

The Memories of Henry & Elizabeth by Delmer Patz

Notes by the Author

Unfortunately, no first hand accounts of Henry and Elizabeth were recorded by their children. However Delmer Patz, a grandson, lived with Henry & Elizabeth for a time following the death of his father. He has recorded his memories of his grandparents and they are reproduced here, with his permission, as written. In some instances, the author of this website felt that certain comments were intended for family distribution only and were not foreseen to be part of a public document. In those cases, it has been noted where text was deleted. Also, the reader should be aware that the text was reproduced from hand written notes in a conversational style, recorded at different times in bits and pieces as remembered, without concern for composition, paragraph breaks, etc.

The author would like to express his gratitude to Delmer for making this information available and allowing it to be reproduced on this web page.

Grandpa often talked about his home in Germany located near Erwitte which is about 120 miles from Koln (Cologne). Very rich soil. He raised wheat, cotton, and corn which he stated did not produce like it does in USA. Most all of the out buildings are still standing. The house was rebuilt after a fire. (see [History of Lusebrink Farm](#)) There is a [chapel](#) on the farm with very interesting stations of the cross outside around the chapel. The King's highway (the principal road between Paris and Vienna) goes by the farm. Marie Antonette is said to have worshiped there at the chapel.

He and his brother Ferdinand came to U.S. because every young man had to serve in the army and because the Farm would go to his oldest Brother.

Grandmother (Elizabeth Rickert) worked as a housekeeper on the farm. She said very little about growing up in Germany. She had a sister Aunt Lena who had a leg amputated when she fell into a threshing machine. I understand that this they threshed in a barn in the winter and she was climbing around.

By the way, Ferdinand was the Kaiser himself. Grandpa the opposite, very kind and loving. Ferdinand settled in Pierce.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HENRY & ELIZABETH BALS

Written to honor and respect my wonderful Grandparents. I am the oldest of the Grandchildren. I visited Germany where they were born and lived before coming to the USA. I also lived on their farm in Loup City two different times.

I am now 86 years old and will write from memory so please overlook any lapses in memory. Come with me as explore the Family Tree.

Grandpa settled in Crete, Ne. It was a German community. He traveled back to Germany to marry Grandma (Elizabeth) only after he agreed to bring her back at least once. They went back with 2 sons, Theodore and Henry. He kept his promise. This time they brought back Tante Lena (the amputee). Everyone walked there, she could get around much better here. One must admire them for their undertaking. She talked incessantly. She was a great gal. She was a seamstress and would go to peoples homes and sew. I am sure you all remember the big yardage depts. She made all of the girls wedding dresses. Some of Grandpa's sayings about life: "The way you made your bed was the way you had to sleep in it, lumps and all." "The women should do the praying because the men worked hard in the fields."

He had trouble with gas so he always said, "Rover go outside". He always had dogs or Rover shame.

He would whistle through his false teeth, the dogs would come running. They would sit down in front of him. He would divide the table scraps in front of them. He would say "now" and they would eat.

He made wine out of anything he could find. No money so he used honey instead of sugar. Everyone would get a taste, even a little for the kids.

One day I came to the house and heard bang - bang. Grandpa was in the basement. I yelled down the steps: "What's going on?". I went down the steps; there he was, a bee bonnet over his head, gloves and jacket on, opening bottles of beer in a wash tub. He had bottled it too green so had to rework it. Several bottles blew up.

He put a raw egg in his beer.

He ate five times a day, always thin. When they had company, he would sit next to Grandma and pat her knee. If she stayed over night with one of the kids he would have tears in his eyes when she left. I never once heard them argue. I lived with them nearly three years.

Grandma used to lecture a little bit: "If you can't feed your family, tie a know in it."

They were wonderful!

CHILDREN

Theodore married Ann Kempkes
 Children: Sylvester, Harold, Donald, Loren and Reatha, Earl.
 Ann used to tell spook stories. Grandpa did to.
 Lived in Crete, moved to Loup City.

