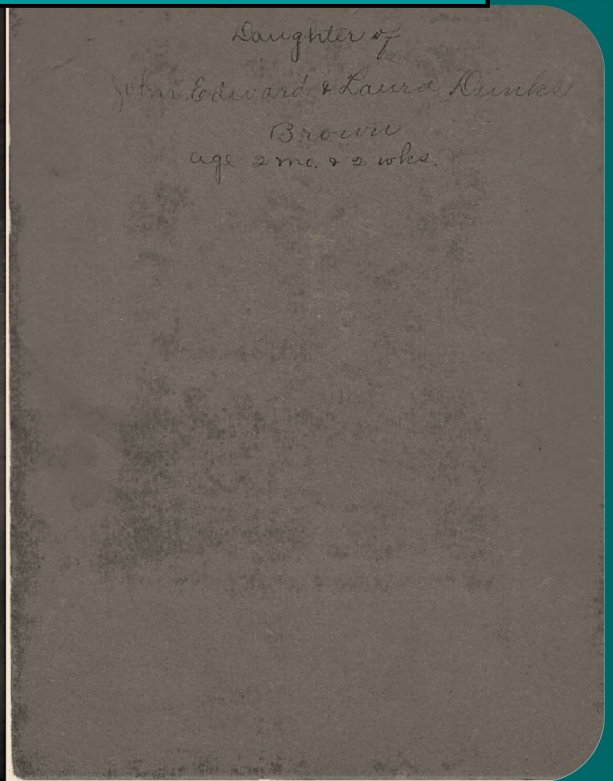




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On the Cover:

Ora Lauerine Brown, age 2 mos. & 2 wks.

(Read more about this photo on page 12)

The Austin Genealogical Society Quarterly is published once per quarter of the year (Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter) by the Austin Genealogical Society (AGS). Deadlines for submissions are the 3rd Saturday of the second month of the quarter. The AGS Editor reserves the right to edit all contributed materials for style, grammar, and length. Contributors are solely responsible for the accuracy and proper citation of consulted sources. In addition, contributors are responsible for adhering to all applicable copyright law in their works. AGS assumes no responsibility for the content of submitted material.

AGS Members and the public are encouraged to submit material for publication to:

Angela Doetsch

quarterly@austintxgensoc.org

FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings AGS Members,

As genealogists, we are often searching for that one break – a small piece of the puzzle that might help us to further our journey in discovery of our past. Often, that break comes in the form of a single name, place or date. Sometimes, it comes in the form of a gift from a complete stranger.

I don't believe in "hoarding" my research and am open to sharing what I have discovered along the way in hopes of helping others with shared ancestry and to make valuable connections with others who might do the same. This can be beneficial, especially if you are researching an ancestor with a common surname such as Brown, Green, Smith, or Williams.

Not long ago, I discovered some old tintypes among my grandmother's belongings after she passed. I was very excited and certain these had to be our ancestors! My grandmother's maiden name was Green, and it has proven difficult to research past my 3rd great-grandparents on that side. After months of research and comparing trees of distant relatives on *Ancestry.com*, I came to the conclusion that these tintypes were not photos of our Green ancestors, but ancestors of in-laws that married into our Green family. I was disappointed at first but soon became excited at the chance to reunite them with the family. It took a while, but I finally found a living descendant I was able to contact and let them know I had a surprise for them. They were shocked, excited, and grateful that I had taken the time to return these precious family heirlooms to them.

Just a few weeks ago, I received a message on *Ancestry.com* with the subject line, "Regarding Susanna Geimeier (Geymeier)." My heart started to race. I had "Guymier" as the maiden name of my paternal 3rd great-grandmother, Susanna Gross, which I found on her death certificate, but had never gotten any further. After reading the message from this distant relative, I not only discovered the correct spelling of her name, but that they were willing to share their research of the Geimeier's all the way back to 1695! This gift from a complete stranger has opened up a whole new world of my ancestry.

This quarterly is filled with stories of similar breakthroughs and gifts from strangers. Who knows, one of these stories might just help make a connection for one of you.

As always, we welcome feedback and suggestions on our quarterly publication. Let us know what you think and happy reading.



Angela Doetsch

quarterly@austingensoc.org

A LETTER TO HIS SON WRITTEN BY CARL F. BLUMBERG – PART II

By AGS Member Andrea M. Burkhart

Carl and Katherine Blumberg were one of the early immigrant families in Texas. They came to Texas after seven years of floods in Germany which caused them to deplete their savings. Their desire was to be able to replenish those savings from good land in Texas and provide their children with an education. One of the seven children, August, stayed in Germany and as a result we have a wonderful letter written by Carl to this son, which outlines the hardships and disappointments the German immigrants faced and the corruption of the *Verein* (the Mainz Society for Emigration to Texas).¹

The following is a transcript of this letter.

The first part of Carl's letter can be read in the Spring 2019 edition of the Austin Genealogical Society Quarterly.

"I had remained at Indianpoint from Dec. 22 1845 to April 2, 1846. I now stayed at New Braunfels from April 28th to July 1st 1846. For several weeks I was sick in bed. Then I bought another yoke of oxen from the Society for \$33.00. On July 2, 1846 I again set out with my wagon this time for Fredericksburg, ninety miles away. But now we had to pass over mountains and through valleys and cross numerous creeks. On July 14th we reached Fredericksburg after fording three larger streams, The Guadalupe, The Sabine and the Pedemales.

Here I and your brother Julius were each allotted a tract of wooded land and one half acre as a building site with garden space. The conditions attached were that we clear the wooded tract of all trees, bring it into cultivation, erect a house and settle down as citizens of Fredericksburg. We were not to sell our land within three years.

"I mentioned before how in the camps at Indianpoint and New Braunfels the contagious diseases of typhoid, cold fevers, diarrhea, and dropsy raged among the German immigrants and how daily

¹ A translated copy of the letter presented here can be found in an article entitled "The True Effectiveness of the Mainz Society for Emigration to Texas" in the volume VII, No. 4 1969 issue of the *Texana*.

many new victims were added to the death list. But in the new colony at Fredricksburg this was even worse. Most of the people arrived either sick or with the germs of sickness in their bodies. And they in turn infected the few remaining who were still well. Upon arriving here they found no other shelter than the oak trees. There is no doctor, no medicine here. The sick get no strengthening nourishment. Their only food is shelled corn which is often half ruined by rain and partly eaten by bugs. So the sick often lie exposed to the heat of the sun and to the elements in their weakened condition. The misery among the 500 souls living in this camp in the woods was such that one's heart almost broke in sympathy and the eyes overflowed with tears. You cannot go through the camp without hearing painful cries, groans, and whimperings [sic] coming out of the miserable shelters made of grass and bushes. Every day five or six die. The bodies are simply placed on a cart dram by two oxen, taken out of the camp to a grave barely two feet deep and dropped into the grave without benefit of casket or clergy.

"It is owing only to divine providence that during the three months we spent in

this infected wilderness, eating unwholesome, wretched food, that the terrible, ravaging epidemic and the merciless angel of death did not lay violent hands on me and my family. Thank God, so far we have all been spared except our little Hulda, who undoubtedly because of the unwholesome food and the excessive heat developed a bad infection of the mouth and lameness in both knee joints. Despite the medical help we received in New Braunfels she has thus far shown no improvement. She detests the corn that has been our daily food for over a year now. Besides a little wheat flour we have seen little other food. Because there are no good roads and no railroad in the interior of Texas transportation cost of all goods is extremely high. That makes flour so expensive. You get only eight pounds for one dollar. At that the American pound is 4 loths² lighter than the German and is equivalent of 28 loths. Thus far we could not afford to buy very much wheat flour, just enough to mix in with and flavor the ground corn flour. The corn flour is a rather poor means of subsistence in comparison with our European rye. Since we do not have good mills to grind it it is coarse like small shot or grit. When mixed with water into a

² loth (plural loths) (now historical) A measure of weight formerly used in Germany, the Netherlands and some other parts of Europe, equivalent to half of the local ounce.

dough it does not possess the same paste-like quality that the European wheat or rye flour has, but it crumbles off like sand even though the baked corn bread looks almost as white as wheat bread.

