OUR FAMILY HISTORY

I

MY FATHER'S FAMILY

My father, Friederich Wilhelm Bahr, was orphaned at the age of five years. It was during the Civil War, the war between the states, that his mother, WILHELMINE SCHROEDER BAHR, passed away. He did not remember his father at all, because he died shortly after his birth. My father was born at Cypress Top, a railroad station on the Houston Texas Central Railroad in Harris County, some twenty miles to the northwest of Houston, Texas. His home on a 320 acre farm was located on both banks of Little Cypress Creek, some five miles north and west of that railroad station. The date of his birth was May 10, 1858. He had five brothers, of which I know the names of only four: August, John, Adam, and Julius. The fifth brother, whose name I did not learn, a soldier of the Confederate Army, was killed in the battle of Natchez, Mississippi. My father also had two sisters: Mrs. Jacob Zahn and Mrs. Carl Raths.

My grandfather came to America sometime during the late 1840's. The exact time of his arrival in America could not be established by me. He and my grandmother hailed from the Province of Posen in East Germany. They traveled to America together with quite a colony of Pommeranians. This colony of Low German People settled along the headwaters of Little Cypress and Spring Creek in northwestern Harris County, Texas. Although my grandfather had his farmhome on Little Cypress Creek, some 28 miles northwest of Houston, he nevertheless maintained a blacksmith and wagon shop in Houston. This shop was located on the south bank of Buffalo Bayou, just north of the present City Hall. I was told that he walked home from Houston to his family farm every Saturday night in order to spend Sunday with his wife and family, and on Sunday night he walked back again to Houston to carry on his trade. My grandmother in the meantime, together with the older children, took care of the family farm.

By Otto E. Bahr, 242 West 16th Street, Houston 8, Texas. 1959.

After grandmother Bahr's death, the orphaned Bahr children were taken in by the oldest daughter of the family, who had been married some time before to Mr. Jacob Zahn. I was told that when she married Mr. Zahn, she was not even sixteen years of age. The girls married young in those days, even as some of them do now again. So poverty stricken were the Bahr children after their mother's death, that my father owned but one shirt to his name. He told me that when his shirt was in the family wash, he had nothing else to wear and of necessity, had to either go to bed or else to play stark naked under the Jacob Zahn home. This is no reflection on the Jacob Zahn family; they also had a number of small children of their own to feed and clothe, and they were just as poverty stricken as other Texas families were after the end of the Civil War. What the Union Army had left them was later taken over by the bush-wackers and carpet-baggers of the Reconstruction days of the impoverished South.

The small colony of German People at Little Cypress, as well as those living at, what was then called Rose Hill, along the south banks of Spring Creek, did not neglect their religion. They banded themselves together and established Salem Lutheran Church at Rose Hill, a community near Tomball, Texas. They called a certain Mr. Zimmerman to be the Pastor of their congregation. It was by this pastor that my father was baptised and confirmed in the Lutheran Faith. Shortly after his confirmation, the small group of Germans who had settled along the banks of Little Cypress Creek, in the year of 1876, built their own church, which is known today as St. John's Lutheran Church.

In the group of Pommeranians which settled along the banks of Little Cypress Creek we find such family names as: Bahrs, Raths, Zahns, Juergens, Lieders, Kitzmanns, Krahns, Muellers, Quades, Teskes, etc. The Land Records of Harris County, in the Courthouse of Houston, Texas, show that Grandfather Carl Wilhelm Bahr homesteaded 320 acres on Little Cypress Creek. The Patent, however, was not issued to him, but to his heirs on August 25, 1868.

There were no schools in the country at that time. My father's childhood education consisted of a six-months course of religious instruction in the Bible and the Lutheran Catechism. And this instruction was received by means of the German Language. Not long after his confirmation, he and his brother, Julius, went to Houston, where they apprenticed themselves to a Mr. Heard, who operated a blacksmith and wagon shop on the south banks of Buffalo Bayou, near the foot of South Main Street. Uncle Julius learned blacksmithing and my father became a wheel-wright. During their first year of apprenticeship, the two brothers received only board and room. During the second year they received board, room, and clothes. During the third year they were given, besides board, room and clothes, also a dollar day in

wages. After three years of apprenticeship, they received the going wage, which was then $3.00 a day.

It was about at this time, in 1879, that Trinity Lutheran Congregation of Houston, Texas was organized. The first church was located on Louisiana Street, about two blocks west of Preston Avenue. After its organization, my father had his membership with St. Johns Church at Little Cypress transferred to Trinity Lutheran Church, of which congregation he remained a member until he left Houston for Klein, Texas in 1885.

While in Houston, my father and Uncle Julius had occasion to visit with some people they knew at Spring, Texas. Spring was a railroad station on the International and Great Northern Railroad, some twenty-five miles to the north of Houston. Their friends in Spring were William and Eli Lemm. It was through this acquaintanceship with the Lemm brothers that my father became acquainted with my mother, then Miss Caroline Klein. Her parents lived in a community some six miles to the west of Spring, Texas. This community was then known as Klein, Texas. A group of German immigrants, most of them from Swabia in south Germany, such as: the Klenks, Zwinks, Kuehnlies, Kleins, Krimmels, Bernshausens, Benignusses, Hildebrandts, etc. Sprinkled among these settlers were also some immigrants from Prusua, Saxony, and Hesse, such as the Wunderlichs, Stracks, Doerres, Franks, Theisses, Roths and many others too numerous to mention.

The post office in the community was called Klein, Texas. It was located and managed by the owner of the Will Blackshear country store, which was then about three-fourths of a mile west of Trinity Lutheran Church, on what is now known as the Spring-Cypress Road. When the Rural Free Delivery was instituted by the Federal Post Office Department, the Klein Post Office was closed, and the Klein community now gets its mail through the Post Office at Spring, Texas. An uncle of mine, Mr. Charley Klein, became the first Rural Route Carrier of Route One in the Spring-Klein communities. He carried the mail on this route for more than thirty years.

William Lemm was a suitor of one of my mother's sisters, Miss Charlott Klein, at the time that my father and Uncle Julius had occasion to visit with the Lemm brothers. It was because of this fact that my father became acquainted with the Klein family. He fell in love with Miss Caroline and she with him. The marriage was solemnized in Trinity Lutheran Church of Klein, Texas by The Reverent August Wilder, on the 26th day of April, 1883. Witnesses at my parents' wedding were given on the aged and mutilated marriage certificate as Johan Klein, Julius Bahr, Ida Zahn, and Sophie (Somebody), the name had been totally oblitterated on the aged document.

John Klein who was a witness to my parents' wedding later married Miss Ida Zahn of Little Cypress. She was a daughter of Jacob Zahn and therefore my father's niece, and by her marriage she became my father's sister-in-law as well. For that reason she was my cousin as well as my aunt.

After his marriage, my father lived in Houston with his young bride, for my mother was only about seventeen and a half years of age at the time of her wedding. Their home in Houston was a rented house, located in the 1st Ward near the Old Water Stand-Pipe just north of Buffalo Bayou. There in that home in Houston I was born on March 6 in the year of 1884. It was a little over a month later that I was baptized in Trinity Lutheran Church, which was then located on Louisiana Street. My Baptismal Certificate states that my baptism was performed on April 20, 1884, by Pastor Gotthold Kuehn. The sponsors were my maternal grandparents, Adam and Friedericke Klein, and Peter and Johanna Arverson, friends and neighbors of my parents. My name on my Baptismal Certificate is recorded as, "Eduart Otto Bahr." Since my parents called me Otto, I have reversed the order, and I sign my name Otto Edward Bahr.

II

MY MOTHER'S FAMILY

My mother's father, Adam Klein, was born in south Germany, then known as Swabia, in the Kingdom of Wuertemberg. His hometown was Stutgard. My grandmother, Friedericke Klenk Klein, was also born in Stutgard. They came to the United States of America as the aftermath of a revolutionary movement in Germany which took place in the year of 1848. My grandfather was involved in this revolution. It was the same revolution in which Carl Schurtz, later the great American Statesman, had participated during his University days. When the revolution was surpressed, both Schurtz and Klein and hundreds of others had to flee Germany in order to escape arrest and imprisonment. Both Klein and Schurtz fled to America. My grandfather arrived in 1849; Carl Schurtz came over in 1852.

