

## THE BECKER FAMILY

Peter Becker and his wife, Margaret Schmidt

Margaret was born in Haganbach Bechert Wille in Germany, in 1832. She married Peter Becker in Germany and they had one son, John Henry Becker. After the death of Peter about 1857 Margaret married a man named \_\_\_\_\_ Schlarb. Margaret and her husband emigrated to the United States and settled in St. Joseph County, Indiana. John, who had come over with relatives earlier, joined his mother in Indiana and remained with her until he was fifteen years old. There were five children born to Margaret's second marriage: Bena, Phillip, Margret, Cate and Jacob.

Bena married Henry Fox, Phillip married Cate Horein, Margaret married Albert Mattmiller, Cate married Jacob Horein and Jacob married Mary Wenger.

### John Henry Becker

John H. Becker, blacksmith and wagon manufacturer at Coleta was born October 3, 1853, in Prussia, Germany. His parents, Peter and Margaret\* Becker, were natives of the same country as their ancestors had been for generations before. John Becker's father died in Prussia about 1857 when his son was a small lad. He was an only child, and when his mother chose another husband he went to live with his grandfather where he remained for two years; at the expiration of that time he accompanied some relatives to the United States\*\* and was taken by them to Ohio.

His mother had, meanwhile emigrated to the New World, and had settled in St. Joseph Co., Indiana where he joined her until he was 15 years of age.

About 1868 he came to Genessee Township, Whiteside County, Illinois and became a farm laborer for about two years. At the end of that time he moved to Coleta, Illinois and learned the trade of blacksmith under the instruction of L.H. Porter. After a service of four years he bought the shop and business relations of his employer and began to operate on his own responsibility. During the four years he also learned the details of wagon-making and pursued both occupations. The "History of Whiteside Co" pub 1885 stated: "He has two forges and in wagon making he has acquired an excellent reputation through successful competition at the fairs at Morrison and Sterling. His work is accomplished with skill, and is ranked as first-class in reliability. He owns his business buildings and residence."

Politically he was a Republican. He was united in marriage in Genessee Township, April 30, 1874 to Esabinda Nance.

To this union were born six children including William Edgar Becker.

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John died on June 8, 1909 at the age of 62 and was burried at Riverside Cemetary in Sterling, Illinois. His wife survived for 43 years and died in 1943.

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\* Margaret's maiden name was Schmidt. She later married a man named Schlarb.

\*\*One of the stories of this trip to America was handed down through my family. Young John was apparently about six or seven years old at the time of the voyage. To protect the family money and ensure its safe keeping, a place inside the lining of John's coat was chosen for a hiding place. Little John must have confided this secret to some unscrupulous fellow travelers, because upon reaching their destination they found the money gone from John's coat.

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William Edgar Becker

William "Will" Becker was the first-born child of Esabinda and John Henry Becker, born on April 28, 1876 at Coleta, Illinois.

He was married on January 22, 1896 to Emma Catherine Gerdes. She was 21 and he was 20 years old.

Will purchased a farm and took up the occupation of farming. Three boys were born to this union: Elery Ronald, Arthur Eden and Glen Ross.

In the winter of 1901 Will suffered a severe injury when he was kicked in the groin by a horse, and died several days later leaving a young widow to raise three small boys all under 5 years of age.



Elery Ronald Becker

Born December 5, 1896 , he was the first son of William Edgar Becker and Catherine Gerdes Becker. His father died a few days before his fifth birthday leaving his young widow with three young boys to raise. He was born near Sterling, Illinois in Whiteside County. When his mother became ill with tuberculosis she sold her Sterling home and moved her family to Rocky Ford, Colorado where Elery graduated from Rocky Ford High School.

Life was hard for a widow with three young children, and Elery, being the oldest, shouldered a major portion of the responsibility for his two younger brothers. All three boys worked hard at part time jobs, working after school, before school and during the summers to help provide for the necessities of life.

When Elery graduated from Rocky Ford High he started college at the University of Colorado at Boulder, and graduated with an A.B. degree in 1921. In 1918 and 1919 he served in the Army as a private in the Medical Corps. He was stationed at Boulogne and Nancy France. Because there was no financial help from home it was necessary for him to work to earn his entire college education. One of the jobs he held at the University of Colorado was that of janitor at the local hospital in charge of firing the furnace. When the head nurse - Helen Pauline Grill - found him helping himself to clean sheets out of the hospital closet, it started a romance that ended in marriage. They were married June 24, 1925 in Los Angeles, California.

His initial goal had been to be a medical doctor, but without any financial aid the road appeared too difficult, so he went to Johns Hopkins University and worked under Robert W. Hegner in the School of Hygiene and Public Health to obtain a Doctor of Science degree in protozoology. He was an instructor in biology at Princeton University from 1923 to 1925, and then went to Iowa State College in Ames where he rose to the rank of Professor in the Department of Zoology.

\*"During World War II he left his family, largely from a sense of patriotic duty and entered the U.S. army as a captain and ended his service as a major in the Sanitary Corps from 1943 to 1945. He was stationed first at the Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and then in the China-Burma-India Theater, where he served in the 9th Medical Service Detachment (Laboratory) and the 20th General Hospital at Chabua and Ledo, Assam, India.

Dr. Becker became the world's foremost authority on coccidia and coccidiosis, but his interests and expertise embraced the whole of protozoology and parasitology. He was an indefatigable research worker and a prolific writer, as his numerous publications attest..... Dr. Becker was a member of many societies, devoting a great deal of his time to their advancement and welfare. He was a charter member of the American Society of Parasitologists and president in 1953-54. He was editor of the "Journal of Parasitology" from 1959-61. He was an organizer of the Society of Protozoologists and president in 1958-59..... He was especially interested in host-parasite relations and in immunity and resistance of coccidial and malarial infections.