Henry married Ann Smejkal
 Children: Jerome, Leonard, Johnny, Valerian, Henry and Gene.
 Uncle Henry had a hearty laugh. Aunt Ann did the worrying. She wrote newsy letters.

Lived in Crete.

Ella married John Patz.

Children: Delmer, Mae.

Moved from Crete to Loup City.

John died of Appendicitis Apr 24, 1921.

Delmer 4, Mae 3

Herb Bals only 16 yrs old did the farming the rest of the year.

Grandpa because he had 3 boys at home moved to Loup City on a 580 A farm.

He purchased horses, cows, machinery n our sale. He had little cash so he said:

"come live in the 2nd house, use milk, eggs, etc from farm until I can pay you.

Ella married Frank Schwader 1 1/2 yrs later.

We moved back to our farm.

After graduation I moved back to Grandpa's farm and worked for a year at a small pittance of a salary. It was the great depression.

After years of the great depression, years of drouth, dust storms, grass hopper plague,

hail; I had it. I said "Grandpa I am going to Calif where my Uncle lives", so I polished up my thumb, bought 20 each penny post cards t write home to Mother at intervals.

I was only 17. Caught a ride with a new car caravan to San Francisco. I only had \$22.00 in my pocket.

Four years in the Navy as a Chief. Ended up anchored next to the Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

I married had 2 children. Wife & another lady claimed they talked to the Saints.

Had a private audience with the Pope. We divorced. Married for 29 years to

Grace Mybroie (sp?). She had 2 sons. We have 7 Grandchildren & 2 Great Grandchildren.

Worked for Sears for 35 years. Calif. has been good to me. We traveled around the world.

Mae and Folks followed me to Calif.

Mae married Carl McDonald.

One daughter Lynette.

Carl passed away, she married Paul Hurtz.

They will celebrate their 25 anniversary soon.

Augusta (Gus) married Herman Witte

Children: Dorthy, Dale, Glenn, Phyllis, Pete and ?

They lived in Friend and then moved to Loup City. Aunt Gus was so much like Mother, very thoughtful. Put up with many hardships. Herman often said he would

end up rich. Once ran a shoe store for a short time. Was a big flax and wheat farmer in So. dakota.

Tillie married Fred Buntmeyer.

Children: Sevilla, Bernice, Genevive, Margie.

Lived in Crete, moved to Loup City, finally to Iowa.

Fred had an unusual laugh. Tillie loved to have a good time.

Hedwig (Hattie) married Elmer Buntmeyer, Fred's brother.

Children: Virgil, LeRoy, Jack, Verlee.

They lived in Lincoln and then moved to Iowa.

Elmer worked for the Holland Furnace Co.

Embarrassing moment: At their wedding; the altar boys always passed the plate by the groom. It was their way to collect money. Elmer forgot to put his billfold in his pocket. He finally told them sorry. Herb, the best man, stepped forward and made an offering.

Verlee is a nun.

Herbert (Herb) married Bernice Watts.

Children: JoAnn, Dale, Bunny, Donald . . . there are more but I do not know their names. I was gone for many years. Seems like they had 7 children.

Tidbit during their courtship: One stormy day Bernice returned the engagement ring and Herb threw it out in the yard. They found it years later.

They lived in Loup City. He was a terrific farmer.

Alfred married Adelaide Envoldson.

Child: Mavis.

Adelaide was a red headed school teacher.

Alfred farmed the home place during the rough yeafs. They had a huge barn which burned down one evening.

Alfred died of appendicitis. Adelaide went back to teaching.

Carl married Hallie Elrod. They divorced.

Children Garland and another boy.

Carl hated farming, hated onions.

Grandma cooked items separately for him, i.e. meatloaf, etc.

Married Marie. Child: Donald.

They retired in Arizona.

Thelma married Carl Miller.

Children: Maryland & June.

I drove Grandma to the city as she was the midwife on both occasions.

Thelma was the only child to graduate from high school. She was one grade above me.