My grandfather had fled, first to nearby Switzerland. From there he made his way into France to the harbor city of Brest. From Brest he wrote to Miss Friedericke Klenk, to whom he was bespoken, that he intended to leave Brest some time for America on a sailing vessel and that, if she were minded to go along with him as his wife, she should meet him in Brest at a certain time.

Miss Klenk accepted his proposal and met him in Brest. She did this despite the advice she received from her parents in Stutgard, who were wealthy people. Grandfather Klein must also have been well to do, for he engaged passage for both of them on a certain sail ship, which was headed for Baltimore, Maryland. They were married by the Captain of that sailing vessel on the high sea. However, the ship did not reach its intended destination. A great hurricane blew it far off from its course and almost wrecked the ship. It was three months before land was sighted. When at last the ship's anchor was dropped and a landing was made, the passengers and crew learned that their ship had missed the mainland of America altogether. They had landed on the shores of Cuba, with most of them suffering from Scorbut and other diseases caused by foul water and malnutrition. In Cuba the Captain and crew somewhat repaired the damages wrought by the storm and renewed their food and water supply. After the crew and passengers of the ship had to some extent recovered their health and strength by the use of fresh vegetables and citrus fruit in their diet, the Captain made the announcement to his passengers that he would not undertake to continue his journey to Baltimore with his ship in the condition in which the storm had left it, but that he would set sail for a much nearer port, namely that of New Orleans, Louisiana, and that his passengers could choose either to continue with him to that port or else leave the ship and disembark at Cuba and there find a ship to take them to Baltimore. Grandfather Klein and his bride chose to go to New Orleans with the crippled ship and try their fortunes there.

At New Orleans, grandfather was told that many German immigrants had sailed up the Mississippi River for St. Louis, Missouri, and had settled there. It was at this time that grandmother remembered that some of her relatives, some other Klenks, that had gone to America and had located on Hermann, Missouri. As a result of this information, grandfather engaged passage for himself and his bride on a River Steamer for St. Louis, Missouri. At St. Louis they boarded another steamboat which plied the Missouri River, for Hermann, Missouri, some sixty miles to the west of St. Louis.

Hermann, Missouri was a town settled by a colony of Germans. This colony had obtained a special charter from the State of Missouri, which permitted them not only to make their own laws and regulations but also to carry on all legal business in the German language. However, when my grandparents at last arrived in Hermann, they found that the German colony there was a group of so-called Free Thinkers: Atheists, who did not believe in God. These people had, in agreement with their convictions, passed a regulation which forever forbade the establishment of a church in Hermann and clergymen were forever barred from dwelling or preaching in that town. It is understandable that this provision did not please my grandparents, for they were believing Christians and they made up their minds not to locate in Hermann permanently.

Now in 1849, the "Gold Fever" was at its height in America. Nearly every American craved to travel to Sutter's Mill in California and there dig for gold. Grandfather Klein was also infected by this fever. So he left grandmother at Hermann, where she had found employment as a maid in the home of a wealthy colonist, and going up the Missouri River to Independence, Missouri, he paid $95.00 for the privilege of joining a so-called "Wagon Train" which was headed for the gold fields of California. He purchased his own riding horse and was engaged as a scout and meat-hunter. The "Wagon Train" soon after was on its way, first to St. Joe, Missouri, where the River was crossed into Kansas, and thence west through Kansas, Colorado, and other western states, to Donner Pass, and Sutters Creek, across the high Sierra Mountains between Nevada and California. After many weeks of travel, privation, hard labor, and skirmishings with hostile Indians, the Wagon Train at last reached its goal.

Soon after this grandfather Klein staked his own placer claim, which he worked with much success. He did not only find much gold, but also, he found a buyer for his claim who offered him such a good price that he decided to sell it, so that he might return to his young wife at Hermann, Missouri. After the deal had been consumated, he, together with other successful gold seekers, set out for home. They took their way through Olt Mexico on horseback, with their precious gold dust stored safely in their saddle bags. All went well until they reached Mexico City. There they stayed overnight in a hostelry. They ate their supper and soon after prepared for a good nights sleep. They spread their blankets on the floor, for there were no beds, and with their saddle bags under their heads for pillows, they soon fell asleep. So deep was their sleep that they did not awake at sunrise in the early morning. It was nearly noon when at last they awoke and found their saddle bags and gold dust gone with the wind. They surmised that someone must have doped their coffee, but to accuse someone of this they did not dare, for it would have meant shooting and killing in a strange land and city where they had no friends to help them. Luckily, grandfather had not deposited all of his wealth in his saddle bags. While in California he had purchased a broad and soft handmade money belt from a Chinaman. Into this belt he had placed the gold coins which he had received for his claim, together with a number of the larger and odly-shaped gold nuggets, which he had found while working his claim. All totaled, about six thousand dollars worth which the thieves had not discovered on him. Grandfather Klein wisely said nothing about his money belt to anyone.

My report on grandfather's further trip through Mexico is somewhat in doubt. From my mother's account, it appears that my grandfather returned overland, hiring out to a cattle drover, who gathered herds of long-horn steers in northern Mexico and southwestern Texas, and drove them northward in the spring of the year through the

vast prairies of Texas, Indian Territory, and Kansas, grazing and fattening them on the way, to sell them in the fall of the year on the hoof to the United States Government for distribution to the various Indian Tribes, who since the depletion of the Buffalo Herds, were usually starving in the cold winters of the plain states and territories. After the cattle drover had disposed of his herds, he paid off his help and returned to Texas to gather more herds for the coming of the next spring. Grandfather, after he had received his wages, made his way to Kansas City, Missouri, and from thence down the Missouri River to Hermann, Missouri, where grandmother was waiting for him. After the reunion in Hermann, the young couple did not waste much time but they left for St. Louis, where they took passage on a River Steamboat for New Orleans, Louisiana. There they boarded a coast-wise sailing vessel for Galveston, Texas. In Galveston they changed to another sailboat, which brought them through Galveston Bay northward and up Buffalo Bayou to the head of tide-water, which was approximately at the foot of the present Main Street in Houston, Texas.

A cousin of mine, however, has told me that his father, my mother's oldest brother, had told him that Grandfather Klein had returned from Mexico City after the robbery there had taken place via Vera Cruze overland, and thence by a costal vessel to New Orleans, where he had sent and waited for grandmother's return down from Hermann, Missouri to New Orleans by river steamer. I have no way of determining which one of the two accounts is correct. However, I do know that Grandfather Klein, in some way, had learned of the opportunities waiting in Texas, for people who wanted to establish a farm home of their own.

Hearsay has it that when Grandfather Klein landed at the foot of Main Street in Houston, which was then but a mudhole of a village on Buffalo Bayou, he was importuned to locate there. He had learned the weaver's trade in Germany, and the townpeople of Houston offered to set up a loom for him, on which he was to weave jeans and hickory shirting for local consumption. However, grandfather had come to Texas to establish a farm home. A farm was offered him on the edge of Houston, comprising what is now some of the highest priced property on South Main Street, for only one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre. However, he did not accept that offer either, but he went out into northern Harris County, into the poor, sandy prairie, between Big Cypress and Willow Creeks, and there, as the Harris County Land Records show, he bought 160 acres from a James More, on which he established his homestead. Later on he purchased an additional 640 acres of timberland north of Big Cypress Creek from the De Lesteniers Estate. He was one of the first settlers of the community, therefore that settlement was called Klein, Texas. Though the Post Office has long been removed from the community, it is even today spoken of as

the Klein Community; and the Fine Consolidated School, located just a little west and north of his homestead, is called after his name.

Grandfather Klein raised a family of seven children. They were according to age, Mary, John, Charlott, Caroline, Bertha, Adam, and Charley. Grandfather prospered on his farm. He erected and operated the first grist-mill and cotton gin in the community. At first, these were driven by horse power. My mother told me that she and her sisters spent many a half day, sitting on the long boom to which the horses or mules were hitched, driving them around and around in a circle, to furnish the power for the gin, or the grist-mill. Some years later, grandfather installed a steam engine to do this work. Many an hour of my boyhood days was spent sitting in the cool shade of the gin-house, watching the giant fly-wheel of the steam engine with its great belt spinning the saws of the gin which pulled the lint from the seed of the freshly picked, snow white cotton, which the community farmers brought there. Saturdays were the Grist-Mill days. Rider after rider converged on grandfather's place on those days, with a large bag of corn tied on behind the saddle, to be ground between the two great mill-stones into the most fragrant smelling white or yellow cornmeal, which in turn furnished our homes with heavenly smelling cornbread or corn fritters. The meal which was not used for bread or pancakes was cooked into a hearty evening meal of mush, which was eaten with milk in the evening, or else poured into a flat platter to be cut into long strips and fried brown on both sides for a breakfast that would really stick to a fellow's ribs. I have been told that grandfather purchased the steam engine for his cotton gin and grist-mill in New Orleans, after the Civil War had been fought and lost by the Confederacy.