.....Outstanding as a research worker, Dr. Becker was also outstanding as a teacher. A large number of students took degrees under him, and a much larger number took his courses and were influenced by him. His success as a teacher was not due to a polished lecture style- this he did not have- but to his extensive knowledge, his dynamic, infectious enthusiasm, and his genuine interest in his students. He was a warm, sensitive, friendly man, modest about his own achievements but highly appreciative of the achievements of others. He liked people, he liked to be with them, and he was always willing to help his students and associates with their problems. Everyone who worked under him developed a genuine affection for him, and this they retained throughout life. Dr. Becker was one of the small group that influenced the advance of parasitology most; his example, his achievements, and his teachings will always be remembered with gratitude by those who knew him and will take their well-earned place in the stream of science."

\* The above was written by a former student, Dr. Norman D. Levine, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Illinois and was printed in the Journal of Parasitology, December, 1963.

Elery Becker moved to Arizona in 1958 and joined the staff at the University of Arizona at Tempe. In 1961 he resigned from this position largely because of internal department politics, and devoted himself to research for the United States Public Health Service Communicable Disease Control Laboratory in Phoenix. It was here in his laboratory that he suffered a sudden fatal heart attack and died November 20, 1962. He was buried in Green acres Cemetary, Scottsdale, Arizona at the age of 66 years.

Elery Becker was a man of extreme moral and personal integrity. Although not a greatly religious man (he preferred to work in his laboratory on Sunday mornings to going to church) he supported the church and endorsed his families participation. He enjoyed hunting and fishing and sometimes golf until he was advised by his doctors to give them up because of signs of arterio sclerosis.

He had a love of the land and sometimes longed for his boyhood days on the farm. After the depression he purchased 160 acres of Iowa farm land near Story City, Iowa. This became his main Saturday recreation for many years, and also became a good investment. When he moved to Arizona he had sold his farm and invested the money in the stock market. Although he had never received more than the modest professor's salary and had always lived frugally, he left his widow an estate of over \$120,000. In addition he had sent his children through college and had provided for each of them an initial down payment on a home.

As a husband and father he was sometimes pre-occupied, sometimes moody and reflective , frequently explosively angry and upset and often jovial and happy. He always provided well for his family, and there was never any doubt of his love and concern for them. His three children: Helen Catherine b. May 8, 1926; Ronald Ernest b. November 7, 1828; and William Elery b. February 15, 1937.

# The Journal of PARASITOLOGY

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## IN MEMORIAM

### ELERY R. BECKER

Elery Ronald Becker, one of the world's leading parasitologists and protozoologists, died of a heart attack while working in his laboratory in the U. S. Public Health Service Communicable Disease Control Laboratory, Phoenix, Arizona on the afternoon of 20 November 1962. The Laboratory had moved into a new building a few days before; Dr. Becker had done a great deal of heavy packing and was tired each evening, but he had not felt ill and he did not know that he had arteriosclerosis.

Dr. Becker was born 5 December 1896 near Sterling, Ill. He received his A.B. degree from the University of Colorado in 1921 and his Sc.D. degree in protozoology from Johns Hopkins University in 1923. At Johns Hopkins, he was a student of Robert W. Hegner in the School of Hygiene and Public Health. He was an instructor in biology at Princeton University from 1923 to 1925, and then went to Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa, where he rose to the rank of professor in the Department of Zoology and Entomology. Here he did the major part of his work and remained until 1958. In that year he moved to Arizona State University at Tempe and was also visiting professor in the School of Medicine at the University of Washington, Seattle. In 1961 he resigned from his position at Arizona State to devote himself to research, working in the U. S. Public Health Service Communicable Disease Control Laboratory at Phoenix, Arizona. He married Helen P. Grill 24 June 1925, and they had three children—Helen Catherine, Ronald Ernest, and William Elery.

During World War I, Dr. Becker served as a private in the Medical Department of the U. S. Army from 1917 to 1918. During World War II, he was an officer in the U. S. Army Sanitary Corps from 1943 to 1945, ending his service as a major. He was stationed first at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D. C., and later went to the China-Burma-India Theater, where he served in the 9th Medical Service Detachment (Laboratory) and the 20th General Hospital at Chabua and Ledo, Assam, India.

Dr. Becker was the world's foremost author-

ity on coccidia and coccidiosis, but his interests and expertise embraced the whole of protozoology and parasitology. He was an indefatigable research worker and a prolific writer, as his numerous publications attest. His book, *Coccidia and Coccidiosis of Domesticated, Game and Laboratory Animals and of Man*, became a classic of parasitology soon after its publication in 1934, and he was engaged in an extensive revision at the time of his death. He contributed an outstanding chapter on Protozoa to Biester and Schwarte's *Diseases of Poultry*. At the time he entered the Army during World War II, he was far advanced on the draft of a book on parasitic Protozoa, but his military service and the press of other activities upon his return prevented him from completing it.

Dr. Becker was a member of many societies, devoting a great deal of his time to their advancement and welfare. He was a charter member of the American Society of Parasitologists, its vice-president in 1938, president in 1953-1954, and editor of *The Journal of Parasitology* from 1959 to 1961. He was one of the organizers of the Society of Protozoologists, and served as its secretary-treasurer in 1949-1951, secretary in 1951-1952, and president in 1958-1959.

Dr. Becker was especially interested in host-parasite relations and in immunity and resistance in coccidial and malarial infections. His Presidential Address to the American Society of Parasitologists in 1953, *How Parasites Tolerate Their Hosts*, mirrored this interest and has been a guidepost to research workers in the field ever since. His Past President's Address to the Society of Protozoologists in 1960, *Some Unfinished Investigations of Malaria in Pigeons*, showed how this interest had progressed.