“The Society provides the Fredericksburg settlers with poor corn, old Coffee beans and salt and occasionally some cattle for slaughter. But the price charged for this food is so high that by the time of the next harvest, when they can become self-supporting, they will have such a tremendous debt that they will never be able to pay it. The Society charges \$1.86 for a bushel of corn, 20¢ for a pound of coffee, 09¢ for a pound of salt. The daily ration per person is one pound of meat @ 5¢ p/lb when available, one pound of corn, and weekly 1/2 lb of coffee and 1/4 lb of salt. Thus the support of my family during the time we stayed at Fredericksburg cost me \$80.00 even though for almost six weeks we had no meat and despite the fact that I had a three weeks supply of corn with me when we arrived. According to these figures I'll have a debt of about \$400.00 by the time of the next harvest. I'd never be able to pay off such a debt. I'd also be prevented from buying the necessary farm animals such as cows, pigs, etc. The Society is doing nothing to make them available to the settlers. And when I talk about animals for slaughter here you must not think that they are stall-fattened, such as our oxen, pigs,

sheep, geese, ducks, etc. in Germany. Here in this uninhabited land you find only oxed [sic] for butchering brought here from inhabited places in the transportation service. Usually they are so skinny and run-down that should you boil their meat you can't find a drop of grease floating in the broth. You look in vain here for butter, bacon, lard, to soften and flavor the poor corn dishes. I haven't seen a potato since leaving Bremen on Oct. 9th of last year. We've had to do without the highly nutritious rye bread we had back home as well as all other wholesome, tasty victuals which we used to enjoy so much. In addition we were exposed during the hot summer months in the physical exertions necessary to make arable the land of our two town lots and the additional acre allotted to us to the almost vertical rays of the sun beating down upon us with such terrible heat that we were prostrated. Hands and feet refused further service. We were forced to rest from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. in the shadow of our hut. Anyone engaging in hard physical labor here between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. is in danger of receiving a sun stroke or some form of nervous disorder. During the hot season here one feels so enervated that it is a chore even to arise in the morning. Fredericksburg lies in a wooded valley enclosed by two mountain ranges and two creeks. At present it is not much more than a lonely settlement of people living among scrub oaks

in sickness and misery. If one goes singly only 1000 steps from the confines of the settlement he is in danger of being attacked and possibly killed by wild Indians.

“This description of such dismal circumstances will undoubtedly convince you that it was impossible for me to remain longer in Fredericksburg and endanger the wellbeing of my family. As head of the family I am responsible to our heavenly Father. I foresaw that with the coming of the rainy season, which will make the only road between New Braunfels and Fredericksburg impassable, and considering the negligence of the Society with regard to providing foodstuffs, that Fredericksburg thus cut off from the only connection with the rest of the world, will experience a great famine and possible starvation.

“The question whether [sic] I did my duty, whether [sic] I used my time well in Fredericksburg and acted as an upright and honest man will be answered when you read the enclosed copy of a letter which I addressed shortly before my departure from Fredericksburg to the colonial Administration in New Braunfels. Since I had been a teacher the Administration at Fredericksburg asked me to conduct worship services for the people under the shade trees. I did this gladly admonishing my brethren and fellow sufferers to practice patience and long-suffering,

putting their trust in God. Personally I tried to give a good example in word and deed to strengthen and encourage the people. At the same time I unceasingly appealed to the Administration of the Society to change the critical situation by immediately adopting and putting into operation such means as will end the present misery. I always received favorable assurances but no real action was ever taken. In order to prevent our utter ruin I was forced to leave Fredericksburg, return to more populated regions and earn my living with my hands. At present we are staying with Mr. Hofmann, a countryman at New Braunfels. He is an upright young man, a real credit to the German settlers. He is permitting us to farm as much of his 10 acres as we can fence and cultivate. We are at present erecting a small house on this land for our use. We have the free use of this land for a number of years. After that time the house and fence become the property of the owner. It is necessary to haul the wood required for the house and fence a distance of 4-5 miles. The wood needed for the house is already here and we have begun cutting and squaring it. I intend to stay here until I have saved up enough money to enable me to return to Germany with my family. Thus I shall not be a burden to you or to any other relative or friend. If God lets me live long enough to carry out this plan then I intend to spend the last days of my troubled life

writing a book about the Robinson Crusoe-like adventures of our trip to Texas for the youth of my dear fatherland. The purpose of the book will be to warn all and sundry against emigrating to America or other parts of the world and to encourage the youth to be faithful to their fatherland; their ruler and government. This book will resemble the one entitled Robinson Crusoe von Kampe, but whereas Crusoe portrays the truths of nature in romantic pictures my book will present actual events and experiences of a large family.

“In accordance with my long experience gained by an exchange of ideas with People of many vocations and from all parts of Germany I have come to the firm conviction that of all countries Prussia is the one in which the people are happiest and most contented. There the [sic] is protected, his person, life, and property are respected by the law. Without fear or favor due process of the law is guaranteed. The entire government with all its officials from the highest to the lowest level is fair and benevolent over against the citizens committed to its care. And this government is supervised by a wise and loving sovereign, the father of his people, Frederick William IV who always opens heart and ear to the requests of his loyal subjects and administers justice in mercy. Tell me, my Son, where is there another land on the earth which was

granted equal happiness by God? Where are there citizens anywhere in the world who are happier than those of the Prussian State? As for myself I would consider myself the happiest person on earth if I could again live in my fatherland. I would then strive with all my strength to show my gratitude to the government authorities at Marienwerder under whose humane jurisdiction I was permitted to teach school for 26 years. This high office sent me a medal for saving a person from drowning and included a draft in the amount of \$15.00 as reimbursement for losses sustained during the 1845 floods. I received both after leaving home from the Prussian Consul in Bremen, Mr. Delins, shortly before boarding the ship and was thus prevented at that time from duly thanking the humane authorities. The royal sub-prefect and the officials in the royal revenue office at Culm were equally kind. As I now in the free State of Texas recall these experiences my heart beats faster in gratitude and deepest respect for my old fatherland and my former superiors; I shall always try to comfort myself as becomes a Prussian and thus bring honor upon Prussia and my friends I left behind there. If the Lord will bless my efforts to earn enough money to return home to Germany again I shall try to express in deeds what I can express now only in words.

“The Texas colonization plan seems to have taken on large proportions in Germany. Here in America the authorities are using pitifully small means to make the undertaking a success. They seem to be looking only for their own profit and advantage rather than the welfare of the many thousands of Germans who were persuaded by their attractive promises, which are not being kept, to leave their comfortable home overseas. Here they are often treated as a commodity, a piece of merchandise to be used in the interest of the Society. It seems as though the American Administration of the Society has lost all financial credit both in Texas and in the United States. Thus local farmers refuse to accept mere promises to pay from the Society in order to help transport the thousands of immigrants, stranded at Indianpoint to the land of the colony. The Society is unable to pay the cost. Thus the poor immigrants are forced to remain for months and even years in the unhealthy climate of Indianpoint where because of the poor drinking water and the unwholesome food one third of them die.

