Olive (Mrs. George Thieman)
Raymond (Mabel Klosterman)
Leonard (Helen Russell)
Alfred (Agatha Dorsten)
Hilda (Mrs. Robert Creeden)
Alfrida
Arnold (Alma Bruns)
Pauline (Mrs. Irven Klug)
Two girls, Edna and Mary, died in infancy.

On February 18, 1913, my mother passed away after giving birth to her 10th child, Mary, at the age of 38 years. On February 14, 1917, my father married Catherine Tuente, daughter of Ben and Anna Buddendick Tuente of St. Rose, Ohio. They were natives of Westfalen, Germany. Catherine Tuente was born at St. Patrick, Ohio, on August 1, 1889. They were the parents of two children: Esther (Mrs. Richard Stroh) and Edwin (Winnie Hemmert)

John W. Kleinhenz was a man with a lot of ambition and determination. He farmed 130 acres of land, and also was a big operator in livestock. In 1907 he had a large hog stable built on his farm, which was used for breeding and feeding pure-bred hogs. The pigs were fed until they were ready for market. Not enough corn was raised on the farm to supply his needs for feed, so corn was bought from farmers in the vicinity. The corn was brought in on horse drawn wagons, weighed on the farm, and then fed to the hogs, which many times numbered 1,000 head. When the hogs were ready for market, they were driven on foot to Maria Stein Station, a distance of one mile, where they were loaded in cars and shipped via Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad, to Cleveland and Buffalo Stockyards. Dad also bought hogs directly from the farmer. He would leave early in the morning and spend all day going from one farmer to the next, trying to buy his hogs. I can remember him, especially on cold winter days, going on these trips with horse and buggy. He would take with him a charcoal heater to keep warm.

Dad never stayed with one thing too long because his goals were to always reach for something bigger and better. His next goal was to ship livestock directly to the meat packer or slaughter house, instead of the stockyards. He knew his margin of profit would be greater if this could be done. Many livestock dealers had tried it, but no one had ever succeeded. Dad made many trips, especially out East to New York and Jersey City, New Jersey, to see if he could do business with some of the largest meat packing plants in the U.S. Due to untold efforts and perseverance, he succeeded in his endeavors. In order to meet the demands of the packer, it meant doing a large volume of business.

In 1924 Dad bought a large abandoned factory building which had been the American Chain Co. in St. Marys, Ohio. This building he converted into a large stockyards. He gradually established branch yards within a radius of 35 to 40 miles from St. Marys. All livestock was then trucked from these branch yards to the St. Marys Union Stockyards. Here the hogs were sorted according to weight, as various packers wanted different weight hogs. When there were enough hogs of one weight or size to make a carload, they were shipped to the packer via Nickel Plate RR. At the time of his death Dad had established a tremendously large business. He had 20 branch yards located in 13 counties, besides the large Union Stockyards in St. Marys, Ohio. In 1927 he moved from the farm where he had lived all his life, 56 years, to St. Marys, so he could run the business. A house was rented for a short time and then he bought a large brick house on West Jackson St. It was extensively remodeled and redecorated at the time. He continued to manage the 130 acre farm at St. Rose (although Dad dealt mainly with hogs, he was also a dealer in calves and sheep.)

The stockyards and business was sold a year after Dad's death to Chas. Miller and Company, North Bergen, New Jersey, one of the meat packers who had been his biggest buyer. The house on West Jackson St. was sold that same year, and was converted into a nursing home. In 1950 the farm was sold to Clarence Stachler after being in the Kleinhenz family for over 113 years. Dad died at Gibbons Hospital, Celina, Ohio, on December 27, 1944, at the age of 73 years. Death was due to generalized arterio-sclerosis. He is buried at Gethsemane Cemetery, St. Marys, Ohio. Elizabeth Kremer Kleinhenz is buried at St. Rose, Mercer County, Ohio. Catherine Tuente Kleinhenz died March 17, 1978, at the age of 88 years. Death was due infirmities of old age. She is buried in Gethsemane Cemetery, St. Marys, Ohio. **Additional information in Part II.**

Edgar Willke



Edgar J Willke. c. 1929-1931

Edgar James Willke is the son of Dr. Alois J. Willke and Caroline Vanderhorst Willke. He was born at Maria Stein, Ohio, on November 6, 1905.

At the age of five years he started school, which was located northwest of St. John Church. He attended school in this building for three years, which had one classroom for boys and girls, and taught by a nun. It was located on the first floor. The next five years he went to an all-boys school which was located east of the church. It was a one-room school taught by a man. The classroom for the five upper grades for girls was located on the second floor of the school located northwest of the church.

He was confirmed and received his First Holy Communion in St. John Church, Maria Stein, Ohio. Baptism was administered in the home. While getting him ready for baptism in church, he developed a bad breathing spell, and therefore his Aunt Celia Bergman, who was his sponsor, baptized him.

As a child he spoke the German language which he picked up from classmates and from people in the community, as well as his parents. At home they spoke the English language. The first years of school he studied English and German. Religious instructions, given on Sunday afternoon, were in German for many years.

After grade school he attended high school for four years at Minster Public High School, Minster, Ohio. He commuted back and forth with a Model T Ford. He graduated with a class of 18, ten girls and eight boys on May 25, 1923. While in high school he played basketball and baseball.

After his junior year in high school his parents moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, but he remained in Maria Stein to finish his senior year of high school in Minster. He stayed with his brother, George, who at that time had taken over his father's medical practice in Maria Stein. George and Marie had been married in the spring of that same year.

After his graduation from high school, he left Maria Stein to live with his parents in Cincinnati. It was at this time, the night before he left for Cincinnati, that we had our first date. Living in the same community, we had known each other for quite a while. We both enjoyed dancing, and we had met several times at dances and various other places. The night of our first date he asked whether he could write to me, and my answer being in the affirmative, started our romance which blossomed into our marriage eight years later. I can remember him telling me on our first date that he was planning on becoming a medical doctor. Instead of going directly to Medical School that fall, his father suggested that he should work for a year and should consider going into Dental School. He worked for Union Central Life Insurance Co. for three months and for Powell Valve for nine months.

In the fall of 1924 he had made up his mind and was convinced he wanted to become a medical doctor. He attended University of Cincinnati Medical School for six years, taking two years of pre-medicine and four years of medicine. He stayed at home and went back and forth to school on a street car. Besides going to school he also worked part time. He graduated from University of Cincinnati Medical School on June 13, 1930. He interned at Good Samaritan Hospital, Cincinnati, Ohio, from July 1, 1930 until July 1, 1931. He came to Maria Stein a week later and started general practice. George and his family had left Maria Stein a year prior to this, as Dr. George had accepted a position at Kneipp Sanitarium, Rome City, Indiana. During that one-year interval, Dr. T. H. Will practiced in Maria Stein.

Ed was 25 years old when he started practicing medicine, which was the same month we were married.

Additional information in Part II.



Edgar in front of Alfrida's St Marys House. 1929



Tom Schwieterman & Edgar Willke at Rimrock Ranch. 1974

Alfrida Edna Kleinhenz



Alfrida Kleinhenz. c. 1929-1931

I, Alfrida Edna Kleinhenz, am the daughter of John W. Kleinhenz and Elizabeth Kremer Kleinhenz. I was born on a farm in St. Rose, Ohio, on February 4, 1906. When I was seven years old, my mother passed away. I can very vividly remember when she died, and how Ed's father, who was her doctor, came over with horse and buggy to see her. Ed's father also delivered me at birth.

I started school at the age of six and spent eight years in the little red school house, directly across the road from our farm home. As a child I spoke Low-German. When I started school I learned to read and write in German as well as English. My first reader was in German and we learned English through translations. During World War I, it was considered pro-German to teach the German language in schools, so it was discontinued. I was probably in the fifth grade then.

There were approximately sixty children in this one-room school, where all eight grades were taught by one man teacher. In my class there were two boys and four girls. The school was heated by two wood and coal stoves. Next to school was the church where I was baptized. I was confirmed and received my First Holy Communion in the new church which was built in 1911.

At the age of fourteen, after I had graduated from the eighth grade, my father sent me to a Catholic boarding

school, called St. Mary Institute, at Minster, Ohio, for one year. The school was operated by the Sisters of the Precious Blood, and it was considered a finishing school. Besides going to classes I took piano lessons twice a week. That following September when I was 15 1/2 years old, it became compulsory to attend school until 16 years of age. I again went to the school across the road from our farm home until my 16th birthday.

I have many happy memories of my childhood days on the farm. We did not have the modern conveniences like we have today, but we enjoyed our simple way of living. We had no electric lights or electrical appliances. Most people used coal oil lights, but we had gas lights since we had gas wells in St. Rose.

We churned our own butter, baked our own bread and cookies, and we raised our own vegetables. We raised our own chickens and had plenty hogs and cattle on the farm which supplied us with eggs, meat and milk. We had six horses that were used to pull the plow, wagons and other farm implements. I can remember how my Dad ridiculed the first tractor he saw being used on the field. We had no indoor toilets, no central heating, and our bedrooms were unheated. We crawled in bed on cold winter nights with our long underwear on, using feather beds to sleep on, and to cover with.

I can remember our first automobile, a Reo, bought in 1913. It was the first automobile in St. Rose. It was such a rare occurrence to see an automobile, that when we heard one coming, we would run to the road so we could get a good look at it. We could hear them coming a half mile away because they did not have mufflers. It left a trail of dust on the gravel road. Later, as the automobile gained in speed, going 40 miles per hour was considered speeding. As the automobile and tractor improved, we witnessed the coming of the radio and airplane. Our first radio (1921) could be heard only by using earphones. Seeing an airplane in the sky was quite an attraction, and we looked up every time one flew over.

Today we hear special news bulletins on TV and radio, but in those days we read it in the papers. When something really special came up, extra newspapers called "Extras" were sold on the street corners and delivered in small communities.

At the age of 18 I left home to work in Dayton, Ohio, and later in Detroit, Michigan, where I worked in a factory. From 1926-1928 I worked as a housekeeper for my uncle, Rev. S. J. Kremer, who was pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Cleveland, Ohio. My parents moved from the farm to St. Marys, Ohio in 1927. From 1928 to 1931 I worked as a bookkeeper in my father's stockyards office in St. Marys, Ohio.

At the age of seventeen on Decoration Day, I had my first date with Ed. Our courtship lasted eight years. We, however, did not date often as he lived in Cincinnati and travelling was not as convenient as we see it today. We managed to see each other about once a year the first years, which usually occurred on the 4th of July when he would come to see his brother George and family who lived in Maria Stein. As the years went by we saw each other more often. I was married at the age of twenty-five years. **Additional information in Part II.**



Alfrida Kleinhenz. 1925



Ida Ernst & Alfrida Kleinhenz. 1924

St. Marys Evening Leader - July 21, 1931.

Marriage of Miss Alfrida Kleinhenz and Dr. E. J. Willke takes place today. Beautiful ceremony is solemnized at Holy Rosary Catholic Church. Couple will live in Maria Stein, Ohio, where bridegroom is engaged as doctor.

Miss Alfrida Kleinhenz, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Kleinhenz, and Dr. Edgar J. Willke, son of Dr. and Mrs. A. J. Willke of Cincinnati, Ohio, exchanged the vows of holy matrimony in an impressive service solemnized at 9 o'clock this morning at the Holy Rosary Catholic Church before a large assembly of relatives and friends. Rev. S. J. Kremer, of Cleveland, an uncle of the bride, was the celebrant of the solemn high mass and performed the double ring nuptial service. Assisting him were the Rev. Edward Lehman of Holy Rosary as deacon, and the Rev. Roman Schwieterman of St. Charles Seminary, Carthagen, as sub-deacon.

Miss Kleinhenz was a lovely picture in her wedding gown of ivory satin, fashioned very simply with fitted bodice, long tight sleeves, and full skirt extending into a long train. Its only trimming was a yoke of fine lace. Her long veil of ivory tulle was fastened to a cap of lace, matching that of her gown. Orange blossoms were at each side of the cap. Her slippers were ivory moiré. The only jewels she wore were a necklace of white gold and crystal and a matching brooch, gifts of the bridegroom. She carried a shower bouquet of white roses and baby breath.

Her sisters, Miss Hilda and Miss Pauline Kleinhenz, were her attendants. Miss Hilda was maid of honor. She wore a beautiful gown of pink lace over a blue satin costume slip. It was trimmed with a blue ribbon belt and blue streamers. The skirt was slightly flared with ruffled hem. Lace mits, blue linen slippers and a large lace hat completed the costume. Miss Pauline's gown modeled like that of the maid of honor but in contrasting colors. Her gown was blue lace, worn over pink satin and was trimmed with pink ribbon. She wore pink linen slippers, lace mits, and a pink hat of hairbraid. Both the maid of honor and bridesmaid carried Colonial bouquets of roses and delphinium.

Jack Willke, of Rome City, Indiana, a nephew of the bridegroom, was ring bearer. He appeared in a white satin suit and carried the rings in a St. Joseph lily.

Dr. Willke had as his best man, his brother Alois Willke, of Cincinnati. The ushers were Ray Kleinhenz, of this city, and Al Goeke, of Cincinnati. Green fern palms, basket of gladioli and baby breath attractively decorated the high altar, the side altars and the communion rail of the church.

The bridal party made its entrance at the church to the strains of Lohengrin's wedding march played by the Helmstetter trio-the Misses Maya, Agnes, and Mathilda Helmstetter playing the organ, violin, and cello. During the ceremony the trio played wedding music from Midsummer Night's Dream.

Miss Bea White gave beautiful rendition of the Ave Maria by Percy Kahn and Holy Rosary choir sang during the solemn high mass. As the wedding party left the church the Helmstetter trio played Mendelssohn's wedding march. Immediately following the wedding the relatives and a few friends went to the Kleinhenz home on West Jackson St. where a reception honoring the bride and groom was given. It will conclude this evening with a dance in their honor at Maria Stein, where they will make their home. This noon a three-course dinner was served to the bridal party and guests. The tables were arranged in U shape with appointments and favors carried out in pink and blue, green and white, the wedding colors. Centering the bride's table was the wedding cake in tiers, ornamented with a miniature bride and bridegroom. At another table was a birthday cake with sixty lighted candles, the bride having chosen her father's 60th birthday anniversary for her wedding. Streamers of pink and blue, and white extending from clusters on the ceiling to the place cards.

Snapdragons and fernery decorated the table. The Helmstetter trio played a musical program during the reception at the home. This evening Dr. and Mrs. Willke will leave for a wedding trip to points west, expecting to be gone a week. They will be at home to their friends after July 28 at their already furnished home in Maria Stein where Dr. Willke is engaged in medicine and surgery. The bride's going away costume was a blue and gray knitted suit with blue accessories.



Our Wedding Day—July 21, 1931—St. Marys, Ohio

Following his graduation from Minster high school Dr. Willke entered the University of Cincinnati where he completed a course in medicine. He served his internship at Good Samaritan hospital in Cincinnati and recently opened an office in Maria Stein, Ohio. Mrs. Kleinhenz Willke has served as bookkeeper in the office of the St. Marys Union Stockyards for the past three years. She has a great many friends here who are extending congratulations and best wishes to her and Dr. Willke. Those at the reception today at the Kleinhenz home were Dr. and Mrs. Edgar J. Willke, Mr. and Mrs. John W. Kleinhenz and daughters Miss Hilda, Miss Pauline and Miss Esther and sons Arnold and Edwin, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Kleinhenz and family, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Kleinhenz and family, Misses Gertrude Danaher, Hilda Vanderhorst, Ione Keller, Katherine Geiger, St. Marys, Dr. and Mrs. A. J. Willke and daughters Margaret and Marcella and son, Alois, Mr. and Mrs. Al J. Goeke, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Limke and family, Mr. and Mrs. John H. Vehr and family, Dr. Omer Jasper, Dr. Ernestine, Miss Caroline Willke, Mr. and Mrs. C. Schunck, Miss Hilda Birkmeyer of Cincinnati. Dr. and Mrs. L. A. Kleinhenz and family of New Bremen. Dr. Willard Clark, Dayton, Dr. and Mrs. G. T. Willke and family, Rome City, Ind., Mr. and Mrs. John Michael, Reading, Mr. and Mrs. George Thieman and family, Minster. Mrs. Ben Tuente and family, St. Rose: Miss Minnie Kleinhenz, Dayton, the Rev. S. J. Kremer, Cleveland, the Rev. Roman Schwieterman, Carthage and the Rev. Edward Lehman, St. Marys.