One of the problems which intrigued him was the relationship of the host's diet to the development and progress of its parasitic infections. He was the author of a series of pioneering papers on the effects of specific vitamins and other feed constituents in the ration of the rat to the multiplication of *Eimeria nieschulzi* in this host. He found that cer-

tain vitamin deficiency on the Protozoa.

He continued *T. lewisi* infections in thenic acid deficiency normally harmless genic. He found, the pathogenicity birds, but this is completed. In his So President's Address that I most regret concerns the effect pigeons. Why it a benign, reluctant very respectable but assume the raging through with fatal intent this remains a n

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tain vitamin deficiencies had a profound effect on the Protozoa.

He continued this work with *Trypanosoma lewisi* infections in rats, finding that pantothenic acid deficiency in the host caused this normally harmless parasite to become pathogenic. He found, too, that the diet affected the pathogenicity of *Plasmodium* infections in birds, but this investigation was never completed. In his Society of Protozoologists Past President's Address, he said: "The problem that I most regret to leave unfinished . . . concerns the effect of diet on *P. relictum* in pigeons. Why it should appear to behave as a benign, reluctant fellow unwilling to exceed very respectable bounds in birds on one ration, but assume the role of a violent character raging through the blood and other tissues with fatal intent in pigeons on another ration—this remains a most intriguing problem."

One series of studies arising out of the above investigations had to do with the effect of salicylates and other compounds on the reproduction of *Trypanosoma lewisi* in rats. Another concerned the nature of the sparing phenomenon in bird malaria.

Outstanding as a research worker, Dr. Becker was also outstanding as a teacher. A large number of students took degrees under him, and a much larger number took his courses and were influenced by him. His success as a teacher was not due to a polished lecture style—this he did not have—but to his extensive knowledge, his dynamic, infectious enthusiasm, and his genuine interest in his students. He was a warm, sensitive, friendly man, modest about his own achievements but highly appreciative of the achievements of others. He liked people, he liked to be with them, and he was always willing to help his students and associates with their problems. Everyone who worked under him developed a genuine affection for him, and this they retained throughout life.

Dr. Becker was one of the small group that influenced the advance of parasitology most; his example, his achievements, and his teachings will always be remembered with gratitude by those who knew him and will take their well-earned place in the stream of science.—  
NORMAN D. LEVINE, *College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Illinois, Urbana.*

## THE GERDES FAMILY

### John Harms Gerdes

John Harms Gerdes was a farmer at Ferrisdorf (Forriesdorf Jeverland) Duk of Oldenburg, Germany. His wife was Gerhardine Schmidt. Their four children were:

1. Itje Catharina born November 20, 1824 and married to John Remmers Euker in October 1849, at Gemeinde Wuppels, Jeverland, and lived on a farm at Wuppelser, Altendeich, Jeverland for 13 years when they moved to the small village, Inhausersiel. They bought a home, a grist, sawmill, and lumber yard. John imported logs from Norway and sawed them up into lumber. They lived here for seven years. In the spring of 1869 John Remmers sold his property and decided to go with a few of his neighbors to the United States. He wanted to get his family of five sons and one daughter away from Europe's compulsory military training. They came on a ship that carried several sails in addition to steam. The party numbered twenty five persons.

They landed on the shores of the United States on the 26th of May, 1869. They were unloaded into a round building called the Castle Garden where the revenue men, who could talk German, examined their belongings.

Some of their friends in the United States had asked them to bring some wool yarn along. The wool carried a heavy revenue tax; so when Father Euker packed the trunks, he laid the yarn on top, placing the inside cover over it. He then placed two partly filled boxes of cigars on the top of the cover. Father Euker told the revenue man to help himself to cigars, which he did gladly and closed the trunk, passing it for inspection.

They spent the first night in a hotel since it was Sunday and there was no train service out of New York on Sunday. On Monday their group of twenty-five persons was put into a small train car usually used for brass bands.



The following day they were unloaded and put into other crowded coaches, which had people standing and sleeping in aisles and entranceways. A few days later they rode in box cars with benches for seats. After a five day trip they arrived in Chicago.

Leaving Chicago, the Euken party arrived in Sterling, Illinois. (Most of the fellow passengers on this trip were Poles. These people were dirty and covered with lice. Living in such close contact it was necessary for Mother Euken to give the children a good cleaning.

They reached their destination during rainy and muddy weather at 5:00 a.m. The family went to a hotel while the two oldest boys walked out to Uncle Henry Gerdes, a distance of about eight miles. Uncle Henry then came after the family and belongings.

They arrived at Uncle Henry and Aunt Rebecca Gerdes's home on June 1, 1869; living with them until Uncle had helped them to build a small house on his farm and until they could find something better. This house was 16' x 16', and with a little furniture. The two older boys hired out to farmers, and Edward worked for Uncle Henry. In hot weather they moved the stove outdoors to do the cooking. After harvest, the family rented a small farm seven miles from Uncle Henry's and bought three horses and a cow. When the fall plowing was done, with Uncle Henry's help, they bought timber and poles, and built a pole straw stable, covering it with plenty of straw for the animals. In the late fall they picked corn. There was a lot of snow that winter, and as no overshoes were available at that time, they padded straw into their boots to help keep their feet warm.

In the spring of 1870 they moved to the rented farm. Father Euken became ill with tuberculosis which he had the last few months they were in the old country, and he passed away in the fall of this year. Six months later in the spring of 1873 the second son, John, died of sunstroke after a day of plowing. Both were buried in the Cap Church (Elkhorn) Cemetary six miles north of Sterling.

In 1875, to keep a deathbed promise to his father, Emke, the oldest son took the family to a new farm of their own in Cass County, Iowa. Catharina died February 9, 1915 at the age of 91 and is buried in the Franklin Township Church Cemetary in Iowa.