During the Civil War, grandfather was conscripted by the Southern Army to serve the cause of the South by weaving hickory shirting and jeans to supply the material for the Confederated Army Uniforms. He was provided with a loom and with the raw material for the weaving and he was given a certain quota to weave day after day, until the war at last came to an ignominious end. His pay was in Confederate paper money, which was almost worthless long before the war was lost.

Grandfather Klein, in the meantime, kept the farm going and the home fires burning. My mother told me that they had little more to eat during the summer months than garden sass and mush and milk. The vegetables were seasoned with rank side-meat out of the family smokehouse. In the winter time, the fare was better for then a beef would be killed occasionally, and fat hogs for fresh roast, steaks and homemade sausages. Also in the fall and winter months, prairie chicken, duck, and wild geese were shot and quail were trapped for a change in diet.

How worthless the Confederate paper money was at the time can be seen from an instance in grandmother's farm experience. One summer the watermelon crop turned out extra well. Needing some groceries, such as sugar and flour, she hauled a wagon load of watermelons to Houston. She received $200.00 in Confederate money for the load. Then she went to the grocer and bought a 49-pound sack of wheat flour, for which she had to pay $200.00 in Confederate currency. She had a heavy load for the horses to pull to Houston, but on the way home the load was so light that the horses could trott most of the way.

Being staunch Lutherans from south Germany, my grandparents on mother's side soon became concerned about church connections. They wanted religious instruction of their children in the Lutheran faith. The only true Lutheran Church in Harris County, Texas at the time was Salem Lutheran Congregation at Rose Hill, a short distance south of Spring Creek and a little over a mile north and west of a town now known as Tomball, Texas. There was a church in Houston at the time which called itself a Lutheran Church, which was served by a certain Pastor Braun, but this church was in fact an Evangelical Reformed Congregation. The Lutheran Congregation at Rose Hill had been founded in 1852 and was affiliated with the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other states, which had been founded by Dr. Ferdinand Walther and other orthodox Lutheran theologicans at Chicago, Illinois in 1847.

Salem Lutheran Church was about nine miles to the northwest of the Klein community. There were no graded roads in Harris County at that time. The roads leading from one community to the other were little more than cow-trails, which wandered along the higher ground, through the open prairies. During the fall, winter, and spring months, these roads were often impassable to wagon travel because of the bottomless mud. Yet, grandfather and his family affiliated themselves with Salem Lutheran Congregation. They attended the services as often as the weather and the roads permitted them to do so. Often, when the roads were impassable for wagon travel, the family rode to church on horseback.

All the Klein children, with the exception of my mother, were baptized in Salem Lutheran Church. My mother, Caroline Klein, was not expected to live at the time of her birth and therefore had received emergency baptism at the hands of her father. (It is a strange coincidence that she, however, outlived all her sisters and brothers, who were born healthy and strong.) The older Klein children also received their religious instruction at the hands of Pastor Zimmerman of Salem Lutheran Church.

However, after a number of years, because of the distance involved, and the often times impassable roads, my grandparents, together

with their neighbors, which had greatly increased in numbers during the years, went about to establish a Lutheran congregation of their own, and to build their own church. Some of these neighbors were the Wunderlichs, Theisses, Kaisers, Klenks, Zwinks, Hildebrandts, Kuehnlies, Krimmels, Mittlesteads, Stracks, Benfers, Roths, Benignusses, Strohheckers, Kreinhops, Brills, Franks, Strehlaus, Feuses, Holzwarts, Hofiuses, and others.

I was told that Grandfather Klein corresponded with Pastor Kilian of the Wendisch Lutheran Congregation of Serbin, in Lee County, Texas, as well as with Dr. Ferdinand C. Walther in St. Louis, Missouri, in matters pertaining to the constitution of the congregation, as well as for a suitable list of candidates, together with their qualifications, from which list the congregation about to be organized was to choose and call a pastor of its own. The end result of all this correspondence of grandfather and his Lutheran neighbors was the establishment of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Klein, Texas. The organization took place in the year 1874. The first called pastor of the congregation was The Reverend J. M. Maisch. His term of office was very short. His successor was Pastor August Wilder. Under his able leadership the young congregation flourished.

Soon after, the members of Trinity Church also established a Lutheran Day School. A call was sent to Synods Board of Distributions, and it assigned a young graduate of Concordia Teachers College at Addison, Illinois to the congregation. He was a Mr. - - - Daenzer. He also did not remain in Klein for many years. He was called away by Holy Cross Congregation of Warda, in Lee County, Texas. Teacher Daenzer, though I do not remember his given name, was my teacher for one term. Teacher Daenzer was succeeded by another graduate of our Teachers College at Addison, a Mr. Rudolph Lorenz, under whose tutelage I completed my grade school education. However, grade school is a misnomer, for at the time I went to school, there were no grades. There was the Primer Class for beginners, then the First Reader Class, the Second Reader, the Third Reader, the Fourth Reader, the Fifth Reader classes, but no eight grades as we have them today.

The language used was not English, but German. We had no English instruction at all, until in the third school year, when English reading was added during the afternoon period. I got no further than the Third Reader in English. I learned to read well enough but had no idea of the meaning of the English words. In fact, I was unable to speak any English at all until I was about eleven years old. The little English I was able to speak, I had picked up from the Negro farmhands which my parents employed from time to time, and their English was not any too good.

Just to give you an idea of what a handicap it was for us German children to do business with English people, let me give you this example. My mother was putting up "Senf Gurken," mustard pickles one day and in doing so, she ran out of ground mustard. She sent me on horseback to Blackshear's store some two and a half miles away to get her a new supply. When I got to the store and Mr. Blackshear asked me what I wanted, I could not translate the German "Senf" into English. However, I saw the jars of ground mustard neatly stacked on his store shelves and printed on the jars in bold letters I read the trade name, which was, "Coleburns Mustard." Reading the first word and remembering that mustard belonged to the cabbage family and that the ground seed burned on the tongue, I jumped to the conclusion that the German word "Senf" meant Coleburns in English, for cabbage in German is called Kohl. And so I answered the storekeeper on his question, "What is it that you want?" "I want a bottle of Coleburns." "What is that?" asked Mr. Blackshear. I was stumped for a minute, then I went behind the counter and with my finger pointed at the jar of ground mustard. "O," said Mr. Blackshear, "it is a jar of ground mustard that you want," and he smiled to himself as he said it. But, I am digressing.

To continue about my account of what I was taught in the grade school, let me add that the only other subjects that were taught me in Trinity Lutheran School by means of the English language was a half hour, once a week, in writing English. Usually we were told to write a paragraph or two from the lesson we had in reading that day. And one half hour on Friday afternoon was devoted to the study of geography. I suppose they could not get geographies in the German language, otherwise we would have been taught that also by the medium of the German language. All our thinking and speaking, even our arithmetic and the multiplication table, and all our religious instructions in Bible and Catechism, were given us in the German tongue.

To this day I am a poor speller, because in the German language the words are spelled as they sound and words of a short sound have the consonants doubled. This is not always done in English. What helped me a lot in the learning of the language of our country was this, that my father joined with other German neighbors of ours in engaging public school teachers to teach summer school for two or three months for us German boys and girls. The public school in the Klein Community was located in the Piney Woods to the south and a little east of the Ernest Kaiser farmhome. At that time the school was open only six months a year. The teachers were usually local young women: the Blackshear daughters, Edna and Alma, and Polly McDouggl. They were only too glad to earn a little something extra through the summer months. They were willing to teach summer school if some thirty pupils could be found who were willing and able to pay a dollar a month in tuition.

In this summer school we were taught, not only reading and writing but also arithmetic, geography, spelling, elementary grammar, and even a little physiology. We just loved our summer school, and since also some English people sent their children to this summer school, it was but natural that our English speaking also improved to quite an extent.