Marilyn, Bill, Janet and Rosann. c. 1944



Janet, Bill, Rosann & Marilyn. c 1945-1946.

We became the parents of four children.



Our home, with adjoining office. 1931-1951



ST. JOHN'S CHURCH -- MARIA STEIN, OHIO

All four children, Marilyn, Bill, Janet and Rosann received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, First Holy Communion and Matrimony in St. John's Church.

The school, across the street from the church, is where all four children received eight years of grade school education, and where Marilyn, Janet and Rosann received four years of high school education. Bill spent one year here and three years at Culver Military Academy, Culver, Indiana. All four children are graduates of Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

Marilyn Carolyn Willke

Marilyn Carolyn Willke is the daughter of Dr. E. J. Willke and Alfrida Kleinhenz Willke. She was born in the home at Maria Stein, Ohio on April 4, 1932 on a Monday morning at 11 o'clock. The doctor in attendance was R. Laufersweiler of Minster, Ohio. She weighed 5 pounds and 12 ounces. She was baptized, confirmed, and received her First Holy Communion at St. John Church, Maria Stein, Ohio. Her sponsors in baptism were her grandfather and grandmother, John W. Kleinhenz and Caroline Willke.



Marilyn as a baby. 1932



Marilyn in grade school



Marilyn high school graduation. 1950

Starting school at the age of six, she received her grade school education at St. John Grade School, which is located across the street from St. John Church, Maria Stein, Ohio. When she started school, there were four boys and eight girls in her class. Two or three grades were in one classroom, and she had nun and lay teachers.

After grade school she attended four years of high school in the same building where she received her grade school education. She graduated from high school on May 23, 1950, with a class of twenty three. While in high school Marilyn was active in all school activities. She played the clarinet in the band and took leading parts in several class plays. In her senior year she was class president, and she had the honor of being elected Homecoming Queen. She was an honor student, and at graduation she gave the class history speech.

During her childhood days, starting at the age of nine, she spent two weeks almost every summer at Fort Scott Camps, near Cincinnati, Ohio. After her junior year and senior year of high school, she spent eight weeks each summer at Four Way Lodge, a camp for boys and girls, at Central Lake, Michigan.

Marilyn took piano lessons for four or five years from Hilda Wernsing of Minster, Ohio.

After her graduation from high school, she enrolled at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, in the School of Business Administration, her major being marketing and merchandising. While at Miami she stayed on campus, and she belonged to Alpha Sigma Alpha social sorority

After her freshman year of college, she spent eight weeks in the summer, at Four Way Lodge, Central Lake, Michigan, as a counselor. After her sophomore year at college, she was a lifeguard and swimming instructor at New Bremen, Ohio, swimming pool. She received her instructor's certificate at Miami University. By being a

good swimmer, as a result of attending summer camps, plus a short course at New Bremen pool, enabled her to receive her lifeguard certificate.

After her junior year she worked at Rike's Store, Dayton, Ohio, in the line of merchandizing, working mainly in the office.

She graduated from Miami University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business on June 7, 1954. She then accepted a job with H&S Pogue Co., Cincinnati, Ohio. She worked in different parts of the store, in several phases of merchandising. She did considerable amount of office work. She worked for Pogues for one year and several months before she was married to Don Schwieterman.

Donald J. Schwieterman is the son of Corinne Woehrmyer Schwieterman and the late Urban Schwieterman. He was born in New Bremen, Ohio, on September 4, 1933. He is the second oldest of four children. He received his grade school and high school education at New Bremen, Ohio. He graduated from high school in 1949. He then attended Cincinnati College of Pharmacy for four years and graduated in 1953. He then decided to go into medicine, and after one year of pre-medicine at Xavier University, Cincinnati, he enrolled in the University of Cincinnati Medical School. After his freshman year of Medical School, he and Marilyn were married.

Don and Marilyn were married in St. John Catholic Church, Maria Stein, Ohio, on September 10, 1955. The Mass started at 9:30 with Rev. George Kraft officiating. After the Mass a wine reception was held at the Willke home for approximately 120 guests. The noon meal with 21 guests and the buffet supper with 250 guests were held at the American Legion Hall, Maria Stein, Ohio. In the evening an orchestra provided music for dancing, and the day's activities came to an end at midnight. Witnesses were Janet Willke and David Schwieterman.



Marilyn college graduation. 1954



Marilyn and Don wedding day. 1955

William Aloys Willke

William Aloys Willke is the son of Dr. E. J. Willke and Alfrida Kleinhenz Willke. He was born in the home at Maria Stein, Ohio, on February 18, 1934 on a Sunday morning at 5 o'clock. He was delivered by his father, and he weighed seven pounds and twelve ounces.

He was baptized, confirmed and received his First Holy Communion at St. John Church, Maria Stein, Ohio. His sponsors in baptism were grandparents, Dr. A. J. Willke and Catherine Kleinhenz.



Bill as a baby. c 1935.



Bill First Communion. 1942



Bill high school graduation. 1952

He received his eight years of elementary education at St. John Grade School, Maria Stein, Ohio. The school is located directly across the street from St. John Church. When he started school, at the age of six, there were eight boys and three girls in his class. Two or three grades were in one classroom, and he had nun and lay teachers.

After grade school Bill attended high school at Maria Stein for one year. He then attended Culver Academy, Culver, Indiana, for three years. He graduated from there on June 4, 1952.

When Bill was eight or nine years old we sent him for the first time to Fort Scott Camps, near Cincinnati, Ohio, for two weeks during the summer. He attended this camp for about four summers. Bill, when he was a boy and with the help of his father, had a trained trick horse called Lady. He could make the horse jump and also could make the horse lie down, and then he would lie on top of her. He could make her eat oats from a table, while in a sitting-lying position. He entered Lady in several rodeos and horse shows in the surrounding community, and received some medals and ribbons in various contests. The summer after his first year of high school Bill attended Culver Military Academy summer school for six weeks. He was in the Cavalry, and he belonged to the Black Horse Troop. At the end of the summer school, we were so impressed with Culver that we decided to send him to winter school because we thought it would be a great educational opportunity for him.

As a boy, Bill was always interested in sports, and he particularly enjoyed basketball and football. In the 7th and 8th grade, he played basketball regularly on the team, and as a freshman he played varsity basketball and

football. When he got to Culver, he immediately began participating in sports, and the first year there as a sophomore, he received varsity letters in football, basketball and baseball. This was quite an achievement in a school of approximately 700 boys. He again lettered three times in his junior year and again in his senior year. At graduation, Bill received the best all around athlete award. He co-shared this honor with another athlete. Bill graduated with a class of 159 boys. In his senior year he was co-captain of the football team, which had only one loss that season. After his junior year at Culver he spent the summer with a group of boys from Culver, at Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, where he was caretaker of cabins.

After his graduation from Culver he enrolled at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, in the school of Business Administration. His major was marketing. After four years at Miami he graduated on June 11, 1956. While in college he stayed on campus. He belonged to Delta Upsilon social fraternity and stayed in their fraternity house the last two years. During the summer he stayed at home and worked at New Idea and Highway Dept. or wherever he could get employment. Five days after graduation from college he and Esther were married.

Esther Hausfeld is the daughter of Leo B. and Armella Eifert Hausfeld of Maria Stein, Ohio. She was born in Maria Stein on December 26, 1933. She was the eighth oldest of nine children, and the doctor who delivered her later became her father-in-law. She attended St. John grade and high school.

As a senior in high school she had the honor of being elected Homecoming Queen. She was an honor student and was valedictorian of her class. She graduated with a class of 24. After graduation from high school in 1951, she worked for New Idea in Coldwater, Ohio, for 3 1/2 years, first as a stenographer, and later as a private secretary. She then attended Miami University, Oxford, and completed two years of college in the School of Business Administration.

Bill and Esther were married at St. John Catholic Church, Maria Stein, Ohio, on June 16, 1956. The Mass started at 9 o'clock with Rev. George Kraft officiating. After the Mass a wine reception was held at the Hausfeld residence for about 150 guests.

The noon meal with 120 guests and the buffet supper for 250 guests were held at the American Legion Hall, Maria Stein, Ohio. In the evening an orchestra provided music for dancing and the day's activities came to an end at midnight. Witnesses were Jeanette Hausfeld and Don Schwieterman.



Bill college graduation. 1956



Bill and Esther wedding day. 1956

Janet Olive Willke

Janet Olive Willke is the daughter of Dr. Edgar J. Willke and Alfrida Kleinhenz Willke of Maria Stein, Ohio. She was born at the Otis Hospital, Celina, Ohio, on December 9, 1936, on a Wednesday afternoon at 4 o'clock. The doctor in attendance was Dr. L. M. Otis, and she weighed 7 pounds and 10 ounces. She was baptized, confirmed and received her First Holy Communion at St. John Church, Maria Stein, Ohio. Her sponsors in baptism were her uncle and aunt, Dr. G. T. Willke and Olive Thieman.



Janet as a baby. 1937



Janet grade school



Janet high school graduation. 1954

Starting school at the age of five, she received her eight years of elementary education at St. John School, which is located directly across the street from St. John Church at Maria Stein, Ohio. When she started school there were six boys and nine girls in her class. Two or three grades were in one classroom, and she had nuns and lay teachers.

After grade school she attended four years of high school in the same building where she received her elementary education. She graduated from high school on May, 18, 1954, with a class of 29. While in high school Janet was very active in all school activities. She was varsity cheerleader, played the trombone in the band, was good at twirling a baton, and took leading parts in several class plays. As a senior she had the honor of being in the Homecoming Court. She was an honor student and was salutatorian of her class at graduation.

During her childhood days, starting at the age of eight, she spent two weeks almost every summer at Fort Scott Camps, near Cincinnati, Ohio. When she was fifteen years old she spent eight weeks at Four Way Lodge, a camp in Central Lake, Michigan. At the age of seventeen she spent four weeks in the summer at Indian Beach Camp at Northport, Michigan.

Janet took piano lessons for about four years, and whenever she was home, she played softball with the Maria Stein Girls Softball Team.

After her graduation from high school, she spent her first year of college at St. Joseph on the Ohio, Cincinnati, Ohio, taking a general course. She then transferred to Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, in the school of Secondary Education, majoring in English. Her minor was Spanish.

During the summer of 1957, after her junior year of college, she spent eight weeks at National University of Mexico, Mexico City, Mexico, where she studied Spanish. This enabled her to graduate one semester earlier. After doing student teaching at Belmont High School in Dayton, she graduated from Miami University on February 3, 1958, receiving a Bachelor of Science Degree in Secondary Education. At Miami she stayed on campus, and she belonged to Alpha Sigma Alpha social sorority.

For three summers during her college days she was a swimming instructor and life guard at New Bremen Swimming Pool, New Bremen, Ohio. She spent several weeks at Camp Limberlost in Indiana, a Red Cross camp, where she received her instructor's certificate. By being a good swimmer, as a result of attending summer camps, plus a short course at New Bremen pool, enabled her to receive her life guard certificate. The summer she spent in Mexico, she stayed with a Spanish speaking family, and toured Mexico on weekends. This schooling proved very profitable, as it helped her to learn Spanish language which she later taught in the classroom.

After her graduation from college she taught Spanish in Fairview high school, Dayton, Ohio, from January until June. That same month she was married to Andrew Niekamp.

Andrew J. Niekamp Jr. is the son of Andrew Niekamp and Alma Bertke Niekamp of St. Henry, Ohio. He is the sixth oldest of nine children. He was born at Celina, Ohio, on August 21, 1933. He received his grade school and high school education at Cranberry and St. Henry schools. He graduated from St. Henry high school in 1951. After working for several years he volunteered in the Armed Forces and served in the U. S. Army for two years, spending some time in Austria and other parts of Europe. After his discharge from the Army in 1955 he enrolled at the University of Dayton in the School of Business Administration. Besides going to school he worked forty hours a week at National Cash Register. When he and Janet were married he had completed three years of college education.

Andrew and Janet were married at St. John Church, Maria Stein, Ohio, on June 14, 1958. The Mass started at 9:30 with Rev. George Kraft officiating. After the Mass a wine reception was held at the Willke home for approximately 150 guests. The noon meal with 68 guests and the buffet supper for 200 guests were held at the American Legion Hall, Maria Stein, Ohio. In the evening an orchestra provided music for entertainment and the day's activities came to an end at midnight. Witnesses were Rosann Willke and Jim Niekamp.



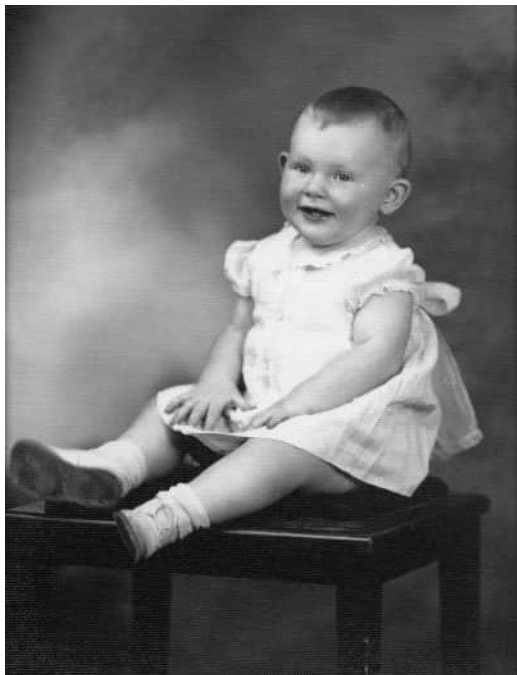
Janet college graduation. 1958



Janet and Andrew wedding day. 1958

Rosann Margaret Willke

Rosann Margaret Willke is the daughter of Dr. E J. and Alfrida Kleinhenz Willke of Maria. Stein, Ohio. She was born at the Otis Hospital, Celina, Ohio, on September 6, 1940, on Friday afternoon at 3 o'clock. The doctor in attendance was Dr. Walter C. Scheidt. She weighed 7 pounds and 6 ounces. She was baptized, confirmed and received her First Holy Communion at St. John Church, Maria Stein, Ohio. Her sponsors in baptism were her uncle and aunt, Arnold Kleinhenz and Margie Landen.



Rosann as a baby. c. 1940



Mrs. Mary Voskuhl, Marilyn, Janet, Bill. Rosann in front. c. 1943-1944.



Rosann high school graduation. 1958

Starting school at the age of six, she received her eight years of elementary education at St. John School, which is located directly across the street from St. John Church, Maria Stein, Ohio. When she started school there were six girls and three boys in her class. Two or three grades were in one classroom, and for teachers she had nun and lay teachers.

After grade school she attended four years of high school in the same building where she received her elementary education. Her class was the last to graduate from this building. A new high school, Marion Local, was completed that summer on State Route 716. Rosann graduated from high school on May 27, 1958, with a class of 43. While in high school she was active in all school activities. She played the trombone in the band and had the honor of receiving the John Phillip Sousa Award. She was a cheerleader for four years for all basketball and football games. She had the honor of being chosen an attendant in the Homecoming Court. She was an honor student, placing fourth in her class.

During her childhood days, starting at the age of eight, she spent two weeks almost every summer at Fort Scott Camps near Cincinnati, Ohio. Two summers she attended Indian Beach Camp, Northport, Michigan, which consisted of four week periods. One summer, at the age of 15, she attended Music Camp at Oxford, Ohio. The following summer she attended Girl's State at Columbus, Ohio. For about five years, she played softball when she was home on the Maria Stein Girls Softball Team. During the period of these years she also took piano lessons.

After graduating from high school, she enrolled in the School of Business Administration, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. Her major was marketing. While at Miami she stayed on campus, and she belonged to Alpha

Phi, a social sorority. She received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business on June 10, 1962, and had the honor of receiving the Outstanding Senior Woman in Business award.

After her freshman year of college, she spent the summer as a life guard and swimming instructor at Mersman Pool, Celina, Ohio. She received her instructor's certificate at Miami U. Being a good swimmer, as a result of attending summer camps plus a short course at New Bremen pool, enabled her to receive her life guard certificate. After her sophomore year at college she went to Europe with an Alpha Phi Sorority sponsored tour. After her junior year she worked at Lazarus Store, Columbus, Ohio, in a merchandizing training program.