2. Gerhardine born in 1826 and married to Mint Carstens in 1852
3. Henry born in 1830 and married to Rebecca M. Cohenour in 1858 after his first wife died in 1857.
4. Herman born 1832 and married to Johan Boetfire

John Harmes Gerdes died when his son, Henry Eden was very young.

His brother, Henry, raised Henry Eden.

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Henry Eden Gerdes

The Gerdes family was originally French. They were Huguenots, a term applied by the Roman Catholics to the Protestants of France during the religious struggles of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These Huguenots suffered great persecutions and finally 100,000 of them were driven out of the country to carry their industry, wealth and skills to surrounding countries. The Gerdes' located in Germany, near the towns of Lubeck, Bremen and Hanover.

Henry Eden Gerdes was born in Ferriesdorf in Duk of Oldenburg on January 3, 1830. He was the son of John Harms Gerdes (who was born in the same city on February 24, 1797) and Gerhardine Schmidt (Smidt, Smith). His brothers and sisters were: Itja Catherina, Herman, George and Gerhardina (Hilly Maria and Edo died at an early age). The North Sea washed the back yard of his home. According to the law in Germany he attended school to obtain the required education and military training. Both of his parents died about 1835 and Henry Eden was raised by his Uncle Henry and his wife Johanna who later went to Holstein, Germany. His oldest sister, Itje Catherine - who was also called "Tina" or "Kate" - also helped care for Henry and the younger children. Henry married in Oldenburg, Germany on June 17, 1854 to Margretha Hayunga, and this couple immigrated to the U.S.A. in 1856 and located near Prairieville, Lee County, Illinois. His wife died shortly after they arrived, and was buried in Brownville cemetery with their twins that died at birth.

In 1858 he married Rebecca Cohenour on April 25. Eight children were born to this union:

John H. Gerdes born Feb. 2, 1859  
Annie Eliza, died in infancy  
Joseph Thomas, died in infancy  
David Edmund, born Dec. 26, 1865  
Herman Eden, born Jan 5, 1867  
Lemuel Joseph, born June 8, 1869  
Laura Ellen born Oct. 31, 1871  
Emma Catherine born February 24, 1875, m. Becker

Henry had brought with him from Germany a "neat" sum of money, but apparently lost it all during the trip and had to start all over again. On coming to Illinois he searched for a place with a spring that would furnish water for his family's needs. When he finally settled he built a tar roof shanty, where his first child, John, was born. To buy stock for his farm he drove an ox team across the open prairie to Chicago. He settled at Dixon, Illinois at a place called Nelson Station in Hopkins Township sometime before his second marriage. He bought a quarter section of land on which he lived for twenty-five years. He sold this place and moved to South-eastern Kansas where he owned and operated a farm near Independence until 1888 when he returned to Illinois and settled in Genesee Township. He was a successful farmer --through his able management he acquired three farms, a total of three hundred and sixty-two acres of land in Genesee and Hopkins Townships. In 1894 he retired from active participation in farming and moved to Coleta, buying a house and seven acres of land on which he raised many kinds of fruit. After the death here of his wife on February 8, 1905, he moved to Sterling and made his home there until he passed away on August 26, 1908.

It is known that other members of the family left Germany and came to America because of their religious views - one of which was pacifism - and Germany had compulsory military training for young men. It can be assumed that this was also an influence on Henry Eden's decision to come to America. (It is also interesting to note that there is no mention anywhere of any of the family becoming involved in Civil War activities.) Henry Gerdes was a man of strong convictions. Though he was raised as a German Lutheran, he changed to the Brethren faith because he thought its creed followed more closely Christ's teachings. And he changed from Democratic politics to the Republican party as its aspects appealed more strongly to him. (The Church of the Brethren had its origin in the Dunkards of Germany.) Henry wore a beard through out his life, as did his sons. The women of the family wore prayer caps of fine white material and wore their dresses long.

The families' social life revolved around their church, which by around 1900 numbered about 125 persons in the Coleta, Illinois area. The family strictly observed the Sabbath. The Church of the Brethren practised immersion for baptism, and they modeled their communion service after what they believed to have been the experiences of the Last Supper. They practised the rite of footwashing, and followed it by the love feast, after which the communion of the bread and cup was performed. They endeavored to settle matters of difference with each other without appeal to the law or the courts. They believed in abstinence from alcohol and tobacco

and the avoidance of places of amusement. They believed in nonresistance and also refused to take oaths. As a Brethren he was interested in the project of a church home for the aged in nearby Mount Morris and contributed heavily to its founding, and aided it financially through the years.

Henry Eden Gerdes died August 26, 1908 at the age of 78. Rebecca Gerdes died February 8, 1905 at the age of 74. Both are buried at Pugh Cemetary, Coleta, Illinois.

The following letters written in beautiful old German script were translated and are attached:

Two letters written by Henry Gerdes to his sister, Itja Catherina, and her husband:

Hopkins September 13, 1868

Dear brother-in-law and sister:

For a long time I planned to write to you, but for one reason or another I never got around to it. When the weather is nice we have other things to do, and if it rains, we visit often with the neighbors or even take a nap now and then. Enough excuses for now. Every month new immigrants arrive from Germany, and we hear more news from them, than from letters. We heard from a reliable source, that business is not going so well, and if you could sell the mill for the right price, you would immigrate to America. Is that true? Let me give you a brotherly advice. Make the decision now, and plan to immigrate to America next spring. Put your mill on the market, and takewhat you can get for it and come to us, you won't be sorry. Often I wondered, why you did not plan on doing this sooner. God blessed you with nice, handsome boys, and if you come to America, in a few years you would gain, what you have lost over there. I know several people from Germany, that have been very successful over here. Have faith in God and don't worry about the loss of your money. I am sure, your decision will be very fruitful. I welcome you with all my heart. We are satisfied here, in every way. We too have our cross to carry, but over every cross is a crown. Last year we built a barn 38'wide 60'long and 24' high. Downstairs for cattle, Horses and machinery, and upstairs for hay and crop.