In the Lutheran School, we children were kept under a very strict discipline. Boys and girls were ruled under the rod. Fighting, cursing, lying, and other disrespectful behavior was treated always, though not always cured, by the application of the switch or the pig-skin riding whip. Some of the boys received their licking without missing a day. In consequence thereof, we had no juvenile delinquency in those days. Outside of swiping a watermelon now and then from the neighbor's patch, or of smoking grapevine, or cornhusk cigarettes behind the barn, there was little that was reprehensible among us teenagers. We were of course by no means in the angel class. At heart we were as corrupt as any, but by good discipline both at home and in school, we were kept from the coarse outbursts of wickedness, which is at the present time so much in evidence. In my life and experience the biblical addage of "Spare the rod and spoil the child" has been well proven.

Trinity Lutheran Church and School, from a humble beginning, have by the grace of Our Heavenly Father, grown to wonderful proportions. The congregation at the present time (1958) numbers more than 500 communicants and more than 700 baptized members. This, in spite of the fact that about half of the young people leave the farm of their parents and seek employment in Houston. The services, which at the beginning were conducted entirely in the German language, are now held altogether in the English tongue. The same is true of the school: all teaching is done in English. The congregation is worshipping today in its third church building. After using its first church building for school purposes as well, the congregation has since that time built two new schools. Both the present church, as well as the school, are of brick veneer construction. Also the third parsonage, constructed last year, is modern in every respect. The congregation employs two male and one lady teacher in the school. The Sunday School is being taught by 19 trained teachers and has an enrollment of 370 pupils. The Adult Bible Class numbers 191 pupils. The property value of the congregation is listed at $175,000.00. The annual budget for church and school is in excess of $35,000.00.

I consider it a great personal loss that Grandfather Klein died so early in his life. He passed away suddenly while planting cotton, about a quarter of a mile to the east of his home. It was in the week before Easter that he died, on March 31, 1891. Easter was the time for the Klein children to gather at grandfather's home for the annual

family reunion. And so it came about, that on the very day all of his children, with the exception of his son Adam who was then attending Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, Missouri, were gathered at his home. Uncle Charley Klein, the youngest of the family, was helping grandfather in the field and so was a Negro hired hand, and these two witnessed grandfather's collapse. The Negro believed that the mule, hitched to the one row cotton planting machine, had kicked grandfather. However, there was no mark on grandfather's body.

While Uncle Charley stayed with grandfather's body in the field, the hired hand ran to the house to get more help. I remember the incident as plainly as though it had happened today. A number of us children were playing in the yard when he made his report to Aunt Lottie Lemm and Aunt Bertha Wunderlich. These two had come home by train to Cypress Top, the Railroad Station on the Houston Texas Central Railroad. Aunt Lottie from Brenham, Texas, where her husband William Lemm was a weigh-master for the Cotton Seed Oil Company, and Aunt Bertha had come home on the same railway line from Perry, Texas, in Falls County, where her husband Fred Wunderlich was pastor of a Lutheran congregation. My mother and children had driven over and so had Aunt Mary Doerre and most of her children, to help grandmother Klein with her baking and other preparations for Easter.

After the hired hand had made his report, he ran to grandfather's gin and got a long ladder and carried it into the field. He was accompanied by my mother and aunts, who carried quilts and blankets. By that time Uncle John arrived from his home just a little ways to the north of grandfather's homestead. They bedded grandfather on the ladder and then with his daughters walking at his side, they carried him home.

Mr. Schoor, a graduate barber from Germany, who also had received a course of training in first aid in the Old Country, had been called in the meantime. He examined grandfather, first by holding a piece of Harts-horn to his nose. This had the action of strong amonia and when applied to the nose caused violent sneezing in a living person. But grandfather did not sneeze. Next he used a mirror, which he applied to grandfather's nose, but it did not cloud over, which was proof that grandfather had ceased to breathe.

I can still see him in my mind's eye, looking up from his examination with tears in his eyes saying to the Klein children: "Euer Vater ist hinueber," in English, "Your father has gone beyond." O what a sad homecoming that was for the Klein children. They buried him in the Trinity Lutheran Cemetery just across the road from the very field in which he had been planting his cotton at the time of his death.

Grandfather's talents and capabilities had indeed been many and varied. He was a German Patriot, who together with others had tried, though failed, to reform his Fatherland. He was an adventurer who dared to come to America with his young bride, when America was little more than a vast wilderness. He was in turn a gold miner, an enterprising farmer, a weaver of cloth, a cotton grower and pioneer cotton ginner, a beloved husband and father, above all a humble child of God, concerned about his own eternal salvation and that of his children after him. God's blessing did not fail him and his children.

In his family and in the families of his children, we find Lutheran pastors and teachers galore. His own son, Adam Klein, for ten years a Lutheran pastor in Chattanooga, Tennessee, was sent in 1902 to be one of the first Missionaries of the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church in Brazil, South America. His last years were spent as President of Concordia Seminary at Springfield, Illinois.

Among his grandchildren we find not only Lutheran pastors and teachers, but also professors at our Lutheran colleges, an LL. D. at the Deaf and Dumb Institute of our church at Detroit, Michigan. Other grand and great grandchildren are lawyers, medical doctors, dentists, merchants, market masters, farmers, undertakers, florists, mayors, justices of the peace. Indeed, the memory of grandfather and grandmother Klein is all in all honorable, and it will live in Harris County, Texas, history for years to come.

Grandmother Klein outlived her husband by some twenty-one years. She died on December 14, 1912. She also was buried in Trinity Lutheran Cemetery. Grandmother was 84 years of age when she passed away. I recall at this point that grandfather had the first bought coffin in the community at his burial and also the first marble shaft to mark his grave. Grandmother does not lie beside her husband. Family lots were not used in the graveyard at that time. But at present, even Trinity Lutheran burial place provides family plots for such as want to be buried in family groups.

The children of grandfather and grandmother Klein all outlived their parents. Uncle John Klein was married to Miss Ida Zahn of Little Cypress, not long after my parents had been married. Aunt Mary, the oldest Klein daughter, was married to a Mr. Klenk, and some time after his death she was re-married to a Mr. Edward Doerre. Aunt Charlott married William Lemm of Spring, Texas. Miss Caroline was married to my father, Mr. Fred Bahr of Houston. Aunt Bertha married Pastor Fred Wunderlich of Perry, in Falls County, Texas, now known as Riesel. Uncle Adam Klein, a Lutheran pastor, married Miss Hermine Schoor of Klein, Texas. And Uncle Charley Klein, the

youngest of the Klein children, married Miss Mary Mueller of Klein, Texas.

My grandmother, after grandfather's death, lived for a number of years on the homestead. Uncle Charley helped her in running the farm. This arrangement was kept up until Uncle Charley was married. Grandmother stayed on, even after his marriage; but with two women in the household things did not work out so well, so grandmother wisely retired. After that, she lived with her oldest daughter in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Eduart Doerre. With the exception of frequent visits in the homes of her other children, she spent the remainder of her life in the Doerre home. She was almost totally blind for six years before she died. She had cataracts on both of her eyes.

I do not know what she did with her share in the Klein Homestead. I do know, however, that Uncle Charley owned it in the end. He wasn't much of a farmer. In the end he had to sell the Klein Homestead. The last I know of its history is that it was farmed and owned by a brother-in-law of my Uncle Charley, Anton Mueller by name. The six hundred odd acres of timberland were given to the children by grandfather before he died. All but 100 acres of it which grandmother, during the depression years of the Eighteen Nineties, sold to my father for $5.00 an acre. It is this tract of timberland that my dad divided and deeded to his sons in 1937.

III

MY PARENTS' FAMILY

As stated in a previous paragraph, my parents at first lived in Houston, Texas where I was born. Soon after my birth, my mother and her folks persuaded my father and Uncle Julius to leave Houston and to open a blacksmith and wagon shop of their own in Klein. In consequence of this move, the two brothers opened their shop a quarter of a mile west of the Will Blackshear Store and the Klein Post Office. They rented the shop building from a Mr. Jacob Strack, who was at the time a saw miller in the Klein community and had operated a small blacksmith shop in connection with his saw mill. There also was a small farm connected with the shop, which my mother with the help of a farm hand, operated. Here my oldest brother, John Frederick, was born on the 17th day of February, 1886.