“The Fredericksburg office of the Society was staffed by three men, Director Bene, formerly royal Prussian lieutenant from the Palatinate; the gemetrician [sic] Wilke, formerly royal Prussian artillery lieutenant from Berlin; and Commissary Bickel, formerly a merchant in

Wiesbaden, Duchy of Nassau. All these are solid men of good will. They realized that my departure from Fredericksburg would create a bad impression among the Germans of Fredericksburg and New Braunfels. Therefore they wrote a true report about the disgraceful conditions at Fredericksburg and requested me to deliver it to the General Commissioner, Mr. von Meusebach at New Braunfels. In this report Mr. von Meusebach was asked to do everything in his power to convince me to stay and return to Fredericksburg. Mr. von Meusebach, a former royal Prussian official, offered not only to give me four cows and a pair of pigs for breeding, but also to remit the excessive cost of our livelihood during our stay in Fredericksburg and the cost of our maintenance until the next harvest if we could return to Fredericksburg immediately. However, for valid reasons I preferred not to accept this tempting offer but to remain here in New Braunfels for the time being in order to earn my living with my hands and to make it possible to return to the old home in Germany. I desire to see you again, my dear son and my many other loved ones as well as my former superiors, especially my unforgettable pastor, Mr. Skrzeczka in Gr. Nebrau, my dear relatives in Brosowo, my only brother and sister, dear friends and patrons of my congregation at Kokocko, such as J. Windmueller, J. Fenske, F. Fenske, J. Goertz and many others, friends and

acquaintances. I steadfastly desire to see all of them again and share with them the joy of a reunion.

“It will interest you to know that the former teacher Wamel from Ezarze who lost his wife when his ship was wrecked in Caballo Pass near Matagorda Bay, has married a widow from Hanover whose husband died at Indianpoint. They now live happily at Fredericksburg where he is again as in Germany addicted to his filthy greediness. Somehow he acquired two cows before coming to Fredericksburg. Now he is taking the last few pennies from the poor immigrants for the rare treat of a little milk. For all the people of this ilk and all who have some cash for trading purposes Texas is a land after their heart, since there is no one here to prevent them from charging one hundred and more percent interest on their money. But whoever does not care for swindling people and pulling their skins over their ears, whoever is honest and sincere will not find much that is pleasing in our present life in Texas.

“Peter Zabel, who left Kokocko with me, remained at Indianpoint then I left there in April of that year. His wife was ill as was also his son, your friend Carl, who suffered from typhoid and dysentery. He passed away at Easter time, a few days after our departure. Peter Zabel had been seasick during the entire trip over here. However after landing he soon

recovered. Now because of the grief over the death of his son and worry on account of his wife's health he again took sick. During the month of May Julius and I drove to Indianpoint in my wagon and brought two yokes of strong oxen with us for Zabel's wagon which he has brought from Germany. I was eager to transport him, his wife and household effects out of this unwholesome climate to New Braunfels. But unfortunately, his wagon had gone to pieces during two earlier attempts to get away. According to reports Zabel had remained at a place where his second breakdown had occurred, near the Guadalupe River, about 28 to 30 miles from Indianpoint. This is a good settled farming community. I then returned to New Braunfels from where I made the trip to Fredericksburg. I have told you about returning from there to New Braunfels. During all this time I have heard nothing from the Zabels even though I continuously inquired about them. They must either have died or returned to Germany. He wanted to do the latter even though he was afraid of seasickness.

“Farewell then, my dear son. Remain in your and my former fatherland. Never leave it. Be faithful in your position and work for the welfare of mankind, trusting in our heavenly Father even as you are bound in love to his Son, our Lord and Saviour [sic]. Thus God will be

pleased with you and his blessing will be upon you and your work, and your heart will be filled with inexpressible joy. Thus you will be truly free and independent. There is but one true freedom and independence, the freedom that comes from the faithful fulfillment of our duties, in all the relationships of the moral, religious and civil life. Wait patiently for the joy of a happy reunion when we shall see each other again before the end of my days after so many hardships, sufferings and adventures. With tear filled eyes yet beaming with joy I look forward to the blessed prospect, after having renounced the ways and joys of the world, to lay my tired head to rest in the bosom of the fatherland's sacred soil. But should our heavenly Father will otherwise, should he in whom I have the utmost confidence and with whom I am bound together in the bonds of love determine in his inscrutable [sic] wisdom to call me hence before I may return to Germany, then may his will be done. He who has always done all things well will also in this know what is for my best. Then we shall meet in our heavenly fatherland where no pain, no suffering, no separation will mar our joy.

"Please inform all of our relatives and dear friends concerning our situation and extend our warm greetings. Do not fail to inform your aunt Brade and your uncle A. Blumberg in Zawisno at Landsberg, Upper Silesia. Since I'm not writing

to anyone else include all friends in Eriefen and Brosowo.

"And now my dear child, farewell. Remember in love your parents, your brothers and sisters who yearn for you and fervently pray for you each day.

"Your loving father
"C. Blumberg"

"Fredericksburg, October 7, 1846

"The highly esteemd [sic] Colonial Administration of the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas is hereby requested graciously to receive this my report and to give my petition favorable consideration.

"Since July 14th of this year I and my family have been in Fredericksburg and since the 18th of the same month and year I and my oldest son Julius have been in possession of lots 270 and 271 located on Main Street. With the same devotion and enthusiasm that I have always manifested over against the Society I went at the difficult and often bitter work of clearing the wilderness and making the land arable, trusting that God would give me strength to overcome all difficulties. In doing this I was determined to give my fellow citizens a good example of virtue, faithfulness and industry. How far I succeeded in this endeavor the

Administration may determine by a check-up. In the meantime, however, the difficulties and problems have increased, the condition of the immigrants has worsened to such an extent that even the greatest courage and resoluteness is unequal to the task. I shall abstain from describing the terrible misery of our poor immigrants, a condition so terrible as to shake the strongest soul and fill one's heart with utmost sympathy, since the esteemed Administration through daily inspections is aware of this sad situation and itself suffers from it. I want to inform the Administration that during the three months of my stay here I have come to the conclusion that despite my heroic efforts and all my former enthusiasm I shall not be able under these depressing circumstances to establish a permanent home here for my family. I have therefore determined to return to the Society the two lots that were allocated to me and my son, to leave this place as soon as possible, and to try somewhere else to

provide for my family with the work of my hands.

"Convinced as I am of the humane disposition of the Administration I entertain the hope that after examining into the reasons and motives that prompted this step the Administration will approve of it and not only take back the two town lots but also reimburse me for the time and labor I spent in improving them.

"To this end I am attaching a statement of account and courteously and urgently request that payment of the amount of \$92.50 for wages be authorized. From this amount is to be deducted whatever I owe for foodstuffs received during the three months of my stay. The balance I desire to receive in cash.

"Hoping that this will meet with your approval,

"I am
"your devoted
"Carl Blumberg"³

³ The transcript ends with the following note: "Copy made from original belonging to Mr. Alex Brinkmann of Comfort, Texas. The pamphlet has green wrappers on front page of which same title as this is printed. There is a double rule above and below the title printed on wrapper, and below the lower double rule appears the words: "Co-Operative. Publishing Co. Print." No date of printing appears anywhere, but it has the appearance of being recent - say since 1910 - and to have been done at New Braunfels, San Antonio, or Fredericksburg, or some place neighbor to these. E. W. W. 10-21-27 [1927]"

ORA LAUERINE BROWN

An Austin Genealogical Society Photo Mystery

By AGS Member Erin Garcia

As the Treasurer for the Austin Genealogical Society, I regularly check our post office box for membership renewals, etc. In October 2018, we received an intriguing letter accompanied by an old photograph of an infant in what appeared to be white baptismal clothes. On the back was written:

“Ora Lauerine Brown, daughter of John Edward & Laura Dunks Brown, age 2 mos. & 2 wks.”

The letter read as follows:

“October 7, 2018

“Austin Genealogical Society

3616 Far West Blvd

Suite 117-227

Austin, TX 78731 – 3082

“I am enclosing an old photograph of Ora Lauerine BROWN of Austin, TX. I’ve attempted to locate a family member so that the photograph could be returned to their care, but was not successful. I am passing the photograph along in hopes that you might be able to make a connection with the family in addition to sharing the photograph with others in your community.

“I do this as a hobby and appreciate reimbursement of my expenses if possible, so that I can continue my efforts to recover and reunite family treasurers with families. In this case my total expenses for the photography would be \$13.00; this includes the price I paid for the photography, a padded mailing envelope, and postage.