This year I bought a 80 acre farm, very good soil with a creek running thru the land and right on the edge of a forrest. Our health is fine, the boys are really growing strong. My wife does all the chores around the house by herself. Even though we had a dry summer, the harvest was good, and the corn harvest is going to be especially good. Crop prices are good and cattle and horses bring good money on the market. From what I read in the newspaper, you probably have another war over there. Why don't you send Einke and Johan to us this fall, so they won't be drafted. The sooner the better, the americans say "time is money". Don't think, when you arrive, that you be living in a wilderness, it looks completely different now, then 14 years ago. Our neighbor built a new home, which, when it is finished, will cost around \$9000.00. It will be truly a dream house. Cattle and horses are bred yearly. Last year I bought a baby bull (Durham Race) for \$70.00 and also 2 cows from the same breed. I sold a bull calf for \$40.00. Land prices are going up daily. If Meint and family would have come last spring and worked the farm, which I had picked out for them, they would have made already \$1000.00. I guess Meint and family are not ready to come to America. Your wellbeing means alot to me. Now its up to you to decide what to do, but I will tell you again: sell the mill, come to America and put everything in God's hand. Do not worry about losing money, I had to go thru the same thing. Just be hopeful patient and pray. Write to me, as soon as you can. Say hello to brother-in-law Meint an family, uncle Hinrich and family and ask him why he does'nt write. Also say hello to all other relatives and friends.

With love  
your brother and brother-in-law

P.S. My wife is worried about you, and if you come to us, you will be very welcome. Send your sons this fall. I will be helpful in every way I can.

Again greetings from all of us.



Hopkins March 4, 1869

Dear brother-in-law and family;

According to your last letter, you definitely made up your mind to come to America, to which I wish you the best of luck, and I would like to give you a few pointers. You did ask me, what should you bring along. #1) good health, clear conscience and a cheerful disposition. #2) all your children. #3) as much money as possible, \$3000.00 to \$10000.00 would come in very handy. #4) two good feather beds. #5) stock up on wool stockings. If you don't want to sell your knives and forks, bring them along and anything else that won't be much of a bother to transport. Our neighbors wife asks, if you would please bring her 10 pounds of white wool yarn and 3 pounds of the enclosed sample for Sunday stockings. The white yarn, she would rather have single than doppel. Would you also bring us 10 to 12 pounds of whitewool yarn for work stockings. The wool yarn over here is too thin. I advise you, to put the yarn in your feather bed, because our custom inspectors are very sharp. Don't bring more boots and shoes, than necessary. Kids here go barefoot in summer, even if they are not poor. Bring zwieback and whisky(Schnaps) or something that agrees with your stomach on land or sea. Make sure your boxes and trunks are well packed and secured, because they will be turned upside down constantly before they get to their destination. Take middle deck on the steamer and immigration train. When you arrive in Castle Garden New York, tell them you want to go to Sterling Illinois.

Don't let your belongings out of sight. You know for how many people you have paid, and 80 pounds of baggage per person is free. I think you should exchange your money in New York. Be very careful John Remmers, and do not trust everybody who says he is your friend. There are more pick pockets in New York, than horses in Jeverland and that goes for all cities and also on trains. The money which you do not need every day, put in a safe place. Watch your children carefully. Don't eat much fresh beef and put not alot of sugar in your coffee, and you won't get diarrhea. A good whisky(Schnaps) is advised. When you get to New York, write right away. The address is : Henry E. Herdes, Halt Station Whiteside Co. Illinois. I will get your letter before you arrive in Sterling, if you mail the letter in New York right away. I myself try to meet you at the depot and in case I would be unable to come, I would send a german man. If God is willing, I will be there myself. We would like a portrait of uncle Hinrich and his family, and also of Meint Carston and his family. This morning Herman Behrens came and asked, if you would please pay for passage for his brother Johan Gehrhard Behrens from New York to Sterling. They will pay you back, as soon as you get here. You can trust them, John Remmers. I don't know, what else I can tell you, also I am pressed for time. So go with God. Except for colds now and then, we are pretty healthy. I hope you are well too. Say hello to all our relatives and please come soon.

Your brother-in-law

H.E. Herdes

P.S. Einke, my good boy, you ask me, what will become of you. Maybe you are going to be a Rothchild #2.

0084473



Rebecca M. Cohenour

Born in Huntington County, Pennsylvania on December 25, 1831, in her early years she received just enough education "to read and write." In 1856 she came west and worked for a Dr. Pennington (There is record of a Dr. Pennington in Whiteside Co., Illinois who was a noted horticulturist who raised apples and developed new strains of corn.).

She married Henry Eden Gerdes on April 25, 1858 and they had six children including Emma Catherine Gerdes. Two children died in infancy.

Emma Catherine told, in her latter years, of how her mother's habit of occasionally smoking a pipe embarrassed the girls when their "beaus came courting".

Rebecca's father's name was Joseph Cohenour and her mother was Mary Moreland. Mary Moreland's father was thought to be Isaac Moreland who emmigrated from Ireland.

Rebecca died February 8, 1905 at the age of 74 following a prolonged illness from a stroke. Emma Catherine cared for her mother for some time before her death. She was buried at Pugh Cemetary, Coleta, Illinois.

Emma Gerdes Becker

Emma Gerdes was born February 24, 1875 in Coleta, Illinois. She was the youngest of a family of six children and one of two girls; her sister, Laura Ellen (Kingsbury) was four years older.

Emma learned all the domestic skills from her mother, but it was her father that she adored. He encouraged her studies and she probably graduated from high school. He would have liked to have sent her to college, because she had excelled in her school work, but she declined.