Soon after my father and Uncle Julius Bahr had located their shop in the Klein community, Uncle Julius was married to Miss Mary

Bender of Spring, Texas. She was the daughter of a saw miller in the Spring and Willis, Texas communities. Uncle Julius and his bride lived in a small shanty, just east of the Will Blackshear store. About two years after my brother Fred's birth, Uncle Julius and my father dissolved their partnership. Why this was done I was never told, but no doubt it was due to the fact that at that time there was not enough business in the community to support two families. Uncle Julius moved to Spring, Texas, where he went to work as a mill blacksmith in his father-in-law's saw mill. His father-in-law prospered and Uncle Julius stayed in the employment of the Bender Saw Mills until he retired shortly before his death.

My memories of dad's shop on the Jake Strack's place are very faint. However, there are a few outstanding recollections. One incident which I have never forgotten concerned a beehive, which Mr. Strack had left in the garden, no doubt because it was too dangerous to move to his new location for the saw mill, which at that time he erected in the woods to the west and south of the Big Cypress Creek. One evening just before dusk, I stood before that hive with a small switch in my hand. I struck at the late-comers as they entered the hive. This game of mine, however, did not last long. With an angry buzzing the swarm of bees lighted upon me and I was still wearing dresses at that time. The bees got into my hair, into my face, under my dress and just everywhere. My shrieks of pain brought mother and dad to me and they, too, got stung up until at last they got me into the house and into a tub of water to rid me of the bees and to pull out the stingers which the bees invariably leave in their victims.

Another instance which is still vivid in my mind is the open window towards the shop that Fred and I were looking out of. In those days windows were not hung on cords and pulleys to easily open and close to any desired position. If one wanted them open, a stick had to be placed under the opening. While brother Fred and I were thus hanging over the window sill, one or the other of us in some manner knocked out the stick which held the window up, and down the window came. In some manner I got my head and neck clear, but brother Fred was not quick enough and so the window fell down squarely across his neck. There he was trapped and squalling as loud as he could, so loud in fact that both mother and dad came rushing, mother from the cotton-field and dad from the shop, to see what all the commotion was about.

Soon after my father and Uncle Julius had dissolved their partnership, my father bought 320 acres of land west and north of Trinity Lutheran Church. This tract of land was out in the open prairie a half mile north of the old Henry Theiss homestead. There was not a tree or fence post on the entire tract. It was bald, raw prairie land. After my dad and Uncle Adam Bahr had built a two-room shanty on the

spot which did had chosen to build his new home on, we moved into it. I remember the trip well, that we made in a covered wagon, to our new shanty. There was no road to it. Dad just drove through the open prairie, around ponds, over sandy knolls, through water-filled sloughs, until at last the new unpainted shanty had been reached.

A well had already been dug and bricked out, but so far there was no well house to cover it and no rigging for a chain and water bucket. Just a winch straddled the open well which had been used to hoist the buckets of clay and sand as the well was dug. Dad had fastened a water bucket to the rope, wound around the winch, which we lowered by letting the winch-handle revolve until enough rope had been paid out to reach the surface of the water in the well. When this bucket had filled, we turned the handle of the winch around and around until the bucket surfaced over the well top. Then we released the ratchet of the winch to hold the bucket whilst we reached out and drew it to the curbing of the well to empty it. Primitive, indeed, that arrangement to have a water supply, when compared to the present pressure systems in use of even the humblest farmhome, with its handy hot and cold water faucets above the kitchen sink.

Our water supply in the kitchen was kept in a red cedar, brass-bound wooden bucket. The cedar wood gave the water a pungent but pleasant flavor, which I can still relish in my mind. My parents had brought enough furniture along in that covered wagon to furnish the two-room shanty. Only one of the rooms had a floor in it. The other was to be the future smoke-house of the new home. The room with the floor was to be the servants' quarter of the future. The smoke-house part of the shanty had a floor made of stamped clay covered with white sand. Dad put up the kitchen stove in this unfloored room. Also a home-made table and a few benches besides a few rawhide hickory chairs. In the room with the floor, he placed a double bed, a chest of drawers, a few chairs and a wooden chest to hold the clothes which mother had brought along. The rest of our furniture was left in the Jake Strack home to be moved after the new home dad and Uncle Adam were building would be finished.

In the meantime, my mother, Fred and I slept in the large double bed while dad and Uncle Adam slept on a mattress in the covered wagon bed. Later on, when the barn had been built, they slept in one of the two crib rooms of the new barn. There also the rest of the furniture was hauled from the Jake Strack home and stored until such time that our new home would be finished. This home, at the time, was not only the equal of any of the homes of the community, but it was far better in many respects. It contained four spacious rooms, as well as a closed stairway to the floored attic, but also an eight-foot hallway, running all the way through the house, from north to south,

opening to an eight foot covered porch on the south and an eight by eight foot portico on the north side of the house. Both north and south walls of the hall were equipped with narrow side windows and half glassed in the doors to admit the daylight into the hall. This hall was used as dining room in the summer time. All outside windows and doors were also furnished with screen doors and half-way window screens, something that was totally unknown in older homes, which had been erected before fly screens were manufactured.

The construction of the home was of the very best--all-heart, yellow pine, sawed and planed by the Jake Strack Saw Mill located south of Big Cypress Creek. Besides the north and south doors, there also was a wooden door from the kitchen in the northwest corner of the house. This door opened to the west and also led to an eight by eight foot portico, with a side walk of brick leading to the well house and fruit and wine room that had been built over the well to the northwest of the home.

In this new home, my other brothers and sisters were born in the course of years. My sister Estella Leonore was the first to be born in the new home. She lived for only seven years, when she died of what the doctor called inflamation of the lower bowels; no doubt, it was appendicities. The country physicians of that day were able to diagnose malaria and dengue fever, and they knew how to set broken bones and to prescribe calomel and quinine, but of intestinal surgery they knew little, or nothing. Leonore, as we called her, took sick on a Sunday night. The family doctor was called and he made two visits; and on his second call, he gave her a dose of calomel. When Fred and I awoke on the next morning, we were taken into my parents' bedroom and there we were shown our first death in the family: sister Leonore lying pale and cold under a white sheet, with coins lying on her closed eye-lids to keep them from opening. For at that time morticians were unheard of in the country communities of Texas.

My father had been the coffin builder of the community for a number of years; there was no other in the neighborhood. So it was up to him and my Uncle Adam Bahr to make the coffin. Speaking of this on a later occasion, I heard him say that doing this was the hardest task he had to perform in his lifetime. Not enough that he had to build the coffin for my sister, but he had to build another one for a little playmate of my sisters who died on the next day, after sister Leonore had died. It was the second oldest daughter of Pastor and Mrs. J. C. Jabker who died of diptheria, for which also there was no safe remedy known to the country doctors of that time. Three more children were born to my parents in that new home. They were according to age: Gertrude Anne, Carl Adam, and Lorenz Herman. I know only that Gertrude was born on March the first, but not the year of her birth. The birthdays of brothers Carl and Lorenz are unknown to me.

It took several years before dad and Uncle Adam Bahr had put up all the many other buildings on our farmhome. The building operations were frequently halted by the demands of the neighbors, who brought their old wagons, ploughs, and other farming tools to dad's shop for service and repairs. Also, dad was trying to get the farm going. That meant that the prairie land had to be broken up with a great breaking plow pulled by several yoke of oxen. After the land lay fallow during the summer months, it had to be replowed in the fall and winter, the roots of the wild Myrtle which abounded in the prairie had to be gathered, often to be torn out of the newly plowed land by all the strength at one's command. These roots were gathered and piled by my mother, brother Fred, and myself. It was a job that Fred and I learned to hate.

Far more pleasant, than to gather and to pile the roots, was the task to burn them. This was usually done during the long fall and winter evenings. After the roots had been piled and burnt, the ground was bedded into huge rows. In the spring these rows were opened, fertilized, and planted to potatoes, corn, and cotton. While dad did his work in the shop, we boys and mother, and occasionally a Negro hand or two, did the planting, the hoeing, and the cultivating of the various crops.

Indeed Fred and I grew up between the plough-handles and behind the iron-toothed harrows of our farm; and later on, sitting on the seats of the mowing machines and the hay rakes, we helped to dig bushels and bushels of sweet and Irish potatoes. When these products were hauled to the old Farmer's Market on Preston and Travis Streets in Houston, the one, or the other of us boys were given the privilege to go along. We would leave home at about five o'clock in the afternoon with from thirty to forty bushels of potatoes in the wagon and after an eight-hour drive father would back up to the curb on the Preston street side of the market, just across from Study's and Weise's coffee shops. After we had spread our quilts on the covered sidewalk, we would snooze for an hour or two, and then at about four o'clock in the morning we would get up and go across the street for a cup of the finest coffee and a sweet bun at one of the two coffee shops. Both cost but a dime, and there was a generous pat of real butter always for the bun.