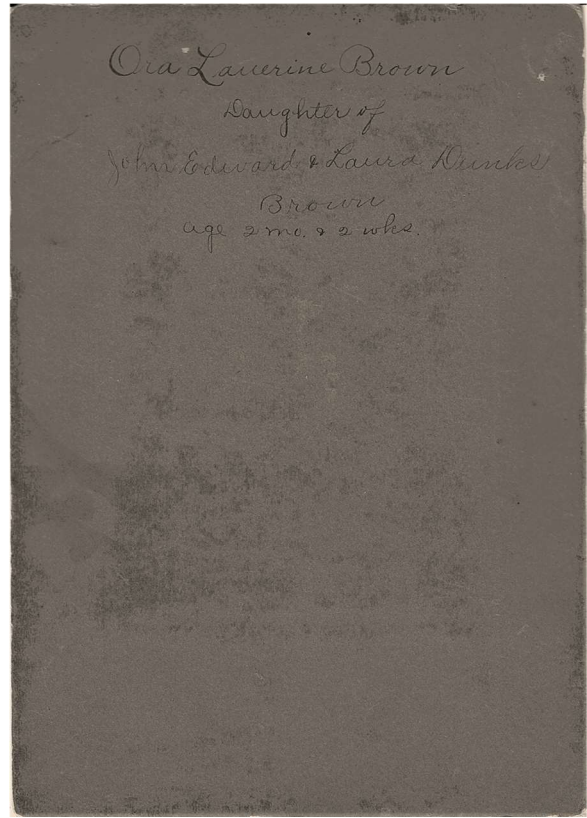
“If you are not able to reimburse me, please accept the photograph as a donation. I hope that you will be successful in reuniting this treasure with family and will also be able to share it throughout your community.

*“Thank you,
Shelley Cardiel”*



Ora Lauerine Brown - Front

"Age 2 mos & 2 wks"



Ora Lauerine Brown - Back

"Age 2 mos & 2 wks"

What self-respecting genealogist could resist? I immediately hoped I could succeed where Shelley Cardiel had not. Fortunately, the baby's unusual middle name was included in the inscription, because with a surname like Brown, finding the family could have been very difficult.

I entered "Ora Lauerine Brown" into *Ancestry.com* and immediately found a Social Security Death Index (SSDI) for an Ora Lauerine Poulson with a birth date of August 4, 1912, and a death date of September 1, 2007.

The birthdate seemed like a good match for the age of the photo (sepia-toned and glued onto a thick cabinet card). In addition, Ora Poulson had been born in Austin, Texas.

Next, I searched for Ora in the United States Federal Census records. I found an "Ora L." living with parents, John Edward and Laura Brown, in the 1930 Census, along with a younger brother named Duane E. At the time, they were living in Pomona, Los Angeles County, California. It looked like I was on the right track. The next piece to find would be a marriage record to someone named "Poulson."

Ancestry did not offer a marriage record for an Ora Brown and a man named Poulson, but I did find a "Lawrine Poulsen" born in Texas around 1913, living with "Harold C. Poulsen" in the 1940 Census for Los Angeles County, California. No children were listed on this census.

It seemed very likely that this Ora Lauerine Poulson might be the baby in the mystery photo. So, the next task was to find a living descendant. Since I had Ora's death date from the Social Security

Death Index, I could try to obtain a copy of her obituary or death notice. According to the SSDI, Ora Poulson died in Canyon Country, California. A quick *Google* search of "Canyon Country" shows it is a suburb of Santa Clarita, California. I then emailed the Santa Clarita Public Library for help finding an obituary. They were kind to send me a brief death notice from *The Signal*, a newspaper based in Santa Clarita.

The obituary read:

"Ora Lauerine Poulsen

"Ora Lauerine Poulsen, 95, of Santa Clarita died on Saturday, September 1, 2007 at Henry Mayo Hospital.

"Lauerine was born on August 4, 1912 in Waters Park, TX. She was a retired school teacher who taught 3rd and 4th grades in the Newhall School District at Peachland Elementary for over 20 years from 1960 to 1982. Lauerine was a member of the Santa Clarita Seventh-Day-Adventist Church and she loved music.

"Lauerine is survived by her two brothers, Vaughn and Duane Brown.

"Memorial services will be held on Saturday, September 22, 2007 at 12:30 p.m. at the Santa Clarita Seventh-Day Adventist Church located at 24436 Valley St., Newhall. Phone number 259-5420."

Ora Lauerine Poulsen

Ora Lauerine Poulsen, 95, of Santa Clarita died on Saturday, September 1, 2007 at Henry Mayo Hospital.

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The Signal, Santa Clarita, September 15, 2007

Ora Lauerine Poulsen – obituary

www.newspapers.com/image/334770499

Sadly, it appeared that Lauerine had no surviving children or grandchildren. I again checked the SSDI and found a record for a Duane Edward Brown, who died in San Bernardino, California on February 15, 2011.

I did not find a Vaughn Brown in the SSDI and hoped that he was still living, although he would be advanced in years. I searched for Vaughn Brown in *Ancestry* but didn't come across anyone that clearly looked like Ora's brother. So, I searched the 1940 United States Census for Ora's brothers. Luckily, I found them in Los Angeles County, California.

The transcription listed Ora's brothers as Duane Edward and Vaughn Adam.

As a good genealogist, I clicked on the image of the census page, because we all know that transcriptions can have errors. So glad I did, because Vaughn's middle name looked more like "Odena" not "Adam." Guessing that his middle name started with an "O" helped me narrow down the few matches I found when I searched Vaughn's name on *Ancestry*. A 1962 voter registration came up for a "Vaughn O. Brown" in San Bernardino, California.

I then searched the *White pages* and the first result was for a "Vaughn O. Brown" aged 80+, who lived in Upland, California. Since there were no other matches with an "O" as the middle initial, I wrote a letter to Mr. Vaughn and crossed my

fingers, hoping I had found the right person.

A couple of weeks later, I received a note in the mail addressed from a Gwen L. Brown:

"Erin –

"I tried to email you regarding the pix of Ora Lauerine, but it came back saying it could not be sent. So I am resorting to snail-mail.

"I am married to Vaughn O. Brown (71 years). Lauerine was born in Texas 1912. She passed away Sept. 2007 age 95. Duane passed away 2007, age 87. (Born in Lubbock). Vaughn is 92; I am 88. We would love to have the pix.

"Thanks for tracking us down.

"Gwen L. Brown"

Mission accomplished!

I mailed the photo to Mr. & Mrs. Brown the next day. What a satisfying feeling to return a photo to the family who will cherish it. As all genealogists know, photographs are treasures!

In the 20 years of researching my family history, I have received a few unexpected and amazing surprises in the mail – including previously unseen photos of my family members. What a wonderful gift! I was so happy I could return the favor to someone else.

CARL AUGUST PETERSON AND LOVISA CARLSDOTTER

A Swedish Immigration Story

By AGS Member Craig Peterson

My great-grandparents, Carl August Peterson and Lovisa Carlsdotter, immigrated from Sweden in 1870. We knew this only because of the book “Swedes in Texas in Words and Pictures, 1838-1918: English Translation” published in 1994. No story was passed down or any information on how and why they left Sweden. Our only hint from the book was that they were part of a group and that they worked from the beginning in Travis County, Texas.

I had the idea that if I could locate the group, I could use other members to build the story of how they arrived. I started with looking for my unmarried great-grandparents on passenger lists from Sweden. Carl August Peterson is a common name but Lovisa is not as common. However, Lovisa’s surname presented different problems. Lovisa’s father was Carl Magnusson Snygg, with Snygg being his military name.

Lovisa could have immigrated under the name Carlsdotter, Carlson, Magnusson or Snygg.

I quickly found a Lovisa Carlsdotter on the passenger list of the vessel Orlando¹ leaving Göteborg (Gothenburg), Sweden for Hull, England; But what vessel did she take to New York? Looking under all the possible names I could not find anyone of the right age and origin. This is where I remained stuck for a couple of years, thinking the records were lost and it was hopeless.