The family lived in a spacious frame farmhouse. Sundays were spent in church services and the Sabbath was strictly observed. During the week all the family worked hard at their various farm chores, but there was time for Emma to read, to learn to quilt beautifully and to learn to play the church hymns by ear on the piano.

On January 22, 1896 she was married at Coleta to a young farmer, William (Will) Edgar Becker. Emma and Will's brief years of marriage were very happy ones. Within a year of their marriage their first son, Elery Ronald was born. Three years later the second son, Arthur Eden, was born; a year and a half later Glenn Ross was born.

Will's farming was prospering as evidenced by his carefully written accounts. In November of 1901 Will was kicked by one of his horses and sustained a fatal injury. Two days before his oldest son, Elery's fifth birthday he died. He was buried in the family cemetery in Coleta. (Some years later the other Becker graves at Coleta were moved to the cemetery in Sterling.)

The years that followed were hard ones for Emma and her young sons. She sold the farm and moved into town in Sterling. There she put her expert seamstress skills to work by doing sewing for people whenever possible to earn a little money. She raised her own vegetables and chickens to feed her family, and her father and brothers helped out from time to time with additional food from their farms. She also nursed her mother in her dying years (her mother had suffered a stroke) and in return her father provided her with money. She was a sensitive and proud young woman, and as time went by her relationships with the Becker family deteriorated because, in spite of their substantial means, they did little to help the young widow in her plight. The boys all worked at odd jobs and had paper routes in order to supplement the meager family income. Emma managed her money well, and was able to make ends meet fairly well without dipping into her principal from the sale of the farm except to buy her home. At the time of her father's death she undoubtedly shared in his estate which also helped her with her expenses.

emma catherine gerdes p.3

About the time when her sons were approaching early adolescence she became stricken with tuberculosis, and her doctor, following the best medical advice of her time advised her to move to the drier climate of Colorado. Seeking a community where she could continue to attend the Church of the Brethern, she selected Rocky Ford. Here she purchased a small frame house with a large yard for her garden and chickens with a large irrigation ditch running along the street in front. She raised flowers and vegetables, did sewing for friends and actively participated in the affairs of the church. In time all three sons graduated from Rocky Ford High School and left home.

Emma Gerdes had been a very beautiful young girl, but age and health problems were beginning to take their toll. She was becoming very deaf and arthritis was making her hands very gnarled. She was sixty three years of age when she moved to the home of her son, Elery, in Ames, Iowa to spend "her final years". In about 1958 she moved with Elery and his wife Helen to Arizona where she lived, past the time when Elery died in 1962. She continued to live for four more years, stooped with age, very deaf and blind with cataracts for four more years and passed away in February of 1966, just a few days before her 91st birthday. Buriel was with her husband in Coleta where he had been buried 65 years before.

## THE SMITH FAMILY

### John Schmidt (Smith)

John Schmidt was born in Germany "somewhere near the Rhine" about 1760-70. The exact date and place are unknown. In young manhood he came to Pennsylvania (date unknown) and settled in Allegheny County. He came as an "indentured person", working after his arrival to pay his passage.

In 1817 he brought his family to Floyd County, Indiana. He married Elizabeth Retzier (Retzer, Retzar, Retsier) in Allegheny Co., Pa. (date unknown). The date and place of her birth are also unknown. John Schmidt died in Floyd County, Indiana before 1819.

At least two of John Schmidt's sons, Thomas and Philip brought their families to Southern Indiana and settled chiefly in Floyd and Harrison Counties. John and Elizabeth had eleven children: Samuel, John, Thomas, Daniel, Philip, George, Catherine, Sarah, Elizabeth, Eleanor and Nancy.

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Note: Lanesville, Indiana, where many of this family are buried is just a few miles east of Louisville, Ky. and slightly south of U.S. highway 64. Lanesville protestant cemetary is easy to locate.

Philip Smith

Philip Smith was the fifth child of John and Elizabeth Schmidt. He was born May 21, 1798 in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. In 1816 or 1817 he came to Floyd County, Indiana with other members of his family.

He was married about 1825 to Rebecca Haynes (Haines). Rebecca was 15 years old at the time of her marriage. She had been born January 6, 1810 and her family had also come from Allegheny Co., Penna. where she had been born.

Philip and Rebecca had twelve children, three of whom died in childhood.

Philip died July 9, 1871 and Rebecca died October 16, 1878. Both were buried in Lanesville Protestant Cemetery in Lanesville, Indiana.

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Note: All the members of the early Smith family who died in the area are buried in the Lanesville Protestant Cemetery. It is my understanding that the burials began here around 1825 and that all of these people were Methodists.

There are apparently many Floyd Co. deed books, marriage books and census records that record specific family events.

Eleanor (Elenor) Smith

Eleanor was the third child of Philip Smith. She was born October 10, 1829 in Floyd County, Indiana. On April 19, 1855 in Floyd County she was married to James Harvey Nance. She was 16 and James 18 at the time of their marriage.

Eleanor and James had nine children: Esabinda, Hattie, Rebecca, William Ellsworth, Mary, James Stanton, Emma, Ada Belle and Annie Bertha.

Eleanor died at age 71 years on October 7, 1900 and James died at age 62 on November 25, 1893 and both were buried at the Peugh Cemetery near Coleta, Illinois.

Esabinda Nance

She was the first child of Eleanor Smith and James Nance, born July 8, 1856 at Coleta. Shortly before her 18th birthday she was married to John Henry Becker. They had six children including William Edgar Becker. All of the children were born between 1876 and 1895 at Coleta. Her husband died in 1909 but she survived him for many years and died at the age of 87 years.

## The Nance Family \*

Family tradition and history seem to agree that our Nance ancestors originated in France, and were driven out at the time of the persecution of the Huguenots. They settled in Wales, England where a Clement Nance is believed to have lived. The first Nance to come to America is not definitely known. It may have been Clement, brother of Andrew, who fled France at the time of the Huguenot persecutions, or it may have been a Richard Nance who was born in 1615 and married to Alice \_\_\_\_\_, and lived in Henrico Co., Virginia.