After the cup of coffee had chased the sleep from our eyes, we would return to the wagon and get ready for the, mostly Italian, hucksters to arrive. We called these wagon and cart-merchants Dagos at that time. They would crawl all over our wagons and feel the size of the potatoes through the burlap sacking. Then they would ask for and haggle over the price asked per bushel. The farmer who had the best looking products for the price that he asked usually sold out his load in a hurry.

Dad was always generous in his measure. He was also very particular in grading his potatoes when we sacked them. The sacks held one and a half bushels each. Every bushel was measured and shaken down, and before the sack was tied, two double handfuls of potatoes were added to the sack. On one of the trips to town, a Negro huckster wanted his potatoes weighed. To weigh them we had to drag them to a scale and have one of the merchants of the Market weigh them. He expected a tip for doing so. Dad said to the Negro, "You will be sorry for making the extra trouble and expense for me." But he insisted, saying he did not think the sacks held a full bushel and a half. He wanted three sacks. Dad carried the three sacks the Negro had chosen to the scale. The merchant did the weighing. The sack had to weigh ninety-one pounds, allowing for the weight of the burlap sack. The merchant looked at his scale and said, "one hundred pounds." The second sack weighed 98 pounds, and the third sack 99 pounds.

The Negro gave dad the price for four and a half bushels. But dad said, "Ah, no! There are 24 pounds overweight in those three sacks, for which you will either pay me or I will take the extra poundage out of one of the sacks. In the end, the merchant who weighed the potatoes got the extra 24 pounds of potatoes. After that incident, no one ever again doubted dad's measure. The Dagos had a good laugh at the expense of the Negro huckster as well.

There were times when we sold out in an hour's time, and also there were occasions when the market was glutted and some of the farmers would go to cutting prices so that we did not sell out all that we had brought along. When this happened, dad would drive to Henke and Pilott's grocery and sell the balance to Ed Heintze, the produce buyer and farmer's clerk of the store. That, of course, meant that dad had to take a discount from fifteen to twenty cents on each bushel.

We did not only haul potatoes to the Farmers Market in Houston, but during the winter months dad would butcher from three to four light hogs, or a couple of eight weeks old calves, or three or four fat lambs, and haul them to town and sell them to the butcher stalls in the market building. The prices were never too high in those times. During 1893 and 1894 many a load of potatoes was sold at the market for 35¢ a bushel, and what was not sold at the market was later in the day sold to Henke and Pilotts for 15¢ a bushel. Butchered hogs and calves brought 3¢ a pound at the butcher's stall in the market.

Before weighing the carcasses, the butcher would cut off the hogs' heads and feet. These, together with the heart and liver, were never included in the weight but neither could we keep these items for ourselves. We had to throw them in, but did not get paid for them. Of course everything else was cheap in those days also. We bought the

best brand of wheat flour at 90¢ for a 49 pound bag; sugar was sold at 25 pounds for a dollar; Arbuckle coffee sold at 12 pounds for a dollar; a pair of work shoes sold at $1.25. Calico sold at 6¢ for a yard. A man's dress suit cost $10.00. Cash money was as scarce as were hen's teeth; but we ate well. In those days, cattle drovers scoured the country, paying from eight to ten dollars a head. Sheep sold for 50¢ each, and fat goats brought as little as 25¢ each. Eggs sold for six to eight cents a dozen; three pound fryers brought three dollars per dozen, and country butter from eight to ten cents per pound.

However, this was to be a family history, not a market report. When dad was in Houston, he never failed to stop in at the Joseph F. Meyer hardware and wagon shop supply store. There he purchased the needed supplies for his blacksmith and wagon shop, such as naves or hubs, spokes, and fellows for the making of wagon wheels, and lengths of tire-iron, from which to build the tires for the wagon wheels. Also he would from time to time replenish his supply of blacksmiths coal for his forge, the various nuts and bolts needed for repairs of all sorts of farming tools, various sizes of plough-shares, iron harrow teeth, lengths of steel rods and band-iron to be used in his wagon building, etc. It would usually be ten or eleven o'clock in the forenoon before we would get to leave town.

On the way home, usually at Little White Oak, or else at Halls Bayou, a stop would be made to feed the team of mules and to prepare our own noon meal. We always carried the fat-pine knots in our wagon with which to build a campfire for cooking coffee and for frying the mess of scrambled eggs and country sausage, or else the meal of raw-sliced potatoes and onions stewed in a dutch oven with a little water and seasoned with salt and black pepper and a tablespoon of bacon drippings. Dad never cooked meals at home, but as a camp cook there was no one that equaled him. I can still in my mind savor the flavor of the fresh home-made, slightly smoked sausage. I am sure that this side of heaven I will never again taste any which was so flavorful and good, for sausage making on the farm has become a lost art since the time that the modern freezing plant butchering and processing has been introduced on the farm.

When I first began going to school, I had to walk three miles to and from school. The first mile I had to walk alone. At grandfather's home I was joined by Clara Doerre, my cousin and by Emma Koch, a red-headed girl, which grandmother had brought from Brenham, Texas on a visit there, to the William Lemm home. The girl had lost her mother and so grandmother took her in to bring her up. From grandfather Klein's home we walked through the piney woods to the William Blackshear store, where we were usually met by some other children

who were also walking to school. It took us about an hour and a half to make the trip. When it rained, dad or some uncle of mine would pick us up in a Spring-wagon and take us home.

By the time my brother Fred was of school age, dad bought a saddle pony from Uncle Charley Klein. His name was Sylum. Why he was called by that odd name I do not know. Dad bought him because he was safe, not because he was fleet. He was so safe that three or four of us could climb on his back without fear. He would just grunt at the weight, but he would never toss us off. We could walk around, yes, even under him, and he would never kick us or run over us.

But he had one bad habit. He would invariably puff himself up, when we saddled him, until the saddle girts had been tightened. As soon as this was done, he again deflated himself. When then we would try to mount, the saddle would slip around and we would have to re-saddle him.

Another bad habit was this: when he did not feel like being ridden, the whole family could not drive him into the barnyard. He would walk up sedately to the open barnyard gate and then he would lay his ears back, raise himself on his hind legs and wheel sharply around and gallop back into the pasture. It was useless to try to get him in after that for the rest of the day.

On such days, Fred and I had to walk to school while on other days, when he was available, we rode to school on his back: I in the saddle and brother Fred behind the saddle. When sister Leonore was of school age, dad built a kind of hack for us. He used the running gear of a so-called Concord Spring-wagon, to which he replaced the tongue by a pair of buggy shafts. Also, he equipped the wagon-bed with bows which he covered with light slats and over all this he stretched yards of heavy, black oilcloth, which he tacked down securely.

On bright sunny days we rolled up the back curtain and that permitted the air to circulate through the vehicle. On rainy days we lowered the back curtain and rode home snug and dry. But alass! This arrangement did not last long, for sister Leonore died during her first year in school. After her death, Fred and I rode to school again. We had to ride three miles to get to school. School lasted from nine o'clock in the morning to four in the afternoon. But in spite of the time and distance involved to get to and home again from school, Fred and I had to do our chores every morning and evening.

We rose in the morning at the crack of dawn, and in the wintertime even earlier, and we ate our supper after dark. We had to feed the chickens morning and evening, and husk the corn, and shell

it for that purpose. We had to husk the corn also for the feeding of the horses and the mules and the hogs. We had to fill the cribs of horses, mules, cattle and sheep with hay or corn tops. In the wintertime, we also had to husk and shell a bushel of corn to feed the sheep in narrow wooden troughs, and carry baskets full of nubbin ears of corn to the older and weaker of the cows. Indeed there was plenty to do for us farm boys. We never had any idle time on our hands during the school year.

Our Saturdays also were not spent in idleness. There always was some work to be done on the farm, such as harrowing the plowed ground in the spring of the year, or chopping the grass out of young corn or cotton. Later on in the spring, when the corn had been laid by, we had to hitch a mule before a sweep and break out the middles, which had been left by the cultivator in the middle of the furrow. When early summer had come, we helped to set out sweet potato slips, or we hauled water in a barrel on a sled up and down the rows to water the plants which had been set out so the hot sun would not shrivel them up before they took root and grew.