When I decided to renew my search, I used a digital copy of *Swedes in Texas*² and did a word search for “1870.” I eliminated anything that did not have to do with immigration. Friends added more names of their relatives. I added a few more I came across in census records or naturalization records. I now had a large list of 1870 immigrants and notes from their immigration stories.

¹ *Ancestry.com* Gothenburg, Sweden, Passenger Lists, 1869-1951, Orlando, 19 Aug 1870.

² SWEME, swedesintexas.com.

Recently, I was searching through the records of New York-bound vessels again. A Lovisa Carlsdotter was listed on the vessel Italy³ but she was married and the wrong age. I was about to dismiss the record when I noticed her husband's name was Gustav Carlsdotter. It would be very unusual for a man to take the name Carlsdotter as "dotter" is the common suffix for female Swedish surnames.⁴

The name listed below this Lovisa was F.O. Carlson. That name seemed familiar. I went back to take another look at the Orlando passenger list. The name above Lovisa was Gustav Wallin. The name below was F.O. Carlson. I soon realized an entire group on both passenger lists was identical except for Gustav Wallin and Gustav Carlsdotter. Many of the ages were wrong and the immigrants were listed as being from Germany on the Italy manifest, but the lists were in the exact same order. I had my group and my great-grandmother's vessel to New

York. Somehow the name Gustav Wallin had become Gustav Carlsdotter and the passenger agent had mistakenly listed them as husband and wife.

I continued to search for immigration information on the internet. I recently found an article published in 1987 in the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* by Magnus Morner.⁵ He mentions that most of sponsors of Central Texas immigration were not Swedish. Checking his footnotes, he references a collection in the Emigration Museum in Växjö, Sweden.⁶ They were able to send me two lists from 1870 made by Johan Swenson, brother of S.M. Swenson, of immigrants and who sponsored their trip. Several groups were arranged through S. M. Swenson and his relatives, the Palms.

One group left in August and a larger group left in November. The pages from the two lists were mixed but after sorting, they were in the same order as both passenger manifests. Typically, farmers

³ *Ancestry.com* New York, Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island), 1820-1957, 1870, September, 07, Italy.

⁴ "A Scandinavian's family name was formed by taking the first name of the natural father and adding sen, son, sson, søn, datter, dotter, or dottir to it." "Swedish patronymic surnames were more likely to end with -sson for males and -dotter for females." https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Scandinavia_Names.

⁵ *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* (North Park University), April 1987, The Swedish Migrants to Texas, Magnus Morner.

⁶ Swedish Emigrant Institute, Växjö, Olie Fritz's Collection, 10:20:14:A:21, 10:20:14:A:25.

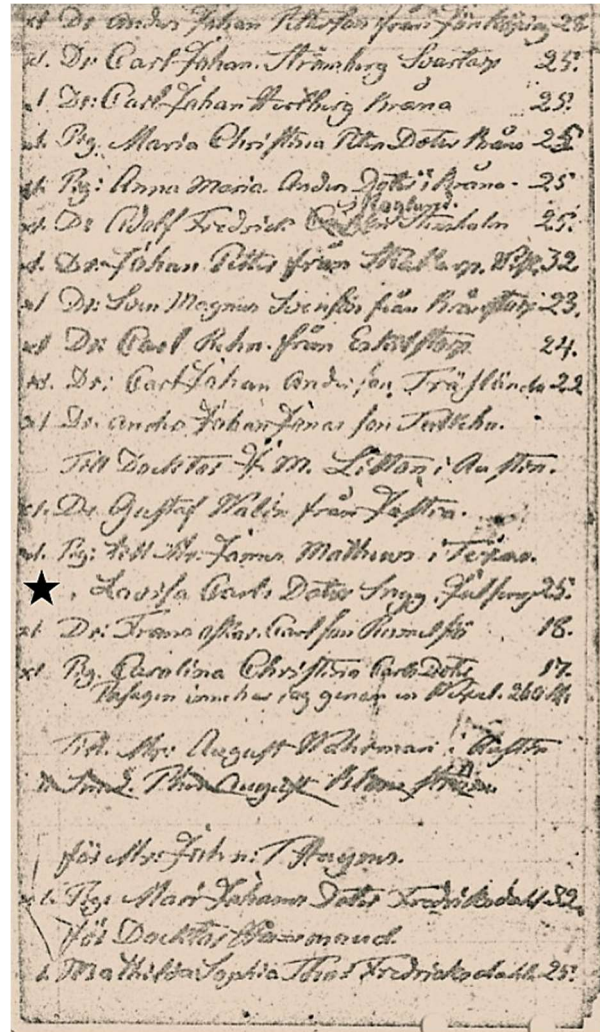
and city dwellers would place an order for a female servant or male laborer with Adolph Palm in Austin, Travis County, Texas, and pay for the cost of passage. The immigrant would agree to work for a year for their sponsor to pay off the costs.

On the August list destined for Travis County's James Matthews, were two females and one male. One of the females was Lovisa Carlsdotter Snygg. I had found my great-grandmother and now I could build more of her story.

A.G. Swenson, a member of the November group, related his story in *Swedes in Texas*.⁷ The August group would have been similar. Arriving in New York, they met with S.M. Swenson and then proceeded by boat to Galveston, Texas. From there, trains took them as far as Brenham, Texas, and they continued on by oxcart, mules and on foot to Travis County, Texas.

The 1870 United States Federal Census⁸ shows two James Matthews as residents of Travis County. One shows no real estate or personal property. The other had real estate valued at \$10,000. He was 54,

married with seven children (aged 8 months to 13 years). Two laborers worked on his farm at the time of the census, John Billingsly from North Carolina and Franz Hage from Sweden.



August listing for Lovisa Carlsdotter Snygg

⁷ *Swedes in Texas in Words and Pictures, 1838-1918: English Translation, 1994.*

⁸ *Ancestry.com, 1870 United States Federal Census.*

Matthews died less than a year after the arrival of the group.⁹ He may have already been sick and ordered for more help knowing he would soon be leaving a wife and seven young children.

I had found my great-grandmother, but what of my great-grandfather, Carl August Peterson?

We believe Carl and Lovisa knew each other in Sweden. There is no evidence that Carl's immigration was arranged in advance and he didn't file his departure with the local parish as required. There was a C.A. Peterson listed with a few other names on the very last page of the Orlando manifest appearing like an add on. He did not appear on the Italy manifest with the group. A search of vessels arriving in New York the same day found the vessel Manhattan and the manifest listed a Carl A. Peterson.¹⁰

A comparison of the names on the last page of the Orlando with the names surrounding Carl on the Manhattan shows they are the same. I believe this is my great-grandfather and he had joined the group headed to Texas. I have not yet found a record of who he worked for, but it could have been Matthews or some of the other nearby plantations.

James Matthews was a deacon of First Presbyterian Church, the church where my great-grandparents were married less than a year after their arrival. There appeared to be no Swedish members of the church so it can be assumed the Matthews family helped arrange the wedding. They were married the same day James Matthews died.¹¹

⁹ *Ancestry.com*, Find A Grave Index.

¹⁰ *Ancestry.com* New York, Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island), 1820-1957, Manhattan, 07 Sept 1870.

¹¹ Records of First Presbyterian Church, Austin, Texas.

SWEDISH IMMIGRATION GROUP #1 TO CENTRAL TEXAS

Arranged for by the Swenson & Palm families of Travis County, Texas.

Departed August 19, 1870, from Göteborg, Sweden to Hull, England on the "Orlando."

Arrived in New York September 7, 1870, on the "Italy."