After graduating from college she accepted a job with Procter and Gamble, Cincinnati, Ohio, as a programmer-analyst. She worked there for 4 1/2 years from June, 1962 until December, 1966. During these years she had the pleasure of taking vacations to Bermuda, New York, Florida, Colorado, Puerto Rico, Smoky Mountains, California and Las Vegas. In January, 1967, she left Cincinnati to go to Chicago, Illinois, where she accepted a job with Crane Co. as a computer systems analyst. She was working at Crane at the time of her marriage to Robert Spitzer.

Robert H. Spitzer Jr. is the son of Robert and Helen Burns Spitzer of Detroit, Michigan. He was born in Detroit, on March 26, 1940. He has no sisters or brothers. He received his elementary and high education in Detroit. He attended Immaculate Heart of Mary grade school, and University of Detroit high school, graduating as an honor student in 1958. He then attended Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio, for four years, majoring in chemistry. He graduated in 1962. For the next four years he attended Carnegie Institute of Technology (Carnegie Melon) at Pittsburgh where he received his doctorate in metallurgical engineering. He then accepted a job with Argonne National Laboratory in Chicago, Illinois, doing basic research. He was employed there when he and Rosann were married.

Rosann and Bob were married at St. John Church, Maria Stein, Ohio, on October 26, 1968. The Mass started at 10:30 with Rev. Vincent Clement Goubeaux and George Kraft officiating at a concelebrated High Mass.

Immediately after the Mass a champagne reception, followed by dinner, was held at the Knights of St. John Hall, Maria Stein, Ohio for approximately 120 guests. The day's activities came to an end at four o'clock. Witnesses were Janet Niekamp and Robert W. Fenn of Cleveland, Ohio.



Rosann and Bob wedding day. 1968



Rosann college graduation. 1962

Looking Back On The Lives Of Our Children After They Got Married. July 1, 1970.

Marilyn and Don

Marilyn and Don, married September 10, 1955, first lived in Cincinnati, Ohio, after their marriage. Don continued his studies as a sophomore at the University of Cincinnati Medical School, and Marilyn continued working at the H. & S. Pogue Co. in the merchandising department. Marilyn worked until December 1957.

On June 6, 1958, Don received his degree in Doctor of Medicine from the University of Cincinnati. He interned for one year at St. Marys Hospital, Cincinnati, Ohio.

On July 1, 1959, they moved to Maria Stein, Ohio, where Don began the practice of medicine as a general practitioner. He and Ed shared the same office. When they came to Maria Stein, they rented a house on State Route 716 across the road from Marion Local High School. They lived there until July, 1962, when they moved into their newly built home on Rolfes Road. After Ed's retirement on July 1, 1970, Don continued on alone in the practice of medicine at Maria Stein, Ohio. Don and Marilyn had 6 children:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. William | 2. Joseph |
| 3. John, born April 14, 1961, Coldwater, Ohio. Died on December 14, 1961 | 4. James |
| 5. Robert | 6. Thomas |

Bill and Esther

Bill and Esther, who married June 16, 1956, first lived in Evansville, Indiana, where Bill accepted a job as business manager with Standard Oil of Indiana. They lived in Evansville for about four months when Bill had an opportunity to be transferred to Indianapolis, Indiana. He continued to work for Standard Oil of Indiana in Indianapolis for about one year.

In 1957 he accepted a job as a salesman with National Cash Register. He worked in Indianapolis for National Cash Register for about five years and then was transferred to Lexington, Kentucky.

They moved to Lexington in December 1962. They rented a house for several years, and in September, 1966, they bought a house on Wichita Dr.

Bill's work consists of selling National Cash Registers to independent retail stores and places of business. After checking and studying the business of the prospective buyer, he recommends the cash register that he thinks he needs. Some registers cost around \$5,000. The average register sells for about \$1,500.00. Bill also installs the cash registers and instructs the individual how to operate them. Bill and Esther are the parents of 5 children:

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. Nancy | 2. Mary |
| 3. Joan | 4. Edward |
| 5. Carol | |

Janet and Andrew

Janet and Andrew, who married June 14, 1958, lived in Dayton, Ohio after their marriage. Andrew continued his studies as a senior at the University of Dayton, and Janet continued teaching at Fairview High School. Janet taught until May 1959.

In June 1959, Andrew graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from the University of Dayton. In the fall of 1959, they moved to Columbus, Ohio, where Andrew continued his studies by entering The Ohio State University Law School. He completed the three year course in 2 1/2 years by going to summer school.

During the 1960-1961 school year Janet taught English and Spanish to the 7th and 8th graders at Starling Junior High School, Columbus, Ohio. She taught until May 1961.

On December 15, 1961, Andrew received his Doctor of Law Degree from Ohio State University. After the completion of Law School, they moved to Dayton, Ohio, where Andrew worked for another attorney for several years. They lived at 979 Manhattan Ave.

In 1965, Andrew became assistant prosecuting attorney of Montgomery County. He was on the criminal staff division and conducted many trials.

They built a new home on 4416 Karen Drive, Kettering, Ohio, and have lived there since the fall of 1967.

Janet and Andrew are the parents of 5 children:

1. Cynthia
2. Andrew
3. Mark
4. John
5. David

Rosann and Bob

Rosann and Bob, married October 26, 1968, first lived in Lemont, Illinois, a small town on the outskirts of Chicago, Illinois. Bob worked in the Metallurgy Division of Argonne National Laboratory at Argonne, Illinois, doing basic research, and Rosann continued working for Crane Co., Chicago. From April, 1969, through August, 1969, she worked as an analyst programmer at Applied Information Development near Chicago.

In September, 1969, Bob accepted a position as associate professor at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, in Materials Science and Metallurgical Engineering Department. He is teaching seniors.

They live on Catherwood Drive, a housing development for the faculty.

Rosann and Bob are the parents of four children:

1. Michael
2. James
3. John
4. Steven

History Of Our Life 1931-1970
Edgar J. Willke and Alfrida Kleinhenz Willke



Edgar. c. 1970



Alfrida. c. 1970

1931 - Immediately after our marriage we located in Maria Stein, Ohio. Ed bought the house and adjoining office from his brother, George, who had lived and practiced medicine here for eight years. It was located 1/4 mile west of St. John Church, and it was the same house and office Ed's father built in 1900.

1931 was the era of the great depression. People were out of work, and in general times were bad. Competition was very keen as there were three doctors in Minster, two in St. Henry, one in Yorkshire, one in North Star, and one in Chickasaw. Ed was not busy all the time and had time to work in the garden and to do things around the house. He, however, had to stay close to home so that when a call did come in he would be there to take care of it. He had office hours every afternoon and evening, except Thursdays and Sundays. He made many house calls. There were still some mud roads and many times he had to walk long lanes to see his patients. All babies were born in the home. Most women did not come in for pre-natal care, but Ed would be engaged by the husband about three months before due date. Some, however, did not even do that, but called for the doctor when labor pains started. Anesthetic during delivery was usually given by the husband. Tonsillectomies and extensive accident cases were taken care of in the office. It was the day before sulfonamides, penicillin, and anti-biotics. Sulfa was not available until 1935, penicillin 1945, and anti-biotics 1952. Whooping cough, diphtheria, measles, polio, and mumps vaccines had not been discovered at this time,

so Ed gave very few shots. Smallpox vaccine had been discovered, as well as typhoid fever and tetanus anti-toxin serums, and insulin had been discovered for the treatment of diabetics. Tuberculosis was very prevalent and drugs for its treatment were unavailable. Patients were first taken to Otis Hospital, Celina, and then to Gibbons Hospital, Celina, Ohio. In 1950 Our Lady of Mercy, Coldwater, Ohio, was built and Ed took his patients there. In 1936 we installed a new furnace in the house and also extended it to the office. The office, before this, was heated by two oil stoves. The drug room, which was added by George and was located on the north side of the office, was moved to the west side so we could connect the pipes of the furnace, and therefore heat everything under one unit.

1941 - In 1941, Ed employed his first office help. Before this I helped a great deal, answering phone calls, and acting as his receptionist when he was gone. I also helped with tonsillectomies and extensive accident cases, which were taken care of in the office. I had help in the house and therefore was available when help was needed in the office. I was very fortunate in having Mrs. Mary Voskuhl, who helped me with the housework and to take care of the children. She worked for us for almost twenty years. Julia Albers (Feltz) was Ed's first office girl, and she worked for him for ten years. Today, after raising a family, she again is working at the office part time

In 1942 three more rooms were added to the rear of the office. The two rooms (waiting room and treatment room built by Ed's father and the drug room added by George) were inadequate for Ed's ever increasing business. In 1950 we decided to build a new house. The office was separated from the house and moved 1/4 mile west and the house was sold to St. John parish.

The office was again enlarged by adding one large room, a utility room for the furnace, and a bathroom.

Ferd Freytag, an architect from Sidney, Ohio, drew up our plans for the house. A lot, consisting of 1 1/3 acre, was bought from Henry and Agnes Streacker and is on the corner of Rolfes Road and State Route 119.

William Tumbusch was engaged as our carpenter, and work began in the summer of 1950. By fall the house was under roof, but because of the shortage of material, progress was slow. We moved in on April 18, 1951. The house is brick veneer, and it has a large living room, dining room, kitchen, bedroom, den, utility room, and a full bathroom downstairs, plus a nice porch and a two car garage. The upstairs has three bedrooms, bath with shower, and very ample storage space. It has a hot water, propane gas heating system. There is no basement. In 1969 we put in air-conditioning.

1951 - When we moved into our new home on April 18, 1951, Marilyn was a freshman at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. Bill was a junior at Culver Military Academy, Culver, Indiana. Janet was a freshman at St. John High School, Maria Stein, and Rosann was in the 5th grade at St. John grade school, Maria Stein, Ohio. In 1957 Ed gave up delivering babies, taking care of the prenatal and postnatal care only. Dr. Kirrigan who lived in Coldwater and near the hospital, took care of the deliveries. Ed gave up this part of his practice, which he enjoyed so much, because he was not able to take care of OB deliveries and his general practice too. By 1950, practically all babies were delivered in the hospital. In 1959, our son-in-law, Dr. D. J. Schwieterman, a graduate of University of Cincinnati Medical School, came to Maria Stein and became an associate with Ed in the practice of medicine. Sharing the same office meant adding more rooms. The waiting room was converted into a receptionist room, and a new waiting room was added, plus a large treatment room for Don.

1961 - As the years went by, Don accumulated a large practice, delivering over two hundred babies a year, besides doing general practice. Ed, too, was working full time. In 1967, to make things more convenient and working conditions more efficient, another small treatment room was added to the office. The original office

built in 1900 had two rooms with 218 square feet of floor space. Today with all the additions it has 1260 square feet of floor space. It consists of five treatment rooms, waiting room, reception room, drug room, toilet with lavatory, furnace room, and ample storage space. In the early and middle 1960s there was a definite shortage of doctors in the vicinity of Maria Stein. Mercer County was also in definite need of a large county hospital. There were three small hospitals in the county: Our Lady of Mercy, Coldwater, established 1950; Gibbons, Celina, established 1923; and Otis, Celina, established in 1915. Our Lady of Mercy was the only accredited hospital, though it needed improvements. Otis and Gibbons could not conform to acceptable health care standards. There was a definite concern that unless Mercer County improved its medical facilities, it would be faced with a shortage of doctors within a few years. It was felt that having adequate up-to-date hospital facilities would attract young doctors to settle in Mercer County.

In September 1967, Mercer County had 17 practicing physicians. Their average age was 50 years; five of them were over 60: five were over 50; and seven were under 50 years.

In September 1966, a group of interested civic and business leaders of Mercer County organized a Mercer County Comprehensive Health Care Planning Committee. The plan was to build a new hospital, 118 beds, to be located a couple miles west of Celina on State Route 29. Our Lady of Mercy was to be renovated and modernized into a 40 room, long term convalescent and extended care facility. The bond issue for these hospital facilities was on an all county ballot on November 4, 1969. It was overwhelmingly defeated 2618 to 8915.

Ed and Don were on the staff of Our Lady of Mercy Hospital, and they were sending their extreme and serious cases to the bigger hospitals, to specialists located in Lima, Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati, Ohio.

They had six girls working in the office. Roene Utz and Pat Elking were working full time; Johanna Bruns R.N., Mary Bruns R.N., Julia Feltz and Agnes Schulze were working part time.

Ed and Don were dispensing their own drugs in the office.

1970 - In the spring of 1970, Ed announced his retirement from the practice of medicine, effective July 1. Having practiced in Maria Stein for 39 consecutive years made him the longest practicing physician in Mercer County. His retirement ended a 77-year history of Willkes serving as physicians in Maria Stein. Ed's father came to Maria Stein in 1893, and after his retirement in 1922, his son, George, practiced here until 1930.

Ed was working full time at the time of his retirement. He and Don, for the past year and a half, had not been accepting new patients because they could not take care of any more. There was a definite shortage of doctors in this area. Some of the reasons why more doctors were not locating in our area were; first, many young doctors were going into specialized medicine. Second, our hospital facilities were not up-to-date. Third, a lot of doctors were going into group medicine, that is, three or more doctors in one office, in which up-to-date and convenient hospital facilities played a big part.

The general trend in medicine leaned toward specialized medicine, with the General Practitioner (as one sees him today), acting as a doctor of internal medicine.

Don decided to continue on alone after Ed's retirement, waiting to see what the future would bring. Having worked with Ed for eleven years, one could not have wished for a better, more considerate, and a more cooperative son-in-law and doctor.

Ed and I are planning on spending two months out west after July 1, and after that our plans are indefinite. Ed and I enjoyed traveling, and during our married life we had been in almost every state of the union and to

many foreign countries.

1939 - We went by train to the west coast. We took the southern route, stopped at the Grand Canyon, then to Los Angeles and San Francisco, California. We went into Canada and spent several days at Lake Louise and Banff. We were gone two weeks.

1953 - We went by train to Mexico. We left from St. Louis, then to San Antonio, Texas; Saltillo and Mexico City, Mexico. We saw Xochimilco, Floating Gardens, bull fights and pyramids of the Sun and Moon. Teotihuacan, and the Shrine of the Guadalupe. Also San Martin, Cholula, Puebla; Cuernavaca, and Toluca. Janet and Rosann accompanied us on this trip.

1954 - We went by plane to Europe and visited the following countries: France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Holland and England. We were gone thirty-two days. Our plane averaged 300 miles per hour going across the Atlantic.

1955 - We went on a Caribbean Cruise. We left from Wilmington, N.C. on a Swedish ship, the Stockholm. We stopped at Port A Prince, Haiti; Cartagena, Columbia; San Blas Islands; Cristobal, Panama; Panama Canal Zone; and Kingston, Jamaica. Rosann accompanied us on this trip. We were gone 12 days

1958 - We went to Nova Scotia and Canada. Rosann and I drove to Bar Harbor, Maine, and then took a boat to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. Ed then came by plane to join us the rest of the trip. We toured Evangeline country, and went as far as Halifax. We came back by Moncton, New Brunswick; Saint John; and St. Andrews by the Sea. Then to Quebec and Montreal, Canada. That same year we spent one week in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

1960 - Ed and I were gone five weeks, taking a plane to Europe and the Middle East. We left from New York, to Lisbon, Portugal; Madrid, Spain; Rome, Italy; Athens, Greece; Cairo, Egypt; Beirut, Lebanon; Damascus, Syria; Jerusalem, Nazareth, Tiberias, Bethlehem, Haifa and Tel Aviv. Then to Zurich and Lucerne, Switzerland; Titisee, Lindau, Oberammergau and Brenz, Germany. We saw the Passion Play at Oberammergau. Henry and Lillian Leugers accompanied us on this trip. Coming home by jet our plane averaged 450 miles per hour.

1964 - Going by jet we took a trip around the world. We left from San Francisco. We stopped several days in Hawaii and nine days in Japan. In Japan we toured Tokyo, Nikko, Kamakura, Kyoto, Nara and Osaka. On our way to Hong Kong we stopped for a short while in Formosa. From Hong Kong we went to Singapore and then to Bangkok, Thailand. We spent 12 days in India in the cities of Calcutta, Bernares, Agra, Dehli, Bombay and Shrinagar. We went to Cairo, Egypt. We saw the pyramids and went down the Nile River to Luxor. We stopped at Istanbul, Turkey for several days and then to Berlin, Germany. We also went into East Germany. Leaving from Frankfort we arrived back in New York. The entire trip was by jet, and we were gone 7 weeks. Jet averaged 550 miles per hour.