About once a month one or the other of us boys had to take corn to the grist-mill to be ground into corn meal for corncakes and corn-bread, or into cornchops for the spring hatch of chicks that mother raised to replenish the flock. At the time, when there was no cotton to gin, steam was gotten up just once a week to accommodate the farmer folk. As a consequence of this arrangement, everybody in the neighborhood in need of chicken feed or corn meal hurried to the grist-mill with a sack of shell-corn or two tied behind and in many instances also before the saddle.

Our home was about three miles from the nearest grist-mill. The owner was a Mr. Calvey on Willow Creek to the north and east of our home. We usually did not get to the mill until nine o'clock in the morning. By that time, there were thirty to forty sacks ahead of us. That meant that we had two or three hours to spend in any way that we saw fit. What was more logical for us boys of the neighborhood but to employ these idle hours at Willow Creek, just a few rods away, catching Goggle-eyed perch and catfish. In the fall and winter months, we would spend our leisure time in visiting nearby ponds and water holes to shoot wild ducks and geese.

O, what a time we boys had on that prairie farm of my dad's. We were awakened in the morning by the hooting of the Prairie Chicken that had roosted by the hundreds on our north rail fence. When the day dawned in the fall, winter and spring, we would see great vee-shaped flocks of wild ducks or geese flying from pond to pond, seeking feeding grounds. What fine eating these wild fowl provided for our dining

tables, and their down provided warm feather beds and pillows to keep our families warm in their beds in our unheated homes at night. My mother saved so many feathers from the ducks and geese that Fred and I shop that she was able to provide every bed in her home with the warmest feather beds and the fluffiest pillows imaginable. More than that, she had enough feathers left over to provide each of her children with all the feather beds they needed for their own homes in years to come. Then in late Spring, when ducks and geese had already left for their northern breeding grounds, our burnt-over prairies would be literally packed with great flocks of Golden Plover. It was no trick at all to shoot a dozen or more of these birds in an hour's time and they were the finest of eating, fried like chicken, or made into a savory sweet-sour stew. However, I am again digressing.

Before I go on with my Family History, I want to tell about a humorous happening which took place in our barnyard one day. It got my brother Fred into trouble. We had a muly ram in our flock of sheep. Brother Fred had teased this ram for weeks while feeding the sheep. The result of this teasing was that the ram would attack Fred whenever he turned his back to him. Fred knew this, of course, and so he would never turn his back to the ram unless he was close enough to the board fence surrounding the sheep pen. Then he would deliberately turn his back on the ram and wait until the ram lowered his head for the charge, when Fred would nimbly hop up the fence and the ram would hit the fence a resounding whack, instead of my brother.

One evening my father had occasion to do the feeding of the sheep and while he was in a stooping position, pouring the shell-corn into the trough, the ram no doubt considered his buttock a fine target and he butted dad so hard that he sprawled over the sheeps through spilling nearly all his corn. My mother witnessed this assault and she laughed until the tears came to her eyes. In the meantime dad picked himself up out of the slosh and mud, and just as he was about to get up on all fours, the ram hit his target a second time, and again dad hit the dirt. My mother nearly died laughing then and there. I don't know what all my father said, but he said a plenty as he too climbed the board fence. He knew, of course, what had happened to get the ram into such a fighting mood. For he had teased rams and billy-goats in the same manner when he was a boy and he had jokingly told us that one day.

It was in that way that Fred had begun his teasing of the ram. Dad was just about as sore at mother for laughing at him as he was at Fred and the ram. And mother's day came just a short time later. One day, when the sheep had been kept penned up for shearing them, in which work mother was an adept, she walked to the gate with the sheep she had just shorn to separate it from the unshorn ones and as she turned her back to the ram, he wasn't slow in taking advantage of the

situation. He hit mother so hard that she kissed the ground and when she got up and was about to flee for the fence and safety, she was not laughing at all and the ram hit her again, just as she reached for the fence. It had now become dangerous for any of us to walk through the sheep-pen. Dad sold the ram and warned the buyer never to turn his back on the ram, and to be sure to let no children get into the place where he was kept.

To return to my Family History, sometime after most of our farm buildings had been erected, my father sold about sixty acres of his land to Uncle Adam Bahr, who wanted a small farm of his own on which to raise his horse and cow feed and his garden truck, and most of all a place where he could work while he was not engaged as a carpenter. This sixty acres of Uncle Adam's joined our farmland on the east line. It is my understanding that Uncle Adam was deeded this land in lieu of wages earned by helping father to erect our farm buildings. No cash money was ever paid to father for this land sold to Uncle Adam Bahr. Dad had also sold some land before this to Oma Wunderlich, the mother and grandmother of all the Wunderlichs, who lived to the west and south of us on the edge of the piney woods. Dad sold her all the land in our tract that was west of the Theiss gully. She wanted that land for her son-in-law, Pastor Behnken and his wife.

Pastor Behnken, who had been the Pastor of the Lutheran churches at Little Cypress and Neu Dorf, had developed tuberculosis and had been forced to resign by his illness. Grandmother Wunderlich built a small home about a quarter of a mile north of her home for this Pastor's family of five: for Pastor and Mrs. Behnken had three children--John, Will and Meta. It was John Behnken, who at the present time is President of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. His birthday falls in the same month as mine. He is nearly two weeks younger than I. His birthday is on the 19th day of March, 1884, while mine is on March the 6th.

Uncle Adam Bahr immediately began building his own home after dad had deeded the sixty acres to him. After he had finished his home and the other buildings, he married Miss Emma Mueller of Big Cypress. She was a wonderful help-mate to him and they were very happy for six years when he died. They had no children. He died of an injury which he received while working for my Uncle Edward Doerre. They were putting new sills under an old barn on the place. In some way the jacked-up building settled, whilst Uncle Adam was at work under the structure. He was pinned fast and ruptured. He lived but a very short time after the accident. Gangreene was the cause of his death.

Soon after his death, Aunt Emma Bahr rented her farm and went to Houston where she was employed for many long years in the

poultry and egg booth, operated by Mr. William Pulse. She never remarried. In her later years she contracted tuberculosis which, after several years of hospitalization in west Texas sanatoria, caused her death.

In the meantime, dad was kept busy at his trade. His chief work was that of a plough-smith. He did not only build new ploughs, from wodden beam to steel mould-board and share, but also he would repair all parts of old ploughs and cultivators. His pay was poor for this hard work. I remember that he received 35¢ for welding a new point to an old, worn-out share, and then setting, sharpening, and hardening the rebuilt share. The farmer would thus have a rebuilt share for 35¢, which would outlast two new shares, which at the time cost 65¢ each.

Indeed dad worked for other people in the true sense of the word, and so he remained a poor man for all the time of his life. In the hot summer time, he was kept busy resetting wagon tires. Most of the manufactured wagons sold in Houston at that time were built by what is now known as the Studebaker Corporation. This company used wood in the building of their wheels, which was not thoroughly seasoned. Therefore, even in new wagons, the spokes and fellows would shrink in the hot and dry summers of Texas to such an extent that the spokes in the hubs would become loose, so that the wheel began to creak. In time the steel tire of the wagon would become so loose that the farmers had to wind baling wire around and around it at various points to keep the tire from coming off the wheel altogether.

Dad would remove the tire from the wheel, knock the fellows from the spokes and shorten them a trifel. Then he would remove all loose spokes from the hub of the wheel, shorten them a trifel at the hub-end and then pound them back into the hub until all of them were good and tight. This done, he would next true up the wheel so that all spoke nipples were equal in the circle. When he had done this, he would again pound on the fellows and then the wheel was ready for the resetting of the tire.

Father had a little hand tool with a revolving disk wheel which he ran all around the wooden rim of the wheel. He counted the revolutions made by this revolving disk and when he had traversed the entire rim to the mark which he had made at the starting point, he calculated in his mind how much he would have to cut out of the steel tire to make it fit. Sometimes he would not have to cut the tire at all, for he had a tool with which he could shrink the tire after he had heated a spot on it red hot in his forge. But each tire had to be made smaller, since the shortening of the spokes and fellows of the wheel had reduced the

size of the wheel. Also the slack caused by the shrinkage of the wood in the wheel had to be taken into consideration. Everything had to be just right. The tire could not be too loose nor too tight. If it were too loose, it would come off again. If it were too tight, the wheel would be dished into a saucer-shape and weakened. Dad knew his job well and he had paid out a lot of cold cash for all the tools that he had to have to do his work with. But his pay was three dollars for resetting four wagon tires, which took him all day to accomplish. Fred and I often begged day to charge a dollar per wheel for resetting the tires, but he would tell us: "Other people want to live, too."