(By Sponsor, Orlando Passenger Number)

A.B. PALM

1498 Lars August Larson

1499 August Nyman

1500 Hedda Kylberg

DOCTOR C.W. PHILLIPS

1501 Johannes August Gustafson

1503 Carlolina Johannesdotter

1504 Sven Svenson

BENJAMIN TOWNSEND

1504 Gustav Swenson

1505 Helena Sophia Shoberg

1506 Anders Magnus Johanson

1507 Johannes Petterson

FRED WARREN

1508 August Magnuson

1509 J. Gustafson

1510 Anders Johan Anderson

1511 Anders Johan Gustafson

1513 Carolina Israelsdotter

MR RAMSDALE, MANOR

1512 Svante Anderson

1514 Emanuel Jacobson

1515 Anders Johan Petterson

1516 Carl Johan Stromberg

1517 Carl Johan Hjerlberg

1518 Maria Christina Petersdotter

1519 Anna Maria Andersdotter

1520 Adolph Frederik Rogland

1521 Johan Petterson

1522 Sven Magnus Swenson

1523 Carl H. Johanson

DR J.M. LITTON

1526 Gustaf Wallin

JAMES MATTHEWS, TEXAS

1527 Lovisa Carlsdotter Snygg

1528 Franz Oscar Carlson/Carolina

Christina Carlsdotter (sister)

JOHN T HAYES

1529 Maria Johansdotter

DOCTOR THURMOND (HARMOND)

1530 Matilda Sophia Thor Frederik-
dotter

SWEDISH IMMIGRATION GROUP #2 TO CENTRAL TEXAS

Arranged for by the Swenson & Palm families of Travis County, Texas.

October - November 1870 "Carl Lundgren Group."

(By Group Number, Sponsor, October 23rd "Orlando" Passenger Number, Name)

#1 BENJAMIN TOWNSEND

Illegible

#2 L. HAYES

1753 Lovisa Johansdotter

#3 L.B. GILES

1758 Isak Ludvig Isaksson

1760 Gustaf Wilhelm Anderson

1759 Per Isaksson

1761 Christina Carlsdotter

1762 Anders August Alexanderson

1763 Per Johan Abramsson

1764 Claus Johansson

#4 F.E. RANEY

1765 Christina Wickstrom

1766 Alfred Landstedt

Per August Johansson

#5 H.R. HILL

Carl Magnusson

1768 Clas Johan Skog

Carl August Magnusson

1769 Frans Yarnquist

1770 Augusta Matilda Carlsdotter

#6 R.M. HUBBARD

1771 Anna Wilhelmina Johansdotter

1772 Carl August Johanson

#7 JOHN T. HAYES

Anders Johan (Johansson)

1774 Hedda Larsborg

1775 Johan Alfred Carlson

1776 Johan August Carlson

#8 W.M. HILL

1777 Gustaf Fedinand On

1778 Gustaf Jonnson

#9 THOMAS P. HUGHES

1779 Carl August Ekdahl

1780 Ida Chalotta Ekdahl

#10 F.G. GRIGG

1858 Anders Gustaf Anderson

#11 R.T. HILL

1781 Carolina Loffgren

1782 Johan Henrick Carlson

1783 Frans Jonsson

1784 Aron Jonsson

Leonard Andersson

#12 J.R. REEDER

1785 Johan Magnusson

1786 Johannes Jonsson

#13 WILL GREGG

1787 Sven Johan Petterson
1788 Anders Johan Carlsson
1789 Anders Gustaf Swenson
17891 Per August Petterson
 Ida Christina Pettersdotter
1790 Maria Carlsdotter
1792 Claus Johan Johansson
 ____ Johansson
1793 Carl Victor Halling

#14 ED R. CROCKETT

1794 Edla Maria Isaksdotter
1795 Gustaf Wilhelm Anderson
 Carl Johansson
1796 Anders Gustaf Anderson

#15 T.M. REEDER

1797 Carl Johan Swenson
1798 Sven Johan Johanson

#16 M.C. TANNER

Johan Ulric Lundquist

#17 B.C. GILES

1800 August Matilda Andersdotter

#18 A.B. PALM

1801 Carl August Carlquist
 Maria Christina Carlquist (wife)
 Edward (son)
1802 Johanna Brandt
1803 Hedda Petersdotter
1804 Anders Petterson

#18 A.B. PALM, cont...

1805 Maria Sofia Petersson (wife)
 Changed on Passenger List to wife
 Clara Petterson
 Per Gustaf Andersson (son)
 Changed on Passenger List to son
 Per Gustaf
1808 Carl Alfred Larson

#19 MR. CALDWELL

1809 Johanna Sophia Johansdotter
1810 Johan Frederik Carlsson
1811 August Anderson
1812 Johan August Lagerblad
 Johan Alfred Johansson

#20 RAMOS DITE WANNER

1813 Gustaf Hallgren
1814 Carl Johan Magnusson
 Johan Pingust Johansson

**#21 S.M. SWENSON, NEW YORK FOR
AUGUST WAHRMAN, AUSTIN**

1815 August Johan Trolle
1822 Lars Magnus Odman

#22 GUSTAF JOHANSSON

Illegible

#23 BENGT SWENSON

1823 N.P. Norden
1824 Carl Swenson

#24 P.W. CASIS

1825 Anders Martin Lundquist
1826 Lotta Gabrielsdotter

#25 ED CROCKETT

1827 Sofia Lovisa Lanberg (Petersdotter)

#26 CLABURN HARRIS, BASTROP

1828 Ida Carlquist

1832 Gustaf Johansson

#27 R.C. SMITH

1833 Anna Caisa Andersdotter

#28 FY PAN

1834 Charlotta Anderson

1831 Johan August Gustafsson

#29 T. CALDWELL

1835 Maria Helena Skoglund

1836 Carl Anders Anderson

#30 OTTO SWENSON

1837 Johannes Sofia Gustafsdotter

#31 ANDERS WILBLAD

1838 Anders Johansson

#32 E.W. TALBOT

1839 F.G. Midland (Hidsend)

1840 L.B. Anderson

#33 SVEN ANDERSON

1841 Johan Alfrid Carlsson

#34 E.B. TURNER

1842 Mathilda Johansdotter

August Mansson

#35 DAVID LAYONS

1843 Sophia Patron

#36 JOSEPH D. LAYONS

1844 Edla Helina Carlsdotter

****NOTE****

Carl August and Lovisa Snygg Peterson are certified Pioneer Families of Travis County (1871). The following certificates are on file for this family: 15-091--15-097 and 15-099--15-105.

Researchers are encouraged to view the original manifests for the two vessels for alternate spellings and immigrant origins.

Transcription by Craig Peterson of list provided by Swedish Emigrant Institute, Vaxjo. Ollie Frit's Collection 10:20:14:A:21 & 25

GOOD COOKING, A FAMILY TRADITION

By AGS Member Audrey Poche

As a result of spending time with my parents over the past few months, I have started to write/collect information for an heirloom cookbook to be filled with collections of recipes, memories, photos, and stories about being raised by parents on our farm where we grew almost all of our own food – “Farm-to-table” before it was a restaurant marketing slogan.

My mother, Bernadette Bludau, (who is now 85) has always said baking is her therapy. Every Sunday her mother, Frances Sitka Sobotik, would bake kolaches. “She remembers helping her mother...and slipping off at times across the pasture to visit her grandmother Annie Sitka, who always had kolaches for a treat.”¹ When it comes to baking kolaches she has a few things “up her sleeve” that she learned from her mother. One was not to overwork the dough – not over-knead it. The other is that she has always preferred to use lard even though her recipes called for shortening. This “secret” has led to Mom winning



Bernadette the “Kolache Granny” – 1996

Photo courtesy of Audrey Poche

multiple kolache baking contests over the years and in 1996, she was crowned the “Kolache Granny of Hallettsville,” a coveted title awarded at the annual Kolache Fest held in Hallettsville, Texas. She also taught kolache classes when she was younger.

¹ *Kolache Granny’s secret in shortening* Victoria Advocate (Victoria, Texas), 25 Jul 1996, Thu, Page 3, Henry Wolff Jr.