1967 - Ed and I took Rosann and four of our oldest grandchildren on a trip to the Northwest. We flew to Great Falls, Montana, and then to Calgary, Canada where we saw the Great Stampede. We spent one day at Banff and Lake Louise in Alberta, Canada. From there we drove through Glacier National Park to Bigfork, Montana. At Bigfork we stayed at a ranch for eight days. The grandchildren who went us were Bill and Joe Schwieterman, Nancy Willke and Cindy Niekamp.

1969 - In February, going by jet we spent two weeks in South America, spending four days in each of the following cities: Quito, Ecuador; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. We left from Cincinnati, and on our return stopped in Puerto Rico, where we went through customs. Then to New York and

Cincinnati.

1969 - In September, going by jet we spent three weeks in Ireland and Scotland. We left New York for Shannon Airport. We rented a Volkswagen station wagon and toured Ireland. In Dublin we flew by jet to Glasgow, Scotland, and then by train to Edinburgh, where we stayed five days, before returning to Dublin. One day we spent at St. Andrews by the Sea, where we saw and played the famous golf course. Arnold and Alma Kleinhenz accompanied us on this trip to Ireland. Our jet averaged 600 miles per hour.

Besides these trips Ed and I took many golfing vacations to Florida, Arizona, North Carolina, and various other places.

Ed and I feel we were lucky that we lived in the day when we could travel by air, because it was through air travel that made it possible for us to take these trips. When our ancestors came to America, it took six weeks by sailboat to cross the Atlantic. Today, by jet, it takes 6 to 7 hours. We also feel we were lucky we travelled when we did because we saw many countries in their primitive stages, and when they were still unspoiled by tourists.

Being a camera enthusiast, I enjoyed taking color-slide pictures on all our trips. Afterwards, I gave travelogues and showed these color-slides to many groups and gatherings. I showed them many times in schools to children for educational purposes.

Many people asked me what I liked best or remembered most about our trips. This was indeed hard to answer. One never forgets the beauty of Switzerland.

Seeing Pope John XXIII and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome were indeed highlights. The trip to the Holy Land was the most rewarding, and it made me better appreciate and understand my Church and the Holy Bible because I became better acquainted with my religion.

The thing that awed me the most was the exquisite beauty of the Taj Mahal in Agra, India.

The terrible poverty of India left the most lasting impression.

My travels made me appreciate my country, whose standard of living is so much higher than any other country in the world.

In 1960, the Elks Lodge Number 2170, was instrumental in buying land and a house on State Route 127, at Carthagena, Ohio, which at that time was converted into an 18 hole golf course and club house. Ed and I had played golf at Northmoor, Celina, and Portland, Indiana, but the convenience of having a golf course and club facilities so close to home was very inviting, and we joined it immediately. It has added much pleasure and enjoyment to our lives.

Besides being an Elk, Ed also belongs to the Knights of St. John, Mercer County Medical Society, American Academy of General Practitioners and the Holy Name Society in St. John Church.

I am a charter member of five organizations and was elected an officer in all five at the time they were organized. They are: Knights of St. John Ladies Auxiliary, Mercer County Medical Auxiliary, Band Mothers, Maria Stein Retreat League, and the Ladies of the Elks Golf Association. I am also a member of St. Ann Rosary-Altar Society of St. John Church and held an office two times. At present I am on the Deanery Commission on International Affairs with the Archdiocesan Council of the Laity.

In 1963, C.C.D. work began in St. John Church, and Father Parr asked for volunteers to take C.C.D. courses,

so they could teach religion. I was interested, and in the fall of 1964 I started to take a 15-week course (30 hrs) in elementary methods of teaching, at St. Charles, Seminary, Carthegena, Ohio. After Christmas I took a 15-week course (30 hrs.) in Christian Doctrine.

In the spring of 1965 I had my first experience in teaching religion when I taught 3 weeks of summer school to first graders. Bill Schwieterman was in my class. That fall I volunteered to teach Religion during the school year to the 8th graders. I had 24 students. We had one-half hour classes twice a week.

In the fall of 1966, I again enrolled in a 15-week course (30 hrs.) in High School Methods at the Seminary. At the same time, I was teaching 28 eighth graders. We had 2 one-hour classes weekly.

During the school year of 1967-1968 I taught twenty-two 5th graders for one hour on Saturday morning.

During the school year of 1968-1969 I taught fourteen freshman girls for one hour on Monday evening.

In the fall of 1969, I had twenty-nine 8th graders, classes being for one hour on Monday evening. After nine weeks I quit teaching.

In 1967 I became interested in doing Red Cross Volunteer Work. After attending classes to get acquainted in the Red Cross Program, I started to work one day a week as a gray lady at the Valley Nursing Home, St. Marys, Ohio. I found the work very interesting and rewarding. I did this until October, 1969.

Ed and I enjoyed sports, besides golfing we bowled for many years, and enjoyed hunting rabbits, pheasants, and squirrels in the fall of the year. One year we hunted pheasants in South Dakota, and one time we went to Kansas. For eleven and one-half years we had a Dalmatian dog, called Chief, which the four children gave us for our 25th wedding anniversary.

I also enjoy walking. Since 1963 I have been taking three mile walks, whenever it is possible, to keep physically fit.

Ed and I feel we lived through a wonderful era. Two generations have changed the pattern of our ways more than did all the centuries before. A generation is usually figured 30 years.

Just how has life changed for us?

We saw horse and buggy days, then automobile---airplane---jets---and then space travel.

We went from gravel roads to superhighways.

We saw the little country stores grow into supermarkets: frozen foods, cake mixes, instant coffee and potatoes, and other prepared foods.

We saw the beginning of electricity, which later gave us electrical appliances.

We saw the change over from silent movies to sound, color, and then Cinerama.

We can remember the first radio. We had to use ear-phones to get reception. Then came television! which seemed impossible. First came black and white, and then color.

There was great advancement in medicine. Life's expectancy rose from 40 to 72 years. The most recent discovery has been heart and kidney transplants.

We saw the advancement of racial integration.

We saw the days when people churned their own butter, baked their own bread, and when they wanted ice

cream they had to turn the handle of the old home freezer.

There were no refrigerators and milk was not pasteurized.

Neither children nor men thought themselves imposed on if they had to walk two or three miles to get to school or work.

In 1959, when I saw the pictures of the seven original astronauts in the newspaper, it was hard to visualize, and almost impossible to believe what they were planning to accomplish. We had seen the un-manned satellites, but could man go into space? In 1961 a Russian astronaut became the first human being to leave the planet earth. Twenty-two days later America sent their first man, Alan Shephard Jr., into space.

In 1962, John Glenn Jr., became the first astronaut to orbit the earth. Then came rendezvous and walking in space.

On July 16, 1969, we saw the three astronauts: Neil Armstrong, Edwin Aldrin and Michael Collins leave for the moon. Four days later on July 20, 1969, we saw on television, men taking the first step on the moon. This was the beginning of the wonderful things that are to come.

We lived in an era when there were many drastic changes in the Church. In October, 1962, Pope John XXXIII summoned the 21 Ecumenical, or 2nd Vatican Council in Rome, which was the most important religious event in this century. Bishops from all over the world met in Rome for these council meetings which lasted 2 to 3 months, for four consecutive years. This was the beginning of the many changes that were to take place.

The changes in the Liturgy of the Mass; the use of English instead of Latin; being permitted to eat meat on Fridays; fasting for only one hour before Holy Communion instead of 12 midnight; laymen being permitted to distribute Holy Communion; nuns being permitted to wear contemporary clothes instead of habits, were some of the many changes. In March, 1970, Father Parr chose Ed, Paul Moeller and Virgil Bertke as the first Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in St. John Church. The first person to receive Holy Communion from Ed was Mark Niekamp, and it was Mark's First Holy Communion. In May he also gave Jim Schwieterman his First Holy Communion.

Ecumenism or Christian Unity was encouraged and promoted. Birth control, celibacy of priests, private confessions were being debated. In general, church laws became less strict and the individual was encouraged to practice good deeds and self denial voluntarily.

Love of neighbor, in particular, was emphasized.

The many changes that were taking place in the Church were not readily accepted by everyone, especially not by the older generation. It was hard for them to understand that these changes were necessary in order to keep pace with the fast changing world. It was hard for them to understand that our Faith was not changing, but was only presented in a different way.

Although the world is going through a cycle of unrest, violence, tension, and drastic changes today, I feel that eventually things will swing back to normal. I have great faith in our youth of today.

It took many years of time, effort and research for me to complete this album. I did it for the benefit of all my descendants, hoping they will find it enjoyable and interesting.

Alfrida E. Willke, July 1, 1970



Our home, built in 1951.



The office, 1970.



*Bill's wedding and our 25th wedding anniversary. 1956
Standing: Marilyn, Ed, Esther, Bill, Alfrida. Seated: Janet, Rosann.*



*Our 35th wedding anniversary. 1966.
Standing: Marilyn, Bill, Rosann. Seated: Janet, Alfrida, Ed.*



*By March, 1962, we were the grandparents of 4 boys and 4 girls.
 Front row: Grandpa holding Nancy, Andrew holding Andy; Cindy in front. Bill holding Joan, Don holding Jim; Joe and Bill in front.
 Back row: Grandma, Rosann, Janet, Esther holding Mary, Marilyn.*



By January, 1970, we were the grandparents of 10 boys and 5 girls. Front row: Mary, Eddie, Bob, Jim, Joan. Second row: Mark, Grandma, Grandpa holding Tom, Jack. Back row: Bill, Esther holding Carol; Nancy in front. Marilyn, Don, with Joe and Bill in front; Bob, Rosann; Janet, Andrew holding David; Cindy and Andy in front. Christmas 1969

History Of Our Life 1970-1978

Edgar J. and Alfrida Willke

It has been eight years since I finished writing the history of "This is Our Life." The following is a history of events that occurred since that time.

On September 7, 1973, Jimmy Spitzer was born. On March 22, 1976, John Spitzer was born. On October 20, 1977, their brother Steve was born. All were born in Lafayette, Indiana, where their father, Bob, is a professor, teaching graduate students at Purdue University.

Ed's retirement on July 1, 1970 lasted three months. He then returned to active practice. He and Don are still in partnership and sharing the same office. In 1973 Don passed the Family Practice Board.

In September 1971, Janet, after a ten year lapse of not teaching, started to teach Spanish at Alter High School, Kettering, Ohio. The summer of 1974, 1975 and 1977 saw her take a group of students to Mexico. Andrew is working as an assistant prosecuting attorney of Montgomery County.

In the fall of 1972, Bill was transferred from his job with National Cash Register, Lexington, Kentucky, to Stevensville, Mich. He terminated his job with National Cash Register in January, 1976. He then worked with Cash Register Sales in Stevensville, Michigan. In January 1978, he started to work for Tibon Hard Chrome Co. of Ohio Inc. in Dayton, Ohio. He moved his family to Vandalia, Ohio in June, 1978.

Ed and I saw five of our grandchildren graduate from high school and enter college. Nancy will be a senior this fall at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Mich. Bill will be a junior at the University of Cincinnati. Joe and Cindy will be sophomores at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. Mary will start her freshman year at Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio.

Ed and I were able to continue our world travels. In 1973 we spent four weeks in Africa, visiting the following countries: Senegal, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Rhodesia, and South Africa.

In 1975, we spent five days in Puerto Rico, and that same year we spent three weeks in Eastern Europe in the following countries: Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Venice, Italy.

The summer of 1974 was a highlight in our lives when our entire family of twenty-seven was able to spend one week together at a ranch (Rimrock) near Cody, Wyoming. In 1974 we also spent five days on Grand Cayman Island and three weeks in Australia, New Zealand, Tahiti, and Fiji Islands.

In 1975 in the month of November, we spent six days on Cancun Island, in Yucatan, Mexico.

In 1976 we spent one week together with five of our grandchildren: Mary and Joan Willke, Andy and Mark Niekamp and Jim Schwieterman at Flathead Lake Lodge, Bigfork, Montana. Nancee Thobe, who worked for me, also accompanied us on this trip.

In 1977 five of our grandchildren: Ed Willke, Jack and David Niekamp, Bob and Tom Schwieterman spent a week with us at Rimrock Ranch, Cody, Wyoming. Marilyn also accompanied us. Every summer, except 1971, Ed and I spent several weeks on different ranches out West. During the winter of 1978 we spent January, February, and March in Green Valley, Arizona. Also one week at Elkorn Ranch, near Tucson, Arizona.

Since the hospital situation in the county has always been of interest to me I will give a resume on what has happened in the past eight years.

In November, 1969, after the all county ballot bond issue failed so badly for a countywide, 118-bed hospital, to be built near Celina, Ohio, a group of civic leaders of Coldwater, Ohio, spearheaded by Harold Romer, made plans to acquire and expand Our Lady of Mercy Hospital in Coldwater. This was very much against the Mercer County Medical Society.

The doctors felt the solution to Mercer County hospital needs could be solved only through the combined efforts of the entire county.

In 1970 a bond issue was placed on ballots in seven southern Mercer County townships: Gibson, Recovery, Granville, Marion, Franklin, Butler and Washington, which would provide \$777,000 for the purchase and improvement of Our Lady of Mercy Hospital from a 38-bed to a 70-bed hospital. The bond issue passed. Our Lady of Mercy Hospital was then purchased by the seven township district, and they took over its operation in May 1971, under the name of Mercer County Joint Township Community Hospital. That same year Dale DeMott of Florida was hired as the first administrator. The hospital had previously been operated by the Sisters of Mercy. In November 1977, Lysle Schmidt took over as the new administrator, replacing DeMott.

June, 1974, saw the groundbreaking of a large scale expansion program of Community Hospital, at an approximate cost of \$6,500,000, to be financed by a \$2,400,000 Federal Hill Burton Fund, \$3,000,000 in revenue bonds, money received on the 1970 bond issue, and a \$225,000 Fund Raising Drive.

June, 1976, saw the completion of the new building. The remainder of the work of remodeling the old hospital was completed in 1977.

There are 76 beds in the new hospital, and 17 beds in the remodeled facility. So, instead of a countywide hospital, supported by the entire county and intended to be near Celina where it would have been centrally located, ended with a county hospital in Coldwater, Ohio. Otis Hospital, Celina, closed its doors in 1977, and it is believed Gibbons Hospital, Celina, will eventually be phased out too, leaving Celina with a population of about 1,000 without a hospital.

In March 1978 Community Hospital started 24-hour emergency room coverage by physicians hired by the hospital. Also available are specialists from nearby cities who come to the hospital on certain days to see patients who need specialized care. There are fourteen family physicians practicing in Mercer County at the present time, plus one radiologist and one surgeon.

Alfrida E. Willke, July 1, 1978



By January, 1978, we were the grandparents of 14 boys and 5 girls. Front row: Andy, Mary, Jim, Mark and Joan. Second row: Nancy holding Steve, Carol, Rosann, Tom, Grandpa, Grandma, Mike, Jack, Cindy holding Jimmy. Back row: Bob holding John, Joe, Esther, Bill, Bill, Bob, Don, David, Marilyn, Ed, Janet and Andrew. Picture was taken Christmas, 1977.

PART II

Our Ancestors

Updates From 1970—1989



*Alois J. Willke Family 1916.
Al, Alois, Marcella, Caroline, Edgar, Tanta & Lucille. Behind hedge: Marie & George.
House and office built in 1900.*

When I became interested in genealogy in 1964, I started to write a family history about my ancestors. By 1970, after doing a lot of research, I had gathered a lot of information.

After including this information with other interesting and important history and articles in a book which I called THIS IS OUR LIFE, I gave a book to each one of our four children.

Now, twenty to twenty-five years later, after finding out more about my ancestors, I would like to re-write that history and make some additions and a few corrections. Since I knew the least about my great-grandparents, Max Seitz and Anna Maria Fecher Seitz at that time, I would like to start with them.