In times, when work was slack, dad built farm wagons. They were so well made that he could not satisfy the demand for them. He often had as many as three new wagons on order a year or more before he could possibly get them finished. He used only the very best of materials. He did his own seasoning of all the wooden parts, such as hubs, spokes, fellows, wagon tongues and hounds. The hubs were turned out of Black Locust which would not split. The spokes and fellows were cut from Osage Orange logs, a wood so hard, close-grained, and rot proof that some of the wheels he had built for these new wagons lasted more than twenty years. The tires on such wheels never came loose. All the iron-work on these new wagons was forged by hand on his anvil. He even made his own chains, though he could have bought them much cheaper ready made.

For the floors of the wagon beds he used the best edge-grained yellow pine. The side boards of the wagon-box were made of 18-inch well seasoned poplar boards. He did not use wooden, but heavy steel axels in his wagons. Also his wagons were equipped with a stiff tongue to take the weight of it from the necks of the team that pulled the wagon.

All factory made wagons at the time had drop tongues with the result that here in the south the mules or horses which pulled them had sore necks, caused by the friction and weight on their perspiring and dust-covered necks. He built some seventy of these wagons in his life time. His price for a complete wagon with spring seat, tripple wagon-box, and attached feeding trough was seventy-five dollars. His wagons outlasted two and three of the Studebaker wagons, which at the time sold for as little as $45.00 each.

Brother Fred and I were permitted to help dad with his work in building these new wagons. Under his supervision, after he had thoroughly mixed it, we gave the wagon hubs, spokes and fellows their first coat of red lead paint. One or the other of us pumped the bellows of his forge when he got out the iron-work for the wagons. We also were permitted to cut threads on the end-gate rods of the wagon-boxes and to drill holes on the drill-press through the band-iron straps, with which dad fortified the wooden hounds, which held the wagon-box

in place. At times we even did a little blacksmithing of our own. On one occasion, dad was away from home when a Willow Creek farmer rode up with a couple of plough-shares in a gunny-sack tied to his saddle. He was so disappointed when he learned that father was gone for the day. He had hoped to take the shares home after dad had sharpened them to do some urgent ploughing. In his desperation, he asked us whether we hadn't learned enough from dad to sharpen a plough-point. Brother Fred, who was more adept than I as to apprentice blacksmith, answered that he could try to sharpen his plough-shares, and promised that he would do his best. The farmer told him to go ahead and he added, I also want the point set to plough a little deeper.

Fred had often seen father do that kind of work, so he stirred up the fire which dad always kept banked up in the forge, added a little blacksmith coal to the supply, and I in the meantime pumped the bellows for him. When the shares were red hot, he yanked one of them out with the pair of blacksmith tongs and holding it in position on the anvil with his left hand, he beat the cutting edge of the share with the three-pound blacksmith hammer as he had seen dad do innumerable times. When the edge had been hammered thin enough on the one share, he took the other one out of the fire and repeated the operation. Replacing the shares in the fire with the points down in the very bed of white-hot coal, he waited until the points were a cherry red. He pulled one after the other out of the fire then and holding the point over the edge of the anvil, he gave each point a light blow with his hammer, depressing the point of the share about a quarter of an inch. Then he dropped the shares in the tub of cold water besides the anvil and when they were cool enough to be handled he clamped one after the other into the blacksmith's vice and with a coarse setting file he sharpened each cutting edge as he had seen dad do it.

The farmer was well pleased with the work and gave Fred 30¢ in change. For dad charged only 15¢ each for sharpening shares. When, some time later, this farmer again had occasion to visit dad's shop, I heard him say to dad, "That boy of yours surely did a good job on my plough-points which he sharpened. Before I had him work on them, I had to pull up on the plough handles all the time to keep the point in the ground, but after he got through sharpening them I had to constantly ride the plough-handles to keep the darn thing from going down to China."

About the year 1907, father was bothered with muscular rheumatism to such an extent that he was unable to do his work in the shop. He went to a doctor who advised him to go to a dryer climate to live in. Somebody advised him to go to El Paso, where the climate was very dry, and at the same time wagon makers and blacksmiths were in heavy demand.

Dad found El Paso exactly as it had been represented to him. After a few weeks of rest his rheumatism had subsided to such a degree that he again was able to work. He looked for and found employment in one of the larger blacksmith shops of the city, which built heavy wagons with which to haul ore from the mines in Mexico. The owner of the shop, after he had seen and examined some of dad's work, told my father that he could have a permanent job with him for $6.00 a day, which was the top wage paid at that time. This offer induced dad to sell his homestead in the Klein community and to move to El Paso with his family. He soon found a buyer for his well-kept farm. A Mr. Kleb from Hockley, Texas offered him three thousand dollars for home, shop and farm. He received an additional sum of money for his cattle and sheep, his farming tools, and other odds and ends. Also, he sold the hundred acres of timberland which grandfather Klein had deeded to him. Uncle Charley Klein bought that. His furniture and his hand tools he loaded into a freight car at Spring, Texas and shipped them to El Paso. There he then bought a five-room brick dwelling about three miles east of the Plaza in downtown El Paso, right on the north side of the irrigation canal which waters the Rio Grande River Valley east towards the town of Ysletta.

The new home was just two blocks south of the Alameda Avenue street car line. Dad went to work at once and was steadily employed for about ten years of his life. He fully recovered his health there. My mother, in the meantime, found an outlet for her abundant energy in practical nursing. So much were her services in demand that she was hardly ever at home except for the weekend. Sister Gertrude had to do the housekeeping, the laundry, and the cooking. She is a good cook to this day, as mother and I found out this summer on our visit to her home, near Valley Springs, California. Of that, however, I will have more to say in a later paragraph.

It was mother again who after they had lived in El Paso for ten years, who induced dad to return again to Harris County in the year of 1917. They sold their home in El Paso and moved back to my brother Fred's home, a mile west of Bammel, Texas. Brother Fred's farm was located on Bammel Road, just a half mile south of the Gottlieb Ehrhard homestead. Brother Fred and his family were at the time living in Kilgore, Texas. How long dad and mother remained on Brother Fred's farm I have no way of knowing. I do know, however, that my brother Carl joined them on that farm after he got out of the U. S. Navy sometime in 1919.

It was in the year 1921 that mother and dad left for Houston, where they purchased a frame home on 16th Street from a Dr. Sinclair. This home they kept until dad died and mother lived in it for several more years; in fact, until 1951 when she left Houston again with brother Fred by plane for Valley Springs, California, where she intended to

spend her declining years in the home of sister Gertrude, her only living daughter.

My mother was 86 years of age when she took her first plane ride. Brother Fred said it was a very stormy and bumpy ride, so bad indeed that no one except my mother would eat the excellent supper which the hostess served them at five p. m. Mother's appetite was not affected by the squally ride. She ate her own meal, as well as part of brother Fred's.

My dad passed away at the age of 84 years. The day of his death was November 6, 1942. His funeral was conducted from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Houston Heights. Pastor Elmo Miertschin officiated. Interment was made in the family plot of Rest Haven Cemetery, north of Greens Bayou, located to the east of Federal Highway 75.

My mother lived for not quite a year with sister Gertrude in Valley Springs, when she passed away in her 87th year of life on a Sunday morning, July 20, 1952. She died suddenly of heart failure while watching sister Gertrude making breakfast. I had just finished preaching a sermon at Trinity Lutheran Church at Klein, Texas, when brother Fred brought me the message that mother had passed away. My brother-in-law, Mr. Douglas Ballard, called a mortician from Ft. Stockton and had mother's body embalmed and prepared for shipment back to Houston. Sister Gertrude and her daughter Ellen accompanied mother's body to Houston. The Klein Funeral Home of Tomball took care of the funeral arrangements, and she was buried by the side of father's grave, after the services conducted in Immanuel Lutheran Church by her pastor, the Reverend Elmo Miertchin. Interment was made on Friday afternoon, July 25, 1952.

I shall have more to say about my parents in later paragraphs.

IV

MY LIFE AS A TEEN-AGER

As stated elsewhere, my parents were much concerned about the schooling of their children. My father had received but six months of formal schooling. In that short time he had learned little more than reading and writing in the German language. The rest of his school time had been employed in religious instruction in the memorizing of Luther's Small Catechism and select Bible passages. Later in