Growing up on a farm, lard was readily available. Like their parents, Mom and Dad butchered a couple of hogs each year – processing all the meat and rendering the fat.

hog was hauled to a huge old oak tree, hoisted up, and the carcass was split open. At that time the organs spilled out into a large galvanized washtub. Our neighbor, Mr. Ernest Meyer, and my dad



Smoked sausages – meat hanging in domestic smokehouse

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/traditional-food-smoked-sausages-meat-hanging-226271461>

With the help of neighbors, hog butchering was an all-day affair that started before sunrise. When the temperatures dropped below freezing, (usually after a blue norther) Daddy would declare it was time. The cold temperatures were needed to prevent spoilage.

The hog was slaughtered, and placed on a “sled,” and drenched with boiling water. The pig hair was loosened by the boiling water, which was then scraped off with sharp knives. Once cleaned, the

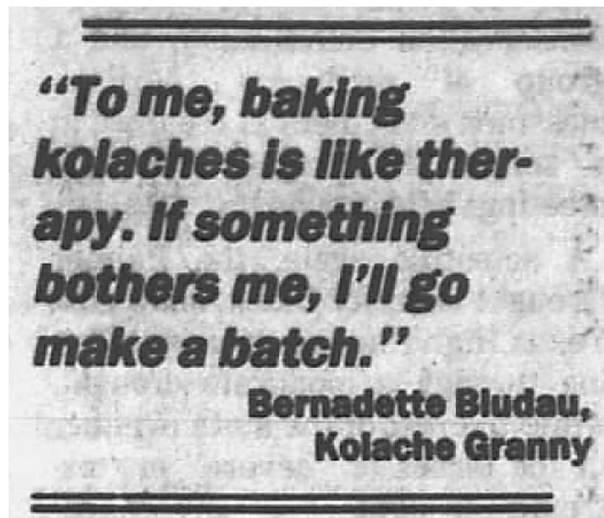
gave me my first anatomy lesson, naming each organ in the tub.

Afterward, the hog carcass was split in half and cut into more manageable pieces – the processing began.

The surface of the large 8-foot wooden table in the “wash house” was used to process most of the meat. Everyone had a job, even the smallest child. Some worked the hand saws, and others with sharp butcher knives cut roasts, slabs of

bacon, and trimmed meat from bones to be ground up for sausage.

Mom oversaw the making of the head sausage or as it is known in Czech, Jaternice/Jitrnice. The same cast iron kettle used earlier to boil water was used to cook the hog head, all the organs (liver, heart, kidney, etc.) and trimmed bones. While the meat simmered over an open fire, the casings were prepared. The dirty



Bernadette Bludau "Kolache Granny" – 1996
newspapers.com/image/432908253/

task of cleaning the large and small intestines was done with the help of us kids. The "big gut" or large intestines was used for the head sausage and the small intestines were used for the smoked sausage. Very little of the hog went to waste. Years later, we would buy store-bought casings for the smoked sausage.

When the organs, head, and bones were finished cooking, the meat was scraped from the bones and ground up with the

organ meat. Cooked rice, garlic, green onions, salt, and pepper were added to the ground meat mixtures, then stuffed loosely into the "big gut." The links went back into hot broth to thoroughly cook the intestines.

Even though Daddy never cooked, he was always in charge of seasoning the smoked sausage. The same recipe was used every year; It even was written on the washhouse wall. The sausage stuffer that dad received from his parents, Annie Friesenhahn and Andres Bludau, was placed on the wooden table to stuff the seasoned meat into casings, cut, and then tied into one-pound links.

The room next to the washhouse was used as the smokehouse. Sausages were hung from the rafters with a smoldering fire underneath to provide the smoke. The links were smoked for two to three nights. The fire needed to be checked in the middle of the night to keep the smoke going. Ham-shoulders and slabs of bacon were coated and rubbed down with a sugar-salt cure and laid on the smokehouse shelves. These were closely monitored in case the weather warmed up too quickly.

One of the final jobs of the day was to render the lard. Into the large kettle went the cut pieces of fat to cook. A huge paddle carved by Daddy was used to stir the mixture. After hours of frying, a clear oil

was released. It was strained, and when cooled it became a semi-soft white fat, known as lard. A byproduct of this process were crispy fried pieces of fat resulting in a delicious treat affectionately known as “cracklins.”

Other treats enjoyed on butchering day were lunches made from fresh pork stir-fried with onion and pan sausage the next morning for breakfast. Another delicacy of butchering was the sautéed brain of the pig cooked with scrambled eggs and green onions. The sausage we processed as a family was also used in Mom’s klobasnek or “pigs in blankets.”

Hog butchering day was a memorable event, and as children we helped in small ways – cutting string to tie links, cleaning intestines, and cutting fat for lard. As we grew older our responsibilities increased to grinding meat for sausage and cranking the sausage stuffer.

Mom and Dad continued to raise and process hogs until the late 1980s.

The lard rendered and stored in gallon jars was Mom’s favorite baking shortening. She believed it produced a lighter, much more flavorful dough for her koches and rolls, and flakier crusts for her pies. It was also used in other recipes and to this day my sister, Shirley, believes that lard makes the best fried chicken.

Although Mom no longer makes koches, she continues to coach her daughter and granddaughters so they can carry on the family tradition.

GRIFF

Chapter XIII: In Business

By AGS Member Glenda Lassiter

Griff (Gordon Oscar Griffiths) was born in 1908 near Jermyn, Texas in Jack County. In 1990, at age 82, Griff recorded the story of his life on audio tapes. When he died the following year, he left the tapes to his daughter, Glenda Lassiter, asking her to write his memoir from them.

Chapters 1-12 are serialized in the Austin Genealogical Society Quarterly beginning in the winter edition of 2015.

Chapter 1 – "Sand" (December 2015 Vol. 56 No. 4)

Chapter 2 – "A Child in Texas" (June 2016 Vol. 57 No. 2)

Chapter 3 – "Graduation" (September 2016 Vol. 57 No. 3)

Chapter 4 – "Leaving Home" (December 2016 Vol. 57 No. 4)

Chapter 5 – "Denton" (March 2017 Vol. 58 No. 1)

Chapter 6 – "College" (June 2017 Vol. 58 No. 2)

Chapter 7 – "The Deal" (September 2017 Vol. 58 No. 3)

Chapter 8 – "Last Year of College" (December 2017 Vol. 58 No. 4)

Chapter 9 – "Exams" (Spring 2018 Vol. 59 No. 1)

Photographs from Griff's Life – (Summer 2018 Vol. 59 No. 2)

Chapter 10 – "The Monitor Top" (Fall 2018 Vol. 59 No. 3)

Chapter 11 – "A Christmas Robbery" (Winter 2018 Vol. 59 No. 4)

Chapter 12 – "Wed" (Spring 2019 Vol. 60 No. 1)

CORRECTIONS NOTICE:

In Chapter 12, "Wed," in discussing the development of the Waggoner Ranch, the author stated that Dan Waggoner "purchased" 650,000 acres that were part of the Comanche and Kiowa reservation lands across the Red River in Indian Territory. The source, the Texas State Historical Association "Waggoner Ranch", states that Dan Waggoner instead "leased" the land in Indian Territory.

Griff and Desda were thrilled to be expecting a baby, but their financial outlook was grim in 1932. In spite of their frugality and Desda's scrupulous budgeting of their income, they were barely getting by.

Now that they had moved Desda's brother Ross and his wife Zella Jo to live with them because of the hard times, they were desperate. Ross had found a job making a little income operating a failing gas station on the edge of Electra, Texas. But on top of everything, Zella Jo was expecting a baby about the same time that Desda was expecting. Griff wasn't sure how they were going to manage.

After church on the last Sunday night of every month, Griff and Desda would sit down at the kitchen table and itemize their expenditures for that month in Desda's little ledger. She kept detailed records of every penny spent the preceding month, always including the tithe to the First Baptist Church. They had total expenditures of \$90.00, and Griff was making only \$125.00 per month.