Note: Alfrida continued to update her family history until her death on January 5, 1990. She was 83 when she died of heart failure while getting in the car to attend the funeral of her brother, Arnold Kleinhenz. Her husband, Edgar, died of cancer the same year on September 28, 1990 at the age of 84. The following was taken from her handwritten notes and compiled 22 years after her death by her daughter, Janet Willke Bolton in 2012. This is an attempt to further her work but much remains to be completed as Alfrida was not able to complete this project.

Chapter One – Maternal Great-Grandparents

Max Seitz and Anna Maria Fecher

Max Seitz and Anna Maria Fecher Seitz were my maternal great-grandparents. They came to America and settled in Chickasaw, Mercer County, Ohio.

Anna Maria Fecher, my great-grandmother, was born in Neunkirchen, Alsace, France, in 1828. She lived in Neunkirchen, a small village located near Strausbourg, in northeastern France on the French-German border. Although the Fechers lived in France, they were of German ancestry. Alsace-Lorraine was fought over for many centuries by France and Germany. Alsace was under French rule at that time.

I received the above information about my great-grandmother, Anna Maria Fecher, from my granddaughter, Cindy Niekamp, after she visited that region in February of 1988.

Cindy, after reading the books ANCESTRAL PORTRAITS written by Con J. Fecher, a relative, became interested in visiting the region where our ancestor Anna Maria Fecher was born and where she lived for twenty years. Cindy lived in Paris, France, for three years (1986-1989) where she was employed by General Motors Corporation.

In Neunkirchen, Cindy found a small village with three families living there, a restaurant, and a church complex with three chapels and a few clergy. One chapel dates back to medieval times and Cindy thought certainly it was in this chapel where Anna Maria Fecher was baptized.

The priests told her that the baptismal records were burned during the war, as well as the buildings in this small town. She looked at the cemetery, but all the old graves were either destroyed or covered up.

Just when Anna Maria Fecher came to America is not known. She, however, according to Con Fecher's book, came to America and the Chickasaw area with her brother and two sisters, probably in the late 1840's.

While in America, she met Max Seitz, my great-grandfather, who had arrived in America earlier and lived in Chickasaw, Ohio. Max Seitz was born in 1825 somewhere in Germany. Max Seitz and Anna Maria Fecher were married and lived in Chickasaw, Mercer County, Ohio.

A deed at the Celina courthouse gave me the following information: Max Seitz (spelled Zeitz) bought some land from Augustine Buehler, dated November 29, 1850. This farmland is located 1/3 mile south of Chickasaw, Ohio, on State Route #716.

Max Seitz and Anna Maria Fecher Seitz were the parents of four children:

Theresia – 1850-1945, Mrs. Henry Knapke, Maria Stein, Ohio

Joseph – 1852 – 1910, Chickasaw, Ohio

Mary* – 1853 – 1888, Mrs. Frank Kremer, Sr. Maria Stein, Ohio

August - Dayton, Ohio

*Mary was my grandmother. Max Seitz and she both died in the year 1869. He died at the age of 44 years and she died at the age of 34 years. I remember my dad telling me that they died of tuberculosis of the lungs.

I remember Theresia Seitz Knapke (1850 – 1945), my grandmother's sister. She lived on Rolfe Road on the same farm where Urban Knapke lives now. I have a picture of her at the home of my parents, taken around 1927, at a family reunion in St. Marys Ohio.

For many years I could not find the tombstones of Max and Anna Maria Fecher Seitz. Aunt Anna Meiring, my mother's sister, told me that since Chickasaw did not have a parish church at that time, people went to church at St. Sebastian, Ohio. I could not find a trace of them anywhere.

It wasn't until 1986 when I read the book, ST. JOHN CHURCH, MARIA STEIN, OHIO 1836-1986, written by Henry J. Luegers that I found out Chickasaw did not have a church until 1903 and that people belonged to St. John Parish, Maria Stein and not St. Sebastian in 1869, the time of my great-grandparents' death.

After searching for many years, I was surprised and relieved to find their tombstones intact and plainly marked in St. John Cemetery, Maria Stein, Ohio.

Chapter Two – Maternal Great-Grandparents

Diederrich (Detrick) Kremer and Elizabeth Beuder

My maternal great-grandparents, Dietrick Kremer, born September 4, 1807, and Elizabeth Beuder Kremer, born November 10, 1808, were natives of Ankum, Hanover, Germany. They came to America in 1835 with their daughter, Elizabeth, born November 20, 1834, and Dietrick's father, Henry.

After remaining in Cincinnati, Ohio, for one-half year and where their second child was born, they came to Minster, Ohio. They remained in Minster for six months where Dietrick, like many other immigrants, helped with the building of the Miami Erie Canal.

The Miami Erie Canal work began in 1825 from Cincinnati to Dayton. Around the middle 1830's it was decided to build the canal north through Fort Loramie, Minster, St. Marys, and then to Toledo, Ohio.

According to history, the workers received 50 cents and a jigger of whiskey a day. The whiskey was to prevent malaria and other diseases.

When Dietrick earned enough money (they were very poor when they came to America), his father, Henry, bought forty acres of land located 1 ½ miles north of the present St. John Catholic Church in Maria Stein, Ohio.

A deed in Celina, Ohio, gives the following record; Land purchased by Henry Kramer (spelled Kramer), May 13, 1836, transferred to Dietrick Kremer on January 14, 1839.

This land was purchased from the United States Government during the presidency of Martin Van Buren. The land Henry bought was nothing but a big forest roaming with wild animals.

The first thing that had to be done was to cut down trees, so they could build a house to live in. They used the logs to build the house. After that, the land had to be cleared before they could plant crops. After much struggle and hard work, 120 acres of land was eventually added, so that at the time of Dietrick's death in 1866, his farm consisted of 160 acres.

The farm is still owned and operated in the same Kremer family. It has been handed down from father to son for six generations, namely: Henry Kramer, to Dietrick Kremer, to Frank Kremer, Sr., to August Kremer, to Paul Kremer, and then to Dennis Beuder Kremer. Dietrick Kremer and Elizabeth Beuder Kremer were the parents of eight children:

- Elizabeth (1834 – 1910), Mrs. Gerard Stammen
- Mary - Mrs. Henry Vander Hoar
- Caroline – Mrs. Henry Will
- Anna (1841 – 1928) – Mrs. Joseph Reichert, Cassella, Ohio
- Philomena – Mrs. Joseph Kramer
- Katherine – Mrs. John Buehler
- Agnes – Mrs. Joseph Roeckner
- Frank, Sr.* - 1849-1916

*Frank Kremer, Sr., was my grandfather. I can remember Ann Reichert (1841-1928), my grandfather's sister. She lived south of Cassella, Ohio. I have a picture of her that was taken at the family reunion in St. Marys, Ohio. It was taken at the home of my parents in 1927.

Dietrick Kremer passed away March 9, 1886, at the age of 78 years. Elizabeth passed away November 26, 1878, at the age of 70 years. Both are buried in St. John Cemetery, Maria Stein, Ohio.

For several years their tombstones lay broken in several pieces on the cemetery. In 1976 Paul Kremer, my cousin, took the initiative to have them replaced with new ones. There is, however, a mistake on the tombstone of my great-grandmother. It should be Elizabeth Kremer and not Maria Kremer. The dates 1808– 1878 are correct.

I have looked for the grave of Henry (Kramer) Kremer, my great-great-grandfather, who came to America in 1835, but I have not been able to find it. He may have been buried in Minster, Ohio, where the early settlers went to church. The first church, a log church, in St. John, now Maria Stein, was blessed on April 9, 1837.

In the summer of 1988 when our daughter, Janet, was being hosted by a German family in Germany during a sister city exchange program, she received some very interesting information about our Kremer ancestors.

When Janet told her host family about her great-great-grandparents being born in Ankum, Hanover, Germany, they became very interested in helping her to find out more about them. They called a man by the name of Bennow Kremer, who looked up some church records in Ankum, Hanover, Germany.

He came up with the birth records of Dietrick Kremer and Elizabeth Beuder Kremer and their daughter, Elizabeth. Their birth dates correspond with the dates I have. They, then said, they could find no further records of them, and did not know what happened to them.

Well, we know the rest of the story. The story of their lives that started in Germany 181 years ago is still very much alive in St. John, Maria Stein, Ohio.

Most of my history, other than already mentioned about the Kremers, was received from court house records, church and cemetery records. Also of interest was an article I read that was given to me around 1965. The article was written in German and was the obituary of my grandfather, Frank Kremer, Sr., who died in 1916. The article gave a lot of information about my great-grandfather Dietrick Kremer.

Chapter Three – Paternal Great-Grandparents

John Henry Pohlmann and Catherine Hagman

My paternal great-grandfather, John Henry Pohlmann, was born in Osnabruck, Germany, in 1799. He and his first wife (he was married three times) and, apparently, one or several of their children came to America in approximately 1833. They first settled in Cincinnati, Ohio. Sometime later, John Henry came via the Miami Erie Canal to Piqua, Ohio, and then walked to Maria Stein, Ohio, a distance of about 30 miles, where he purchased 80 acres of land. This land is located ¼ mile south of Marion Local Schools on State Route #716 in Maria Stein, Ohio.

From Maria Stein John Henry had to walk to Lima, Ohio, a distance of 50 miles, to get the deed. There was no courthouse in Mercer County at that time.

I saw a record of the deed at the Celina Courthouse. It had been transferred there from the courthouse in Lima. It gave the following information: land was purchased by John Henry Pohlmann on March 15, 1837. This land was purchased from the U.S. Government during the presidency of Martin Van Buren.

He and his family stayed in Cincinnati, Ohio, for 3 or 4 years before coming to Maria Stein to clear the land which was nothing but a forest with wild animals roaming the area.

They went through the same procedure other immigrants did to build a log house and clear the land so crops could be planted. This farm is still owned and operated in the same Pohlmann family. It has been handed down from father to son for 5 generations, namely: John Henry Pohlmann to Herman Pohlmann, to Albert Pohlman, and to Albert's two sons John and Joseph who farm it, although Albert still lives on the home place at the present time.

John Henry Pohlmann's first wife and 4 of their 5 children all died during an interval of one year, apparently of cholera or typhoid fever. Their son Herman (1839-1922) survived. John Henry's second wife died in childbirth. He and his third wife Catherine Hagman, born 1805, were the parents of two children:

*Bernadine – 1846-1893 – Mrs. Arnold Kleinhenz, St. Rose, Ohio
Henry – 1850-1900 – Maria Stein, Ohio

*Bernadine was my grandmother.

There are many Pohlmanns living in Maria Stein and the surrounding area. They all are direct descendant of John Henry and Herman Pohlmann, although some spell their name with one "n" and others with 2 "n's." Some of the descendents of John Pohlmann (1872-1951) still spell it Pohlmann. The descendents of Henry Pohlmann (1878-1925) spell it Pohlman.

Henry never married. He was deaf and was killed near his home by a train while walking to church on the train tracks. He died at age 50 years.

The train was an excursion and was not on a regularly scheduled run. His family was alerted by the sound of the train whistle and witnessed the tragic accident.

John Henry Pohlmann passed away June 12, 1888 at the age of 89 years. Catherine Hagman Pohlmann passed away in 1876 at the age of 71 years. Both are buried in St. John Cemetery, Maria Stein, Ohio.

Most of the information about the Pohlmann ancestors was received by word of mouth from Richard Pohlmann and Marcella Pohlman Albers. They remember their grandfather Herman Pohlmann talking about his father, John Henry. Marcella Pohlman Albers was brought up and lived in the same household with her grandfather, Herman Pohlmann. Richard Pohlmann lived on a farm across the road from there. Herman was 83 when he died.

Other information was received from cemetery, church and courthouse records.

Chapter Four - Paternal Great-Grandparents

Joseph Kleinhenz and Mary Meiner

My paternal great-grandfather, Joseph Kleinhenz, was born February 24, 1805. According to letters received from a relative in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1970, he came to America from Molton, Bavaria, Germany.

My paternal great-grandmother, Mary Meiner Kleinhenz, was born August 9, 1816. She was the adopted daughter of Arnold and Mary Meiner. I have no record where Arnold and Mary Meiner and their adopted daughter, Mary, were born. They evidently came to America from Germany. Joseph Kleinhenz and Mary Meiner were married in Springfield, Ohio, in 1832.

It is quite possible that Joseph Kleinhenz, Arnold and Mary Meiner and daughter Mary came to America in the early 1830's.

According to courthouse records in Celina, Ohio, Joseph Kleinhenz and Mary Meiner purchased 80 acres of land in St. Rose, Mercer County, Ohio, in March 16, 1837. This land is located directly across the road from St. Rose Catholic Church, St. Rose, Mercer County, Ohio. There was no court house in Mercer County at that time, therefore, the transaction took place in Lima, Ohio. Mercer County was established in 1920. I saw a copy of the deed at the court house in Celina, Ohio, where it has been transferred from Lima.

When the land was purchased, it had never been cultivated, and it was nothing but a big forest. They went through the same procedure other immigrants did to build a log house and clear the land so crops could be planted.

This farm remained in the Kleinhenz family for three generations, namely, Joseph Kleinhenz, to Arnold Kleinhenz, to John W. Kleinhenz. In 1927 my father, John W. Kleinhenz moved from the farm to St. Marys, Ohio, where he owned and operated a stockyard. In 1950 the Kleinhenz farm was sold to Clarence P. Stachler. It had been in the Kleinhenz name for over 113 years. The land at this time consisted of 145 acres. This was the farm where all my sisters and brothers and I were born and raised.

According to St. Rose history books, some land, dated April 11, 1839, was leased from Joseph Kleinhenz which was used to build the first Catholic church (log church) in St. Rose. Prior to this, mass was held for some time in the home of my great grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Kleinhenz. The log church stood north of the present St. Rose Catholic Church on what-is-now State Route #119. Later, additional acres of land were purchased from Joseph Kleinhenz to build a new church and school.

Joseph Kleinhenz and Mary Meiner were the parents of 10 children:

Elizabeth Duwelling – 1835-1905 – Ottoville, Ohio

Catherine Bomholt – 1837-1869 – St. Rose, Ohio

*Arnold Kleinhenz – 1842-1893 – St. Rose, Ohio

Mary Pohlkamp – 1845-1915 – St. Rose, Ohio

John Kleinhenz – 1849-1911 – Decatur, Indiana

Philomena Fahrig – 1856-1940 – Dayton, Ohio

Anton Kleinhenz – Portland, Indiana

Amelia Loehshetter – Columbus, Ohio

Gerard Kleinhenz – Ft. Loramie, Ohio

Paul – died in infancy

*Arnold Kleinhenz was my grandfather.

Joseph Kleinhenz died August 8, 1866, at the age of 61 years. Mary Meiner Kleinhenz died August 14, 1894, at the age of 78 years. They are both buried in St. Rose Cemetery, St. Rose, Ohio.

When Arnold and Mary Meiner died and where they are buried is not known to me.

Most of the history of the Kleinhenz ancestors came from St. Rose church records, St. Rose Cemetery, Mercer County Courthouse, and by word of mouth.

I remember my father talking about his grandmother, Mary Meiner Kleinhenz, who lived in the same household with him. He said she was an orphan and only 16 years old when she married his grandfather, Joseph Kleinhenz. My Aunt Anna Kleinhenz (Mrs. Anthony) told me that Joseph Kleinhenz and Mary Meiner Kleinhenz were married in Springfield, Ohio.

The name Kleinhenz is spelled "Clius" on the deed at Celina Courthouse. Not being able to speak English when they came to America, the name was spelled like it was pronounced. I can well understand this because, as a child, I, too, spoke German and when I pronounced my name, it sounded more like Clius than Kleinhenz.

Joseph Kleinhenz evidently left many brothers and sisters in Germany. I know of one brother who came to America.

In St. Rose Cemetery, St. Rose, Ohio, are the tombstones of Peter Kleinhenz, born 1793, and Barbara Kleinhenz, born 1800, and their daughter, Katharine, born 1846. They died during the cholera epidemic in 1849.

For many years I wondered how I was related to them.

In 1974 Mom gave me a photo, taken approximately in 1920, of the two tombstones with two men standing beside them. Mom could not identify the tombstones or the two men in the photograph. She thought they had been relatives from Ft. Recovery, Ohio. Dad would have known, I am sure, but he died in 1944.