Times were extremely difficult, the economy hit rock bottom. Many times there was not enough food and no money. Banks closed, people lived in box cars. The county had no money. Banks foreclosed farms. Cattle were destroyed, too thin for food, they were starving.

Roosevelt was elected President. The situation turned around. you know the rest. Wars, happy days, sad days, always looking forward. We have all been pioneers, haven't we.

Mother organized a big famiy get together at Grandpa's farm in about 1928.

Everyone was there. What a time was had by all. It was the last time when all were present.

The history of the Bals Family is almost unbelievable:

Sylvester died illness, very young.

Donald died in snowstorm, young.

Retha (this was actually Maxine) died drowning.

Valerian died appendicitis, very young.

Jerome died illness, young.
 Glen died pilot of U.S. Navy plane.
 Jack died illness, young.
 Donny (Herb's boy) died auto accident.
 Donald (Carl's boy) shot to death - murder.
 Alfred died appendicitis.
 Goldie (Harold's wife) died in auto accident.

The following are excerpts from a letter by Delmer Patz to Gene Bals in 2003.

I left Nebraska in 1935. Farming was not for me. I polished my thumb and reached San Diego, Calif. where my uncle lived: Conrad Nave who once lived in Crete on a small farm near the dam on the Blue River. He was a Carpenter.

Do you recall that they dismantled two bridges in Loup City and moved them to Crete over the Blue?

My Father died in 1921. Grandpa moved to Loup City in 1922. Herb came to Loup City. He was 16 and farmed for Mother after my Father's death. We had a sale and moved to the little house on Grandpa's farm.

(The foundation in the foreground is what remains of the "little house" mentioned above. *Photo and note by author.*)



I remember that your Mother could not understand how we left wonderful Crete and moved to the clay hills with cat-steps in Loup City. She saw a spider web in the biffy, after that your Dad went with her to the biffy. I had to clear out the webs. Also, what a time when she needed milk of magnesia; held her nose, used sugar as a chaser.

I told you about the bad episode. We were in Crete the first time Jerome left for Wisconsin to go to school. The suitcase packed just so from a list of needs sent by the monastery. A tag on the coat showing his destination. (Jerome left to attend St. John's School for the Deaf when he was about 9 years old.)

And of coarse, who can forget the kolaches.

You mentioned Tanta Yetta. Grandma went there to help at one of the births. She said that there was a tarp like an umbrella over the bed to ward off the rain leakage. Ferdinand was the Kaiser himself according to Grandma. When they came to Loup City liqour (time of prohibition), violins, horns, singing; quite a get together. I met Bill, their son gassed in WWI. Ted, who worked for us in Crete a short time. He later was a custodian of a lake which supplied water to San Diego. And Albertine. But there were many more children. By the way, we called her Aunt Getta.

Got a chuckle out of your visit at the Rickert-Berkermeir farm. Can not te anything more (about) Anton except there was something about David Ci stated in your letter.

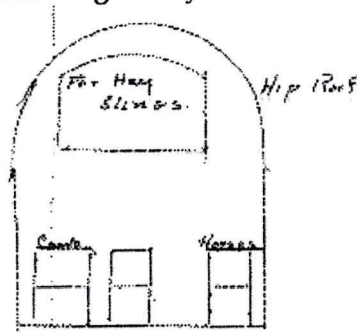
I visited Granpa & Grandma on the farm in 1938, also was back in 1940 whe were living in a house near church owned and provided by Herb. Of coarse came the war years so all of my information was second hand so to speak.

Alfred farmed the home place until he died.

I know so little of the Patz family history but Grandma said they came from Westphalia. Do you remember Grandma Patz, little, with a German accent living near church. Her saying "Yah, that's the way things go."

I told you about the machine shops and the grainery built after the barn burned down. I believe the barn stalled 13 horses and over 20 cows.

Huge hay loft with an elevator, like in town, for the grain bins on second floor so to speak, and corn cribs beneath. A drive thru for wagons to dump grain in the pit and carried up-stairs.



(Sketches at right by Delmer of the barn as he remembered it.)