An early record shows 300 acres of land in Henrico County given to Richard Nance for transportation of six persons into the Colony on March 18, 1639. Another record shows 1,000 acres of land, originally granted to a Giles Nance, deeded to Clement and his family from 1786 to 1796. Other Nance records are in the Vestry Book and Register of Bristol Parish, Virginia starting about 1712.

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\* There are three primary sources for this material on the Nance family:

1) #12398 Library of Congress; The Nance Memorial by George W. Nance, CS71.N176 1904

2) The Smith Family Record by Viána McCown, 1966, whose sources included the above "Nance Memorial" and the family Bible of Eleanor Smith Nance.

3) Notes of my father, Elery Becker, collected from relatives.



The family of Clement Nance, Sr.:

1. Dorothy, m. Joseph Burton in Va.
2. Mosias, m. Margaret Denton in Va., Aug. 17, 1797.
3. Susan, m. William Shaw in Va.
4. Mary, m. Patrick Henry Shields in Va., May 16, 1773.
5. William Nance, m. Nancy Smith of N.C. 1803
6. Nancy May, m. Elder John Oatman in Ind. Dec. 18, 1806
7. Clement Nance, m. Martha Chamberlain March 25, 1790
8. Jane, m. Jacob Richardson, \_\_\_\_\_ Branum, and Cooper Jordon.
9. John Wesley m. Cloe Mitchell
10. Elizabeth m. Isaac Richardson, Anderson Long, Joseph Walden, John Benson.
11. James Reed m. Mary McNary, Nancy Chamberlain.
12. Giles Nance, m. Phebe Sellars in 1812

The family of Mosias Nance (#2 above) and Margaret Denton:

1. Clement Denton m. Margaret Calhoun Aug. 8, 1824
2. William Joseph m. Elizabeth LaFollette July 6, 1826
3. Mosias Nance, Jr. m. Catherine Chamberlain Jan. 10, 1828
4. Nancy May m. James Hancock Sept. 17, 1826
5. Mary (Polly) m. Anthony Russell, Joseph Routh
6. Elizabeth Jane m. Hawley Russell Feb. 22, 1832
7. David Nance, m. Julia Ann Chamberlain Sept. 3, 1840
8. Margaret Perkins, m. Hamilton Wolf Sept. 19, 1839

The family of William J. Nance and Elizabeth LaFollette (#2 above:)

1. James Harvey Nance m. Eleanor Smith
2. Nancy May m. David Lemuel
3. John m. Lucy Hammersly, Lydia Speaks, Mary Ward
4. William Coleman m. Mary Criswell
5. Harriet m. Samuel Watts
6. Alonzo Clement m. Jane Ayers
7. Elizabeth m. Jason Smith, William Brock
8. Emma m. Mack Gunn
9. Frank m. Salley Kepley
10. LaFayette m. Addie Riley
11. Annie m. John W. Fowler
12. Charles m. Linnie Smith

The family of James H. Nance and Eleanor Smith (No. 1 above):

1. Esabinda m. John H. Becker
2. Hattie m. John Fritz
3. Rebecca m. Adam Linebaugh
4. William Ellsworth
5. Mary
6. James Stanton m. Sarah Bushman
7. Emma
8. Ada Belle
9. Annie Bertha

Children of Esabinda Nance and John H. Becker (#1 above):

1. William Edgar Becker m. Emma Gerdes January 22, 1896, Coleta, Ill.
2. Hattie Mae Becker m. Charles Anthony Wink Feb. 1898
3. Arthur James Becker m. Estha Mauelen 1910; Nellie Druce 1940
4. Harvey Nickolaus Becker m. Blancy Bowman 1906
5. John Clair Becker m. Hazel Wynette Swartley 1911
6. Charles Ray Becker d. in infancy, buried Sterling, Illinois

Children of William Edgar Becker and Emma Gerdes (#1 above):

1. Elery Ronald Becker m. Helen Pauline Grill 1925
2. Arthur Eden Becker m. Minnie Crocker 1922; m. Shirlee \_\_\_\_
3. Glenn Ross Becker m. Nita Elizabeth Floyd 1923

Children of Elery Ronald Becker and Helen Pauline Grill (#1 above):

1. Helen Catherine Becker m. Norris Leroy Sample 1952
2. Ronald Ernest Becker m. Frances Hamrick 1955
3. William Elery Becker m. Marilyn Hastings 1960

Children of Helen Catherine (Trudy) Becker and Norris Leroy Sample:

1. Norris James Sample
2. Cynthia Laura Sample
3. Mark Ronald Sample

Clement Nance

Clement Nance is believed to be the son of William How Nance and the grandson of Richard Nance, although no positive proof has been recorded of these relationships. Clement was born in 1756 in Virginia, and is said to have died at the age of 72. He was married to Mary Jones about 1775, and their first child was born May 22, 1776. All of his children were born in Virginia. In 1803 he left Pittsylvania County, Va. and settled in Kentucky, making the move with a large number of other members of the family.

" He remained in Kentucky for only about 18 months, determined to press on to Indiana Territory. He constructed a flatboat, upon which he placed a part of his family, all the women and children, and all the household effects. Upon this boat they floated down the Kentucky and Ohio Rivers, landing just below the present site of New Albany, Indiana, and on section 10, township 3, range 6. A portion of the family came overland with their cattle and horses, they being possessed of quite a number of cattle, which, by browsing upon the cane-break and wild grasses that grew abundantly, kept fat. Thus he landed a large family in the wilderness, without house or even shelter. It is said the mother cried piteously when she found herself surrounded by a helpless family of children brought to this dreary, desolate region, and landed in a cold March storm of sleet and snow without

shelter of any kind. A three-sided pole shanty was soon erected, with open end from the storm, and a log heap fire was soon crackling away, bringing good cheer to the cold and wet. In this little open camp, covered only with bark and brush, the family lived until a permanent cabin could be erected. They did not suffer for provisions for the cows gave milk and the woods were full of game. This landing was made on March 5, 1805."