In 1978 I contacted Vivian (Kleinhenz) Wrangler, age 74, of Celina, Ohio. She was a perfect stranger to me. Since her maiden name was Kleinhenz, I figured she could be a relative.

When I showed her the photo, she identified the two men as her grandfather Joseph Kleinhenz, born December 13, 1842, and her son Edward, born March 13, 1889. They, evidently, had just replaced the tombstones of Peter Kleinhenz, Barbara Kleinhenz, and their daughter, when the picture was taken.

The mystery was now solved and we know Peter Kleinhenz was a brother to Joseph Kleinhenz (1805-1866) who was my great grandfather.

Peter Kleinhenz, Barbara K. and their daughter lived in Fort Recovery, Ohio. During the cholera epidemic in 1849 they came to St. Rose, Ohio, to the home of his brother, Joseph, thinking they could escape the cholera epidemic. They died and are buried there.

Many of the people who died during the cholera epidemic were buried in one grave. Cholera was so contagious and people panicked so that the bodies were buried immediately.

In St. Rose Cemetery, where Peter, Barbara and daughter are buried, there is a large space which has no crosses or tombstones. "Under this soil lie the victims of the cholera plague."

Earlier I mentioned that the tombstones of Peter and Barbara were replaced in 1920. I would probably be correct in saying that they never had a tombstone until these were put there in 1920.

There are no records of Peter and Barbara Kleinhenz in St. Rose Church history records. I have not checked Ft. Recovery, Ohio, church records.

After sending her all the information I had about my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, she returned to me the information that she was certain my great-grandfather, Joseph Kleinhenz, born 1805, and her grandfather, John Kleinhenz, born 1818, had been brothers.

She mentioned she had in her possession two letters, dated 1859 and 1866, from Motten, Bavaria, Germany, that had been sent to her grandfather by his brother Valentine. In both letters Joseph's name had been mentioned. Up until this time, to my knowledge, no mention had ever been made of Joseph Kleinhenz having had any brothers, or what part of Germany he came from.

In her letters she also mentioned an abbot and monastery in Motten, Bavaria, Germany, by the name of Kleinhenz. My last letter to her was returned unopened, and marked "deceased." At the time of her death she was still writing to Germany trying to learn more about our ancestors. She knew that her grandfather had left many sisters and brothers in Germany.

Chapter 5 – Maternal Grandparents

Frank Kremer, Sr., and Mary Seitz

Frank Kremer, Sr., my maternal grandfather, was the son of Detrick and Elizabeth Bueder Kremer. He was a farmer, born in Maria Stein, Ohio, on March 10, 1849. He lived all his life on the same farm where he was born. This farm is located two miles north of the present St. John Catholic Church, Maria Stein, Ohio.

Mary Seitz, my maternal grandmother, was the daughter of Max and Ann Maria Fecher Seitz. She was born on a farm 1/3 mile south of Chickasaw, Mercer County, Ohio, on October 5, 1853. Frank Kremer, Sr., and Mary Seitz Kremer were the parents of 11 children:

John D. – 1873-1945 – Elizabeth Menker and Agnes Menker, Maria Stein, Ohio
*Elizabeth – 1874 -1913 – Mrs. John Kleinhenz, St. Rose, Ohio
Catherine 1876-1954 – Mrs. Frank Evers, Carthagena, Ohio
Anthony – 1879-1960 – Mary Evers, Carthagena, Ohio
Joseph - 1881-1955 – Reverend Sebastian Kremer, C.PP.S, Carthagena Seminary
August – 1883-1947 – Catherine Bertke, Maria Stein, Ohio
Anna – 1884-1978 – Mrs. Joseph Meiering, Cincinnati, Ohio
Frank, Jr. – 1886-1955 – Regina Bertke, Chickasaw, Ohio
Three children died in infancy.

*Elizabeth was my mother.

My grandparents Kremer had 64 grandchildren and 2 step-grandchildren that grew to adulthood. Several others died as infants.

Frank Kremer, Sr., passed away July 22, 1916, at the age of 67 years. His death was due to an asthmatic-heart condition. Mary Seitz Kremer passed away February 22, 1888, at the age of 34 years. Her death was due to childbirth. Both are buried at St. John Cemetery, Maria Stein, Ohio.

I was 10 years old when my grandfather Kremer died. My grandmother Kremer passed away 18 years before I was born.

One thing that stands out in my mind is seeing Grandpa Kremer coming down the road with a white horse and buggy to visit us. We lived in St. Rose, Ohio, about two miles from where he lived. We always looked forward to seeing him because he would bring us some stick candy. He had a long beard and was a farmer known for working hard and being very thrifty. Seemingly, he inherited this trait from his father and passed it down to future generations.

One day I met a lady from Germany who was visiting America. She mentioned there were a lot of Kremers where she came from in Germany. I asked her what kind of people they were. She replied that they are “gamuklich,” which means in English easy-going and not very aggressive. I told her the gamuklich ones must have stayed in Germany because all the Kremers I knew worked hard and were very aggressive.



Father Sebastian Kremer C.PP.S.

Father Kremer, Alfrida’s uncle, was ordained a priest in the Society of the Precious Blood in 1907 at Saint Charles Seminary, Carthagena, Ohio. In 1918 Our Lady of Good Counsel parish in Cleveland, Ohio needed a German-speaking priest to meet the needs of their German-speaking segment of the parish. He was pastor there for 29 years. From 1926-1928 Alfrida and a friend worked as housekeepers for him and the priests at the Mission House. He celebrated the mass and performed the nuptials at the wedding of Alfrida and Edgar.

The legend of Father Kremer still lives on today at Mary Queen of Peace Church (formerly Our Lady Of Good Counsel). One legend is that Father Kremer had a stained glass image of Saint Sebastian installed in the window next to the baptismal font. If parents had trouble deciding on a baptismal name for their baby, he could show them the stained glass and suggest the name Sebastian. The other legend is that Father Kremer had the image of his face used for the face of Saint Gaspar on a painting which he commissioned. The painting is of Saint Gaspar kneeling below the Virgin Mary. It still hangs in the church today. The face of Saint Gaspar, the founder of the Society of the Precious Blood, looks striking similar to that of Father Kremer.

Chapter Six – Paternal Grandparents

Arnold Kleinhenz and Bernadine Pohlmann

My paternal grandfather, Arnold Kleinhenz, was the son of Joseph and Mary Meiner Kleinhenz. He was born December 30, 1842, at St. Rose, Mercer County, Ohio. My paternal grandmother, Bernadine Pohlmann, was the daughter of John Henry and Catherine Hagman Pohlmann. She was born December 2, 1846, at Maria Stein, Ohio. They were married June 2, 1868, at St. Rose, Ohio.

Arnold Kleinhenz and Bernadine Pohlmann were the parents of seven children:

Mary – 1869-1957 – Mrs. Ben Fleck, Dayton, Ohio

*John W. - 1871-1944 – Elizabeth Kremer, St. Rose, Ohio and Catherine Tuente, St. Marys, Ohio

Anna - 1874-1888 – St. Rose, Ohio

Regina - 1876 – 1965 – Mrs. Joseph Meyer, Minster, Ohio

Catherine - 1876 – 1876 – Regina's twin

Anthony – 1877 -1956 – Anna Lochtefeld, Maria Stein, Ohio

Minnie - 1884-1970 – never married, Minster, Ohio

*John W. was my father.

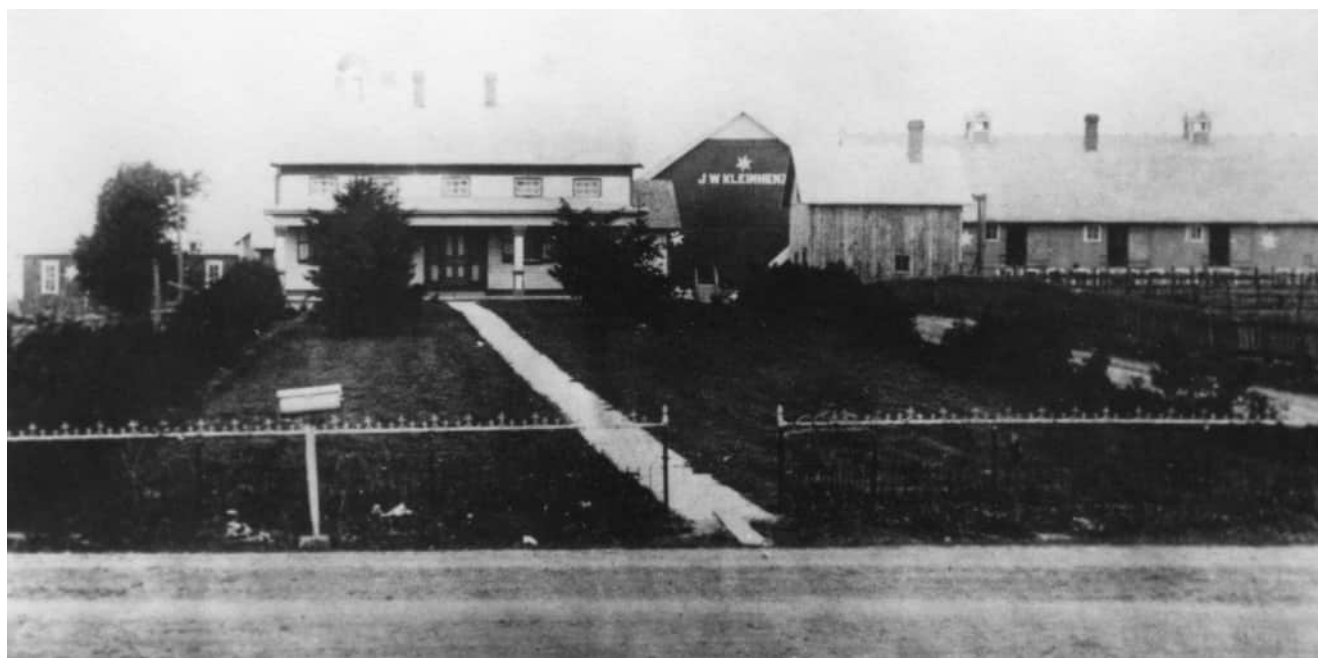
Arnold and Bernadine Pohlmann Kleinhenz became the grandparents of 28 grandchildren, one step-grandchild (Tim Creeden) and one adopted grandchild (Donald Beaver Stroh). Four grandchildren died in infancy.

Arnold Kleinhenz passed away on Christmas Day, December 25, 1893, at the age of 50 years. Death was due to typhoid fever. Bernadine Pohlmann Kleinhenz died that same year on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1893, at the age of 47 years. She died of a hemorrhage during her menopause. They are buried in St. Rose Cemetery, St. Rose, Ohio.

My father was 22 years old and not married when his parents died. He often mentioned how hard it had been for him to lose both mother and father in such a short time. He was again saddened the following August, 1894, by the sudden death of his grandmother, Mary Meiner Kleinhenz, who lived in the same household. My father often spoke about his grandmother, more so than about his parents.

I regret that I did not start writing a family history while my father was still living. He could have given me some information about my ancestors that I would have treasured.

My Aunt Minnie Kleinhenz, who was still living when I wrote my first family history in 1964-1970, could not give me much family history information because she was only 7 years old when her parents and grandmother died in the 1890's.



Kleinhenz Farm in St. Rose, Ohio where Alfrida was born. c. 1918.

Chapter Seven - Maternal Step-Grandparents

Bernard Tuente, Sr., and Anna Buddendick

My step-grandfather, Bernard Tuente, Sr., was born on July 4, 1858, in Westfalen, Germany. He came to America in 1881 when he was 23 years old. He landed in New York and then came to Cincinnati, Ohio. He soon made his way to the state of Kansas where he stayed for a short time before he came back to Ohio.

On November 7, 1888, he married my step-grandmother, Anna Buddendick in Ft. Loramie, Ohio. Anna Buddendick, daughter of Bernard and Anna Baumer Buddendick, was born March 28, 1868, in Westfalen, Germany. She came to America on October 21, 1887, when she was 19 years old.

They lived in St. Patricks, Ohio, where their three oldest children were born. They then went to Hartford, Kansas, for about one year. Their fourth child, Anna, was born there. They then moved back to St. Patricks, Ohio, where they lived until 1898. After that they bought some land south of St. Rose, Ohio.

They became the parents of 12 children;

- *Catherine – 1889-1978 – Mrs. John Kleinhenz , St. Marys, Ohio
- Mary – 1890-1966 - Mrs. Harry Dirksen, Minster, Ohio
- Ben, Jr. – 1892-1946 – Caroline Winner, Osgood, Ohio
- Anna – 1893-1977 – Mrs. Julius Riethman, Minster, Ohio
- Elizabeth – 1895-1983 – Mrs. August Riethman, McCartyville, Ohio
- Henry – 1896-1972 - Agatha Riethman, St. Rose, Ohio
- Clara – 1898-1985 – Mrs. Anthony Ungruhn, St. Rose, Ohio
- Frances – 1904-1982 – Mrs. Leo Walterbusch, Maria Stein, Ohio
- Rose – 1906-1974 – Mrs. John Berning, McCartyville, Ohio
- Margaret – 1908- - Mrs. Henry Grieshop, Osgood, Ohio

Two children died in infancy.

Julius, August and Agatha Riethman were brothers and sister.

*Catherine was my step-mother.

Grandpa Tuente came to American alone and Grandma Tuente came here with a girlfriend. She often spoke of her girlfriend with whom she remained close friends for many years. Her name was Stephan and she lived south of here, around the Greenville, Ohio, area.

Grandma Tuente often spoke about her trip to America via sailboat. She said it took six weeks or more to get here. Some days when the weather was bad, she said that the sailboat would go backwards instead of forwards which would delay them for many days. She and her girlfriend landed in Baltimore, Maryland.

Ben Tuente, Sr., died March 22, 1930, and Ann Buddendick Tuente died April 17, 1958. He was 72 years old when he died and she was 90 years old. They are buried in St. Rose Cemetery, St. Rose, Mercer County, Ohio.

Grandpa and Grandma Tuente left many brothers and sisters and other relatives in Germany. After my dad died, Mom made two trips to Germany to see them. My sister, Esther, went with her and they enjoyed the trips immensely.

Chapter Eight – Alfrida’s Family

John W. Kleinhenz and Elizabeth Kremer Kleinhenz and Catherine Tuente Kleinhenz



John Kleinhenz Family 1927

Seated: Leonard, John, Edwin, Catherine & Alfrida.

Standing: Arnold, Pauline, Ray, Hilda, Alfred, Olive, Esther (behind Edwin)

Children of John W. Kleinhenz and Elizabeth Kremer Kleinhenz and Catherine Tuente Kleinhenz.