There were fewer and fewer door-to-door customers for the Monitor Top refrigerators, even in the oil well community of Electra. The economy was so bad that people were losing their homes to

foreclosure. In 1932, 273,000 people nationwide lost their homes. The next year a thousand mortgages a day were being foreclosed. There was so much animosity against the banks for foreclosures, that bank robbers such as John Dillinger, Charles Arthur "Pretty Boy" Floyd, and Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow were becoming folk heroes in Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Kansas. Floyd was said to have burned people's mortgages in a bank robbery spree in Oklahoma to the delight of the public.

Desda's delicate constitution caused her to have a very difficult pregnancy. She was vomiting almost every day for months. Zella Jo was having an easier time and did most of the cooking and cleaning for the four of them.

In April, Zella Jo's baby was due. Ross couldn't afford a hospital stay so they had a doctor and a midwife come in to deliver the baby in the cramped apartment. During the delivery, Ross became so upset and anxious that he finally went out and sat in the car. The baby was a breech birth, and the doctor called Griff in to help him. Griff held Zella Jo's legs while the doctor attempted to deliver the baby. Griff said he didn't know how Zella Jo got over that delivery because she had some really rough treatment that afternoon. It was a boy, and they named him Hal Stein Stubblefield.

Before money got so tight for them, Desda and Griff had spent the last of the money she had earned teaching school to buy an old 1929 Model A Ford. So, at least, they had a car to drive Desda to see a doctor in Wichita Falls, Texas, 25 miles away, during her grueling pregnancy.

On May 13, 1932, a month after Hal Stein was born, Desda had her baby in Bethania Hospital in Wichita Falls. The hospital had been built in 1926 when the population outgrew the old Wichita Falls General Hospital during the oil boom. Griff was concerned about her weakened condition and wanted her to have the best care that he could provide for her. That night they had a daughter and named her Janet Jeannine Griffitts. They named her after an old parlor song that they often heard on the radio: "I Dream of Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair." Henry and Flora Stubblefield drove up to Wichita Falls from Cisco, Texas to see their new granddaughter.

That same year, Texas Electric Service Company started laying off salesmen. Griff believed that he was going to get laid off, but the company made him an offer. They had so much repossessed merchandise that they wanted him to stay and help clear out the service center stock. The company knew they would have to close down their sales force when Texas governor James Burr Allred

signed state legislation forbidding utility companies from selling appliances in addition to electricity. Texas Electric let their entire sales force go except for Griff and one salesman in Wichita Falls. Now Griff's job was to call on outlying communities to sell the repossessed appliances now on hand.

Griff was working in Vernon, Texas when Charlie Sprague came to see how he was doing selling the repossessed merchandise. Charlie was a big, cheerful, friendly man about ten years older than Griff. He had been Griff's foreman ever since Griff started with the company selling Monitor Tops.

As a gift, Charlie wanted to open a savings account for Griff's new baby daughter. They went to the bank in Vernon. It was the only bank in town that was still open; all the others had gone broke. However, the bank said they no longer had a Savings Account Department. People just didn't have any money to save.

Charlie knew that Griff was very worried. Griff had sold almost all of the repossessed merchandise, and when it was gone, he would be out of a job.

So, Charlie offered to furnish Griff with more repossessed appliances from Texas Electric to sell on his own. Griff would owe Charlie just 10%

commission on the merchandise. Griff always said that's how he got into the appliance business.

Griff rented a space right next door to Texas Electric Service Company, the company that was laying him off. Texas Electric started sending Griff all of their repair work on refrigerators, and in time, he developed a very profitable service center. Soon Griff started selling new Maytag appliances in addition to the repossessed Texas Electric stock that Charlie was sending him.

Franklin Roosevelt was inaugurated as President of the United States on March 4, 1933. He came into office focused on ending the Great Depression with his multifaceted New Deal legislation. On the day of his inauguration, Delaware became the 48th and last state to close its banks. Roosevelt's first initiative was to rebuild confidence in the nation's banking system. On March 6, he declared a four-day national banking holiday that kept all banks shut until Congress could pass the Emergency Banking Act. This was the beginning of a very gradual return of consumer confidence.

Griff's appliance center, Griffitts' Electric Company, became so large by 1934, that he needed more room. He rented space on the ground floor of the old Jefferson Hotel. This was a five-story hotel that was full all the time with people still

coming to Electra because of the oil boom.

Griff found that even now there were people around Electra who could afford new Maytag washing machines. He was known very well throughout the community and had the reputation of being a Christian man who could be trusted. He held many sales promotions at the store to give customers the best deal possible. When Maytag came out with a gasoline-powered washing machine, everyone wanted one. He also carried radios with batteries that sold like pancakes.

By this time Griff had bought a modest house for his family just a few blocks from the store. It was a one-story clapboard house with two bedrooms, a bath, a living room, dining room, and kitchen. He wanted a house where Jeannine would have a yard to play in, and he put a swing up for her in a big live oak. For himself, he wanted to plant a garden. Griff had been working so tirelessly that Desda rarely saw him except on weekends. She had bought a treadle sewing machine and had become a very talented seamstress. She loved to make clothes for Jeannine. Frequently Ross and Zella Jo would bring Hal Stein over to play. They would stay for dinner, often gathering in the backyard to make ice cream or spread blankets and look at the stars and just enjoy being together.

Griff was doing so well selling Maytag products that the company wanted him to open a dealership in Vernon as well. Soon he had a second store in Vernon. He also borrowed money to open a grocery store in Electra.

In July of 1935, his businesses were prospering, and in appreciation, he gave his employees a big banquet at the Jefferson Hotel. He had a total of 18 employees at this time. The banquet included all his employees and their families from Griffitts' Electric Co. in Electra, Griffitts' Electric Co. in Vernon, and Griffitts' Grocery Store in Electra. Desda was there with their three-year-old daughter Jeannine. Griff looked at his wife and daughter and smiled. He whispered softly into Desda's ear, "Honey, we are so lucky."

The banquet was a true celebration of success in the midst of the difficulties of the Depression. He gave out prizes for outstanding sales achievement. After the awards, Griff took the microphone to say a few words:

"Folks, if you don't know Charlie Sprague, stand up Charlie, I want you to shake his hand tonight because he is the reason we are all here. A few years ago,

I was about to get laid off by Texas Electric. I had nowhere to go. Charlie Sprague trusted me in my darkest hour in the middle of this devastating depression and gave me a job. I will forever be grateful to Charlie for giving me a chance when I was about to lose everything."

Griff looked out at his family and his employees and was filled with gratitude and joy at the beauty of life. Everyone went home filled a sense of pride and camaraderie.

That night at 2 am, Griff was awakened by the clanging of the fire alarm from the Electra Municipal Fire House. Griff and Desda rushed out into the front yard to see a sky filled with a rich orange glow. Fire and smoke were issuing from a building on Main Street. Griff's heart leaped into his throat. He turned to Desda and clasped her hands to his heart. He looked pleadingly into her eyes and said, "It can't be our store."

Just then one of his salesmen ran toward them. He was panting as he shouted, "Griff, the store is burning. Your store is on fire!"

(To be continued) ...

PIONEER FAMILIES OF TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

The Austin Genealogical Society will issue a pioneer certificate to those who can prove their ancestors lived in Travis County, Texas, prior to the close of 1880. To qualify for the certificate, you must be a direct descendant of people who lived here on or before December 31, 1880, proved with birth, death and marriage certificates; probate, census and military records; and obituaries and Bible records.

Applications for Pioneer Families of Travis County can be found at:

<http://www.austintxgensoc.org/pioneers/> or from Kay Dunlap Boyd, 3616 Far West Blvd. Ste. 117-247, Austin, Texas 78731. Each application is \$20, and the certificates make nice gifts. You don't have to be a Travis County resident or a member of Austin Genealogical Society, although membership in the Society is another fine bargain at \$25 a year.

Austin Genealogical Society
Travis County Texas
Pioneer Families Certificate

This is to Certify that

is a descendant of

who was living in Travis County, Texas
before the close of

Certificate No. _____	President _____
Date _____	Pioneer Families Chairman _____
	Registrar _____

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Austin Genealogical Society

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Austin, Texas 78731