Olive

Date of birth: October 8, 1896

Date of death: December 18, 1963 – Cause heart attack

Age: 67

Buried: St. Augustine Cemetery, Minster, Ohio

Married George Thieman of Minster, Ohio

George Thieman 1889-1963

6 children:

Roger (Clarissa Boerger) died 1994

Edna (Mrs. Richard Frierott) died 2012

Hilda (Mrs. Robert Wehrman) died 2008

Harold (Betty Beckman)

Alice (Urban Poeppeleman & Alex Bruggeman) died 2012

Betty (Mrs. Myrl Vallo)

Raymond

Date of birth: May 11, 1898

Date of death: February 24, 1961 - Cause – heart attack

Age: 62

Buried: Gethsemane Cemetery, St. Marys, Ohio

Married Mabel Klosterman of Guadaloupe (Montezuma), Ohio

Mabel Klosterman Kleinhenz 1897 – 1972

5 children:

Robert (Rosanne Hausfeld)

James (Shirley Clifford) – died 2011

Ray Jr. (Norma Jean Bernhold) – died 2010

One girl and one boy died in infancy

Leonard

Date of birth: February 24, 1900
Date of death: March 1, 1967 – Cause – heart attack
Age: 67
Buried: Gethsemane Cemetery, St. Marys, Ohio
Married Helen Russell of Worthington, Ohio
Helen Russell (1905 – 1990)

4 children:

Leonard Jr. (Mary Alice Poonman) died 1991
Betty (Mrs. Reinhold Seizenger) died 2004
Rosemary (Mrs. Robert Dineen)
One boy died in infancy

Alfrida – author of these writings

Date of birth: February 4, 1906
Date of death: January 5, 1990 – Cause – heart attack
Age: 83
Buried: St. John Cemetery, Maria Stein, Ohio
Married Edgar J. Willke, M.D. of Maria Stein, Ohio
Edgar J. Willke, M.D. (November 6, 1905-September 28,1990)

4 children:

Marilyn (Mrs. Donald Schwieterman)
William (Esther Hausfeld)
Janet (Mrs. Andrew Niekamp, Mrs. James Bolton)
Rosann (Mrs. Robert Spitzer) died June 15, 2007
cause – unknown primary cancer

Andrew J. Niekamp (1933- 2009)

Alfred

Date of birth: January 25, 1902
Date of death: December 17, 1968 – Cause – heart attack
Age: 66
Buried – Gethsemane Cemetery, St. Marys, Ohio
Married Agatha Dorsten of St. Sebastian, Ohio
Agatha Dorsten Kleinhenz, (1908 – 1991)

1 child:

John (Virginia Borgert, deceased, 1929-2002)

Arnold

Date of birth: November 17, 1908
Date of death: January 3, 1990 – Cause – heart attack
Age: 82
Buried St. Joseph Cemetery, Columbus, Ohio
Married Alma Bruns of Yorkshire, Ohio
Alma Bruns Kleinhenz (1912 – 2007)

3 children:

Kenneth (Lois Butryrn) (La Wanda Butcher)
Bill (Mary Elizabeth Newman)
One boy died in infancy

Hilda

Date of birth: November 29, 1903
Date of death: January 26, 1990 – Cause – heart attack
Age: 86
Buried: Calvary Cemetery, Dayton, Ohio
Married Robert Creeden of Celina, Ohio
Robert Creeden, death January 22, 1995

One step-child:

Tim Creeden (Betty Council), deceased

Pauline

Date of birth: November 20, 1910
Date of death: January 1, 1977 – Cause – heart disease
Age: 66
Buried – Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio
Married Irven Klug of Cincinnati, Ohio
Irven Klug (1908 – 1993)

4 children

Mary
Tom (Beverly Ann Smith)
Nancy (Mrs. Thomas Keller)
John

Esther

Date of birth: February 16, 1918

Date of death: May 15, 2009

Age: 91

Buried: Gethsemane Cemetery, St. Marys, Ohio

Married Richard Stroh of St. Marys, Ohio

Richard Stroh – 1919-1997

One adopted child: Donald Beaver Stroh (Peggy Scott)

Edwin

Date of birth: January 16, 1922

Date of death: May 31, 1977 – Cause – liver cancer

Age: 55

Buried: St. Joseph Cemetery, Wapakoneta, Ohio

Married Winnie Hemmert of Wapakoneta, Ohio

Winnie Hemmert Kleinhenz, deceased

One child: Debbie (deceased)

Deaths: Urban Poeppelman 1969, Robert Wehrman 1984, Roseanne Hausfeld Kleinhenz 1994, Alex Bruggeman

Note: Hilda, Alfrida, and Arnold all died in January of 1990



Alfrida at age 7.

Aunt Minnie took her to Celina on the train to have this picture taken.



Edgar and Alfrida Willke. 1941

A Brief Biography of My Father, John W. Kleinhenz (1871-1944)

“The desire and determination my father had to succeed in the livestock business is what I remember most of my childhood days.”

Dad not only farmed the 145 acre farm at St. Rose, Mercer County, Ohio, but he also was a big operator in livestock, especially hogs.

He bought hogs from the farmers, collected them on the farm, and when he had a carload, he would ship them to Cleveland and Buffalo Stockyards. He shipped them via C H and D (Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Dayton) railroad which was located at Maria Stein Station, one mile east of our farm. Sometimes when not enough cars were obtainable on the C H and D, he would take the hogs to Versailles, Ohio, where they were shipped via the Big Four Railroad.

After many years of doing this, Dad had a great desire to expand his business. Dad was a real entrepreneur. His intentions now were to ship his hogs directly to the meat packer instead of shipping them to the stockyards. He knew his margin of profit would be greater if he could do this. This, however, was not easy. Many livestock dealers had tried it but none had ever succeeded.

Dad made many trips by train to the East (New York City, Buffalo, Boston and Jersey City) to see some of the largest meat packing plants in the United States. After many trips, with lots of determination and perseverance, he eventually convinced the meat packers that he could meet their demands. To meet their demands meant doing a large volume of business.

Dad's intentions were to locate a large stockyard somewhere in Mercer County, Ohio, but he could not find a suitable place. The important factor was to find a building that was located by a railroad, plus a good farming community.

In 1924 he bought an abandoned factory building in St. Marys, Ohio, 15 miles northeast of St. Rose. This building, which once was the American Chain Company, was converted into a large stockyard. Besides large scales, pens, etc., it also included putting in a side railroad track so that the hogs could be loaded directly from the stockyards to the railroad cars. The side railroad track was in direct line and ended near the stockyard office. I can remember how careful Dad was to leave a big mound of ground at the end of the tracks. This would serve as a barrier in case a railroad car got loose. It would prevent it from running into the office. Dad always believed in “safety first.” After 64 years the mound of ground can still be seen on the east side of the office building.

The business did not flourish to expectations at first. Although many hogs were brought in within the immediate St. Marys area, Dad could not wholly depend on that because he needed to do a larger amount of business. He then established branch yards within a radius of 35 to 40 miles from St. Marys, where farmers could take their hogs. All hogs were then trucked in from these branch yards (there were 20) to the St. Marys Union Stockyards. Here the hogs were shipped to the meat packers or slaughter houses via the Nickel Plate Railroad to points east. The biggest buyer was Chas. Miller and Company, North Bergen, Jersey City, New Jersey.

The business grew and flourished. My brother Ray and Alfred, who worked as co-managers with Dad, worked very hard to make the business succeed. Around 1936, however, they developed serious health problems which disabled them from working.

During the time of their illness Dad needed assistance, and he relied on help from a young man who was employed in the stockyards doing manual work, such as cleaning the pens, sorting and feeding hogs. His name was Bill Keith, Jr., and he was black. Before long, Bill had worked himself up to working in the office, taking over the responsibilities that were once Ray's and Alfred's. This was the day before integration, and it was almost unheard of to see a black person holding a position like that in an all-white environment. Dad always was ahead of his time in many things, and having a black man as an assistant manager was no exception.

My father died in 1944. A year after his death, Mom sold the business and stockyards to Chas. Miller and Company, the meat packer where Dad and my brothers had shipped most of their hogs. Bill Keith, Jr., continued to be the manager, but after several years the business gradually phased out.

Although none of Dad's immediate family is in the business today, he did create and establish a livestock business for others to follow. The name Kleinhenz Stockyards can still be found in today's newspapers. The owners are the descendants of Anthony Kleinhenz, who was Dad's brother. They, as well as several other successful livestock dealers in this area, are the offspring or by-products of men who at one time were associated with Dad's business. Some were branch managers.

After buying the stockyards in St. Marys in 1924, Dad drove back and forth from St. Rose to St. Marys. After about two years he found it necessary to leave the farm and move to St. Marys, so he could devote all his time to running the business. My brothers, Ray and Alfred, and my sister, Hilda, who worked in the office, had already moved to St. Marys and were working there full time. A house was rented for a short time on 243 N. Wayne Street. Later, a large brick house was purchased on 518 W. Jackson Street. The house was built around 1895-1901 and was called the Diaker Property.

Dad purchased the house for \$9,000. The builder never lived in it because he went bankrupt right before or after the house was completed. Several families had lived in it, but they had used only part of the house. Our family was the first to occupy the entire house. There were eight of us, my parents, and six children, namely: Hilda, Arnold, Pauline, Esther, Edwin, and myself.

The house had 12 rooms, spacious halls, four wood-burning fireplaces, and four of the six bedrooms had large lavatories with hot and cold running water. It had a full basement and an entire third floor, large enough for a ballroom.

When we moved into it, it was extensively redecorated with new carpeting, matching velour drapes, beautiful chandeliers and furniture. Otto Rentzch of Celina, Ohio, who supplied the furnishings, said it was the biggest order he had ever received.

During the 17 years our family lived there, Dad enjoyed the house immensely. Mom did too, although it meant a lot of work for her. Mom planned well and the house was always in good condition. She always had things under control. She did not have steady help but did have help come in by the day. A lady across the street, Laura, was a big help to her as well as a good friend. Mother did not socialize much and was always ready to go with Dad whenever he wanted to go someplace. Mom was my step-mother. My mother died in 1913 when I was 7 years old.

Dad was successful and was eager to show it. One thing he loved to do was to sit in the back of his Buick car with Mom at his side and have Bill Keith, Jr., who was black, serve as his chauffeur. He enjoyed doing this, especially when he wanted to go to the farm at St. Rose. He missed the farm and went there quite often. There were, without a doubt, a lot of memories there. It was the place where he was born and where he lived for 56 years. His parents and grandparents had lived there, and it was the place where all of his 10 children were born and raised. There were 12 children, two having died in infancy.

By hiring help, going strictly into grain farming, and keeping all his farm implements, Dad was able to continue operating and managing the farm. The farm also has a lot of memories for me. One does not forget the place where you spent your childhood days, especially if they were happy ones like mine were.

I also have some fond memories of our St. Marys home, where I lived for about four years. Ed and I had an all-day wedding celebration there for 80 guests when we were married on July 21, 1931.

Dad enjoyed making money, and he also enjoyed spending it. Besides his 145 acre farm and hog business, he was a big speculator in the stock market. He bought and sold grain on margin. This was before, during, and after the Big Stock Market Crash of 1929, and The Great Depression that followed.

Although Dad suffered losses like millions of other people did, he eventually came out of it all right. I do remember the worry it caused him when he received phone calls from his broker informing him of a big drop in the market. I was a young teenager then, and we were still living on the farm.

Dad had an interesting life, but it was not an easy one. An expression he used quite often in German was, "Ick hept the ol vot ahn dahn." In English it means, "I have done things and have worked at it hard," (German translated into English never has quite the same meaning.)

Dad often told me he wished I had been a boy. He said he could have used me in the business. This was before "Women's Lib," when a woman's place was in the home and not in the business world.

Dad died in 1944 at the age of 73, having had generalized arterio sclerosis for years. A year after his death, Mom sold the stockyards. Also, that same year she sold the big house and in 1950 she sold the farm.

The house was sold for \$25,000. I am not sure what the stockyards sold for, but I would guess around \$85,000. According to Elmer Schmiesing, son-in-law of Clarence Stachler who bought the farm, the farm sold for \$32,500 or approximately \$224 per acre.

In 1987 when Elmer Schmiesing gave me this farm information, he said the farm consisted of 145 acres and not 130 acres as mentioned in some of my previous histories.

Mom was very generous in sharing her money with her 10 children at the time the house, stockyards, and farm were sold, more generous than was expected of her. She lived for a couple of years on 301 North Walnut Street, St. Marys. Later she built a nice home on 241 N. Spruce Street, where she lived until her death in 1978. She had the pleasure of making two trips to Westphalen, Germany, to see her relatives, who were her uncles, aunts, and cousins. She lived comfortably for 34 years after my father's death.

Mom, Dad, Alfred, Leonard, Ray, and his wife, Mabel, are buried in Gethsemane Cemetery, St. Marys, Ohio

Written by Alfrida E. Willke on May 1, 1988.

John W. Kleinhenz
Obituary
1944



John W. Kleinhenz, Widely Known As Livestock Broker, Died Wednesday.

Was Owner Of Kleinhenz Union Stockyards Established 20 Years Ago – Funeral Services Will Be Held Saturday At Holy Rosary.

John W. Kleinhenz, age 73, owner of the Kleinhenz Union Stockyards operating in 14 counties, died at 12:40 o'clock Wednesday afternoon at Gibbons hospital, Celina, where he had been under treatment since Sunday for a complication of diseases. Mr. Kleinhenz had been in failing health for several years but was able until recently to be at the stockyards office.

Mr. Kleinhenz was a native of Mercer county where he was born on July 21, 1871, at St. Rose, O., a son of the late Arnold and Bernadine Pohlman Kleinhenz. He was engaged there for years in farming and in the raising of livestock, and had established a reputation as one of the largest stockgrowers in the county before his decision to enter into the stockyard business.

On December 21, 1924, he bought the abandoned factory building of the American Chain Company here in St. Marys and soon had it converted to his needs as an extensive buyer of livestock for marketing purposes. His business grew rapidly at the St. Marys yards and before long he decided to establish branch yards in

communities of neighboring counties. Today he has yard in 13 counties surrounding Auglaize and at the time of his death was widely known as a buyer and seller of livestock. As a livestock broker, he did business with the largest meat packing plants in the United States. He had gained an enviable reputation among livestock dealers.

On November 6, 1895, Mr. Kleinhenz married Elizabeth Kremer whose death occurred 32 years ago. On February 14, 1917, he married Catherine Tuentle who is left to mourn his death.

Besides the bereaved widow there are ten children, Mrs. Olive Thieman, Minster, Ray Kleinhenz, St. Marys, Dr. L. A. Kleinhenz, Indianapolis, Ind., Alfred Kleinhenz, Ft. Wayne, Ind., Mrs. Hilda Creeden, Dayton, Mrs. Alfrida Willke, Maria Stein, Pfc. Arnold Kleinhenz, somewhere in Belgium, Mrs. Pauline Klug, Cincinnati, all children of his first marriage, Mrs. Esther Stroh, Mississippi, and F-2-c Edwin Kleinhenz, U.S. Navy, Pittsburgh, Pa., children of his second marriage. Two children by his first marriage are deceased.

There are 20 grandchildren, a brother, Anthony Kleinhenz, Maria Stein, and three sisters, Mrs. Mary Fleck, Dayton, Mrs. Regina Meyer, Minster and Miss Minnie Kleinhenz, Minster.

Mr. Kleinhenz has two sons, two sons-in-law, S-Sgt. Irvin Klug and S-Sgt. Richard Stroh and one grandson, Pvt. Roger Thieman in the armed forces.

He was a member of Holy Rosary Catholic church since his removal to St. Marys, and of the Holy Name society.

He was greatly interested in business, and a few years back was instrumental in having a city baseball team revived here. It was his favorite sport.

Funeral services are arranged for 9:30 o'clock Saturday morning at Holy Rosary. The solemn requiem high mass will be offered by his brother-in-law, the Rev. S.J. Kremer of Cleveland, the Rev. Raphael Schmaus, of St. Rose, where he formerly belonged, and the Rev. John J. Brinker of Holy Rosary.

Friends may call at his residence at 518 West Jackson street, this city, any time after 5 o'clock tonight.

All the Kleinhenz Stock Yards will be closed until further notice and in memorial to his passing.

Chapter Nine – Edgar’s Family

Dr. Alois J. Willke and Caroline Vanderhorst Willke



Alois Willke Family 1934

Seated: Alois, Margie, Caroline & George. Standing: Marie, Al, Ada, Marcella, Ed & Lucille

Children of Dr. Alois J. Willke and Caroline Vanderhorst Willke

Brothers and Sisters of Edgar J. Willke, M.D.

Ada

Date of birth: February 27, 1895

Date of death: May 30, 1962 – Cause - stroke

Age: 67

Buried: St. Marys Cemetery, St. Bernard, Cincinnati, Ohio

Married Harry Limke of Cincinnati and Clarence Beckman

Harry Limke 1885-1943. Clarence Beckman 1895-1971.

6 children: all Limke

Louis (Jen Schappel) died 2004

Gene (Edith Donovan) died 2007

Ruth (Mrs. Ed Klumb)

George (Barbara Born) died 2001

Alice (Mrs. Carl Walsh) (Mrs. Peter Rausch)

Helen

Gerard or George

Date of birth: January 27, 1897

Date of death: April 3, 1950 – Cause - stroke

Age: 53

Buried: St. Marys Cemetery, St. Bernard, Cincinnati, Ohio

Married Marie Wuenneman of Cincinnati

Marie Wuenneman Willke 1897-1990

6 children:

Mary (Mrs. Ralph Robish)

Jack (Barbara Hiltz)

Ruth (Mrs. Dave Folz)

Jean, died 2007

Tom (Geraldine Page)

Bonnie (Mrs. Michael Morrissey)

Marie

Date of birth: October 16, 1900
Date of death: December 17, 1975 – Cause – colon cancer
Age: 75
Buried: St. Joseph Cemetery, Price Hill, Cincinnati, Ohio
Married Alois J. Goeke of Maria Stein, Ohio
Alois J. Goeke 1897-1972

2 children:

Mary (Mrs. Joseph H. Backsman)
Lois (Mrs. James Landon) (Mrs. Peter J. Curtin)

Lucille

Date of birth: March 25, 1903
Date of death: November 13, 1980 – Cause – heart failure
Age: 77
Buried: St. Joseph Cemetery, Price Hill, Cincinnati, Ohio
Married John H. Vehr of Cincinnati
John H. Vehr 1904-1980

3 children:

Jack (Lucille Kroner) died 1993
Carol (Mrs. Michael Giuliani)
Martha (Mrs. Charles J. Wollenmann)

Edgar

Date of birth: November 6, 1905
Date of death: September 28, 1990 – Cause – kidney cancer
Age: 84
Buried: St. John Cemetery, Maria Stein, Ohio
Married Alfrida E. Willke of St. Rose, Ohio
Alfrida Kleinhenz Willke 1906-1990

4 children:

Marilyn (Mrs. Donald Schwieterman)
William (Esther Hausfeld)
Janet (Mrs. Andrew Niekamp, Mrs. James Bolton)
Rosann (Mrs. Robert Spitzer) died June 15, 2007

Deaths: Ralph Robish 1974, Carl Walsh 1976, Charles J. Wollenmann 1985, Peter Rauschenberg, Peter J. Curtin 2003, Joseph Backsman 2002, Art Sleeman 1992, Joseph Grathwohl 2001.

Alois H.

Date of birth: May 23, 1908
Date of death: October 17, 1990 – Cause – systems shut down
Age: 82
Buried: Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio
Married Ann Fette of New Alsace, Indiana, and Marcella Witterstaetter Wilhelm
Ann Fette Willke 1909-1967. Marcella Wilhelm 1922-2002.

8 children, all by Ann Fette

Catherine (Mrs. Jay Borgarding) (Mrs. Virgil Redden), died 2000
Elizabeth (Mrs. Arthur Sleeman)
Angela (Mrs. Lawrence D. Elder)
Mary Jane
Jim (Jill Tipton)
Bob (Nancy Sue Ohime)
Tom (Lois Allen)
Virginia (Mrs. Gerry Weale)

One stepdaughter:

Melody Wilhelm (Mrs. Joseph Tolmie)

Marcella

Date of birth: March 2, 1911
Date of death: October 23, 1991 – Cause – colon cancer
Age: 80
Buried: St. Joseph Cemetery, Rapid Run, Cincinnati, Ohio
Married Carl B. Austing of Cincinnati
Carl B. Austing 1910 – 1992

2 children:

Lois (Mrs. Joseph Grathwohl)
Susan (Mrs. Robert Jorden)

Margaret

Date of birth: March 25, 1917
Married J. Hains Landen of Detroit, Michigan
J. Hains Landen 1916-1989

4 children:

John (Patricia Connor)
Dick (Elizabeth Lund)
Gretchen (Mrs. John Francis Klein)
Marcia (Mrs. Ralph A. Zuzolo) (Michael McAllister)



Dr. Alois Willke. Family. 1918

Left To Right: Alois, Lucille, Al, Marie, Marcella, George, Ed, Margie, Ada, and Caroline

Dr. Alois J. Willke

Obituary

1941

Dr. Alois J. Willke, Father of Three Physicians, Dies.

Funeral for Ohio Medical College Graduate Arranged.

Requiem High Mass for Dr. Alois J. Willke, retired physician and father of three other doctors, will be intoned at 10 a.m. Thursday at St. Teresa Church, Price Hill. Burial will be in St. John Cemetery, St. Bernard.

Dr. Willke, who was 76, died Monday night at his home, 1017 Lockman Avenue, Price Hill, four days after he was stricken with a heart attack. He retired in 1922 after practicing 30 years, all but one year of which was spent in Maria Stein, Oh.

He graduated in 1892 from the old Ohio Medical College and interned at Good Samaritan Hospital. He was a member of the St. Joseph Men's Society of St. Teresa Church.

His three sons are Dr. G. T. Willke, Cincinnati; Dr. A. H. Willke, Groesbeck, and Dr. E. J. Willke, Maria Stein, O. He also leaves five daughters, Mrs. Harry Limke, Mrs. A. J. Goeke, Mrs. John Vehr, Mrs. Carl Austing and Miss Margaret Willke, and 24 grandchildren. Dhonau funeral home is handling arrangements.

Edgar J. Willke, M.D. Childhood Recollections **Alfrida's Husband**

Edgar J. Willke, born November 6, 1905, was the son of Dr. Alois J. Willke and Carolyn Vander Horst Willke. He was born in Maria Stein, Ohio, where his father was a practicing family physician. He was the 7th oldest of 10 children, all delivered by their father in the house.

Of his childhood recollections, the thing Ed remembers most is the 2-room office – a waiting room and a treatment room – where his father used to see his patients. The office was located about 15 feet from the house.

A barn located on the same property had stables for 2 horses, a place for a buggy, sleigh, and a sulky. In later years a storm buggy, which was considered a big improvement and luxury, was added. By 1913 a Maxwell automobile was added to the transportation vehicles.

Ed recalls the first years his father owned an automobile. His father did not use it in the wintertime because of poor road conditions. There were a few gravel roads but most of them were mud roads.

His dad's office calls were not very numerous as most of his patients were seen at their homes. All babies were delivered in the home.

Ed remembers walking to Station to see the excursion come in on the C H & P. He remembers people walking by his house on their way to work at the New Idea Spreader Works in Station.

Ed used coal oil (kerosene) lights. When he went to high school they had no electricity.

He attended St. John Public Schools, which was located northwest of St. John Catholic Church. He attended school on the first floor in this building for 3 years. It had one classroom for boys and girls taught by a nun, Sister Irene.

The next five years he went to an all-boys school, which was located east of the church. During his years at this one-room school, his teachers were men: Mr. Forsthoefel and Mr. Eifert. The classroom for the five upper grades for girls was located on the second floor of the school located northwest of the church.

Ed often mentioned an incident that happened while Sr. Irene was his teacher. He had turned in a paper which was not done too neatly. When Sr. Irene saw this, she took hold of Ed's shoulders, shook him, and said, "Edgar, you can do better than that." Just then Ed's nose started to bleed and Sr. Irene felt so bad. She took him to the water pump outside and washed the blood from his face. Ed said he will always remember all the attention he received that day.

***Alfrida E. Willke*, 1988**

Ed dictated the following to me.

I had a large practice of home deliveries. I thoroughly enjoyed that type of medical care. I got to know the families quite thoroughly, and most of the families were very cooperative and helpful. Some of the mothers having their first babies were unprepared as many did not have pre-natal care and advice and were not told by anybody what the birthing process entailed. As a result, the mother-to-be was tense and frightened. They had to be assured that what was happening to them was normal and that everything would be all right.

Grandmothers, who usually were called to assist their daughter at the time of giving birth, also had to be assured that the process was going normally and that extraordinary procedures were not required. The grandmother did not realize that she had gone through the same process and had forgotten what it really had been like. To deliver a normal baby to a most-welcoming mother and father was a pleasurable and rewarding experience.

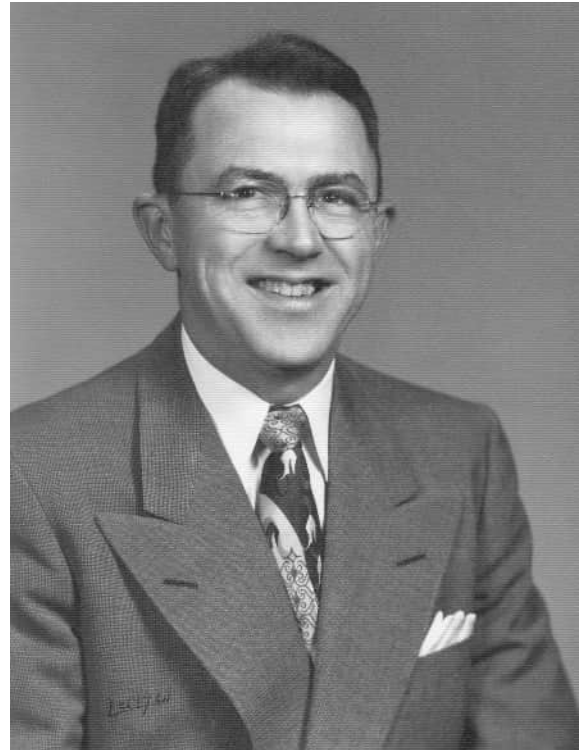
Sometimes, especially when I had to go long distances, I had to wait hours and hours for the mother to deliver. This was especially true during the Depression when most homes did not have a telephone. Many times I waited 6 to 8 hours before the delivery was completed.

A Family Of Doctors

Alois J. and Carolyn Willke were the parents of eight children: Ada, Gerhard T., Marie, Lucille, Edgar J., Alois H., Marcella, and Margaret.

Alois J. Willke, M.D., graduated in 1892 from the Medical College of Ohio, Cincinnati, Ohio, now known as the University of Cincinnati. The school was located in the 2400 block of West Clifton Avenue.

Ten of Dr. Alois J. Willke's descendants (including Don Schwieterman) have followed the medical profession. They are all graduates of the University of Cincinnati School of Medicine, Cincinnati, Ohio. The year of their graduation, their name, and their relationship are as follows;



Edgar Willke. c. 1940s.

1921 Gerhard T. Willke – son

1930 Edgar J. Willke – son

1934 Alois H. Willke – son

1948 John C. Willke – grandson, son of Gerhard T.

1958 Don Schwieterman – grandson-in-law, son-in-law of Edgar J.

1976 Tom Willke – grandson, son of Alois H.

1979 Marie Willke Meyers – great-granddaughter, daughter of John C.

1984 Bill Schwieterman – great-grandson, grandson of Edgar J.

1986 Janet Limke – great-granddaughter, granddaughter of Ada, daughter of George Limke

1988 Jim Schwieterman – great-grandson, grandson of Edgar J.

1993 Tom Schwieterman – great-grandson, grandson of Edgar J. is a senior in pre-medicine at Miami University at Oxford, Ohio. Tom has been accepted and plans to enter the University of Cincinnati School of Medicine in the fall of 1989. If everything goes as planned, he will graduate from medical school in 1993, like his great-grandfather did 101 years ago.

Written by Alfrida E. Willke on September 19, 1988

After 50 Years, Doctor Still Going Strong
Dayton Journal Herald
May, 1981

To Dr. Edgar Willke, Maria Stein “is a good place to practice medicine.”

So the 75-year-old general practitioner has been ministering to the residents of this Catholic farming village in Mercer County for the last 50 years.

“We like the community and we like the people,” he says simply.

And although he pared down his schedule four years ago so that he works only mornings in his office, Willke has no intention of quitting.

“I’ll keep on as long as I feel good.”

Willke, who was born and raised in Maria Stein, was honored for his years of service at an open house yesterday at the town’s American Legion hall.

“I certainly am very grateful to everyone that I’m being remembered,” said Willke, who is known in the village as “Doc.”

Of course, it’s not easy to forget the Willkes and their family tradition in Maria Stein.

The family has lived in Maria Stein since 1893, when Willke’s father Alois, a Cincinnati native, opened his medical practice. In 1922, Willke’s brother George took over, and in 1931, when George moved to Indiana, Willke took control.

He ran the practice alone for about 10 years, then added an office assistant who still works for him.

The tradition continued when Willke’s son-in-law, Dr. Donald Schwieterman, became his partner in 1959.

“The load was too great” for one person, Willke explained.

And although none of Willke’s four children chose to follow in their father’s, uncle’s and grandfather’s footsteps, one of Willke’s 19 grandchildren is studying medicine.

Being a general practitioner today is far different than it was 50 years ago, he says.

“When I started there was no preventive medicine. There was no penicillin, no antibodies. All babies were home deliveries. And we made a lot of house calls.”

Medicine now “is definitely harder because we have more specific drugs to work with and we not only have to watch the effects, but also the side effects,” Willke says.

But some aspects of medicine—such as the qualities that make a good doctor—are the same as when Willke began his practice, he says.

“Certainly you have to have dedication to take care of other people. And you have to know that your time is not your own. That doesn’t change.”

Even though having a partner allows him more time to enjoy his family, golfing, gardening and globe-trotting with his wife, Alfrida, Willke still doesn’t consider his time to be his own.

“I still like to be involved.”



Alfrida E. Willke. c. 1929-1931

Alfrida Willke
Obituary
1990



Alfrida E. Willke 83, 1986 Rolfes Road, Maria Stein, died at 3:30 p.m. Friday, January 5, 1990, at her residence following an illness of one week.

She was born February 4, 1906, in St. Rose, a daughter of John and Elizabeth (Kremer) Kleinhenz. On July 21, 1931, in St. Marys she married Edgar J. Willke, who survives.

Also surviving are three daughters, Mrs. Donald (Marilyn) Schwieterman, Maria Stein, Janet Niekamp, Kettering, and Mrs. Robert (Rosann) Spitzer, Lafayette, Ind.; a son, William (Esther), Dayton; 19 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; two sisters, Mrs. Hilda Creeden, Centerville, and Mrs. Esther Stroh, St. Marys.

She was preceded in death by five brothers, two sisters and a grandson.

Mrs. Willke was a member of St. John Catholic Church, Maria Stein, and the Ladies Sodality of the church.

She was a charter member of the Knights of St. John Auxiliary, a member of the Mercer County Medical Auxiliary, a charter member of the Maria Stein Retreat League and a member of the Mercer County Elks Society.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held at 10:30 a.m. Monday at the church, with the Rev. John Behen officiating. Burial was followed in the church cemetery. Hogenkamp Funeral Home, Minster were in charge of arrangements.

E. J. Willke
Obituary
1990

Dr. E. J. Willke, 84, 1986 Rolfes Red., Maria Stein, died at 3:30 a.m. today at his residence.

Born Nov. 6, 1905, Dr. Willke was the fifth child of Caroline Vanderhorst and Alois J. Willke, M.D., and in 1931 he married Alfrida Kleinhenz, who died Jan. 5, 1990.

He is survived by a son and daughter in-law, William and Esther Willke, Vandalia; three daughters and sons-in-law, Marilyn and Dr. Donald Schwieterman, Maria Stein, Janet and Jim Bolton, Dayton, and Rosann and Robert Spitzer, West Lafayette, Ind.; two sisters Mrs. Carl (Marcella) Austing and Margaret Landen, Cincinnati; a brother Dr. Alois Willke, Cincinnati; 19 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

A grandson, brother and three sisters preceded him in death. Dr. Willke was a 1923 graduate of Minster High School. In 1930 he graduated from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, as his father had done in 1892 and his brother George had done in 1921. Another brother, Al, graduated later from this school. In addition, two nephews, a son-in-law and three grandchildren are also physicians.

He completed his internship at Good Samaritan Hospital, Cincinnati, in the spring of 1931, and in July took over the private practice of his brother George, which had been established by their father in 1893. In 1959, Dr. Willke was joined by his son-in-law, Donald J. Schwieterman, who continues the medical practice. Besides being affiliated with Gibbons Hospital, Celina, for many years, in 1950 he became the first chief of staff of Our Lady of Mercy Hospital, Coldwater, a position he held for 10 years.

Dr. Willke was a member of the Mercer County Medical Society, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the Ohio State Medical Association, and the American Medical Association. He attended St. John's Catholic Church, Maria Stein, and was a member of the Mercer County Elks, the Knights of St. John Commandery 313, and the Men's Holy Name Society of the church. He served on the board of directors of the Maria Stein Retreat House, served as team physician for the Marion Local High School sports program and coached the Maria Stein Jinx girls' softball team. In 1984 he retired from his medical practice.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10:30 a.m. Monday at the church, the Rev. John Behen officiating. Burial will be at the church cemetery. Friends may call Sunday 2-9 p.m. or Monday 9-10 a.m. at Hogenkamp Funeral Home, Minster. A wake service will be at 8:30 p.m. Sunday.



Willke Family Vacation at Rimrock Ranch in Cody, Wyoming. 1974.



Edgar and Alfrida Willke at Rimrock Ranch in Cody, Wyoming. 1974

“The desire and determination my father had to succeed in the livestock business is what I remember most of my childhood days.”

Alfrida E. Willke