Clement did not take the precaution of registering his claim because of the long distance necessary to travel through the forest to Vincennes, Indiana where the U.S. Land Office was located. The story is told that the angry father of a rejected suiter of one of the Nance girls went to Vincennes and registered the farm in his own name in order to "get even". After losing this place, Clement moved to (and filed properly for) 160 acres near Lanesville, Indiana. Eventually the family owned about four sections of land adjoining the original claim.

There is a record in Harrison (now Floyd) County, Virginia, showing that Clement freed a slave in the year 1799. It is believed that Clement owned a number of other slaves, and that he set them free and made arrangements for their return to Liberia, Africa.

Clement became a Baptist minister in 1790, and later preached in fervent but unpolished oratory the doctrine of a sect known as the New Light. He was a voluminous writer of hymns. He is believed to be the first preacher to settle in the Indiana Territory. He was tall, erect, dignified and imposing, and his hair was pure white in the latter years of his life.

In addition to preaching and farming he established a grist mill on his farm. He was also Associate Judge of Floyd County for six years from 1819 to 1825. In addition he was the postmaster and had a post office named for him, "Nanceville", which he kept in his home.

Clement Nance died in 1828 of "bloody flux". He was buried in the orchard on the farm on which he had lived since making entry June 25, 1807. There is nothing to mark the resting place, and no trace of any markers remained in 1905. He had fathered twelve children. His will was structured to provide for his widow and his estate was to be divided in fairly equal portions among his children after her death.

In 1905 it was determined that there were already 3,354 descendents of Clement and Mary Jones Nance! (Including those who had married into the family.)

Mary Jones, wife of Clement Nance

Mary Jones was the daughter of Mosias Jones, Pittsylvania County, Virginia. She was living at the date of her husband's will in 1821, but had passed away before his death in 1828.

The following story is told of a remark that Mary Jones\*made to the British officer General Tarleton following the battle at Cowpens, January 17, 1781 in which the British were badly whipped.

Colonel William A. Washington, in a personal combat in this battle, wounded Tarleton. Months afterwards, the British officer, while conversing with Mrs. Jones, a witty American lady, sneeringly said, "That Colonel Washington is very illiterate. I am told that he cannot write his name."

"Ah, Colonel," she replied, "You bear evidence that he can make his mark." Tarleton expressing, at another time, his desire to see Colonel Washington, the lady replied, "Had you looked behind you at Cowpens, you might have had the pleasure."

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\* Source: The Nance Memorial; George Nance indicates that this story has been handed down for generations within the family, and he also cites a printed source; perhaps the Mrs. Jones is more properly Mary Jones' mother.

Mosias Nance

Mosias Nance was born in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, May 26, 1777. He died in Indiana, January 6, 1857. His wife, Margaret Denton, was born in Virginia, March 1, 1781 and died in Indiana, March 3, 1833. They were married in the county of his birth, August 17, 1797 and moved to Kentucky about 1804, settling near the Kentucky River. After a few years they followed his father to Floyd County, Indiana. He secured a farm adjoining that of his father, on which he lived throughout his lifetime. He was said to be a man of great faith, remaining true to the "Old Christian Order", usually called the "New Lights".

He was a great sufferer during the last few years of his life. Having lost the use of his lower limbs, he would crawl over the floor like a child. In spite of his affliction, he is said to have maintained a patient, cheerful spirit. He died at the home of his daughter, Elizabeth, when nearly eighty, and was buried on the farm on which he had resided for half a century. He and his wife were parents of nine children, the first born dying in infancy. The other eight lived to have families of their own.

He was married three times: to Mrs. Nancy Humphrey and later to Mrs. Nancy Walden, who survived him.

William J. Nance

William Joseph Nance was born in Kentucky, November 4, 1804, the same year that his parents had moved there from Virginia. He was a small child when his parents made the move to Indiana. He was married to Elizabeth LaFollette, July 6, 1826, by his grandfather, Clement Nance. After Elizabeth died, he married Elizabeth Compton who survived him. There were two children by his first marriage and ten by his second marriage making a total of twelve children. He spent his entire life on the farm where the family of his grandfather first settled near New Albany (where they filed claim). He was said to be a faithful and regular member of the Christian Church. He died February 16; 1859.

Elizabeth LaFollette , wife of William J. Nance

Elizabeth was the daughter of Robert LaFollette born in 1776. She is believed to be the granddaughter of Joseph LaFollette, born in 1745 who married Phoebe Goble, born in 1743. The family of Robert LaFollette and his new bride (name not known) were the first persons to locate in Floyd County, Indiana, November 4, 1804. (The family of Clement Nance was the second to locate there.) Elizabeth died following the birth of her second child October 25, 1833.



James Harvey Nance

Born in Floyd County, Indiana, December 29, 1831, he went to Whiteside County, Illinois and purchased a farm when still a young man. The following year he returned to Floyd County and married Eleanor Smith and brought her back to his farm in Illinois. Here he and his wife resided for the remainder of their lives. They were respected citizens of the community and active members in the local Christian Church. They were the parents of five children, all of whom reached maturity. James died December 29, 1893, Sterling, Illinois. He and his wife are buried in Pugh Cemetery near Coleta, Illinois in a family plot.

Eleanor (Elenor) Smith, wife of James Harvey Nance

Eleanor was the third child of Philip Smith of Floyd, County, Indiana. She was born October 10, 1829, Floyd County, and married April 19, 1855 in the same county. She died October 7, 1900, Sterling, Illinois.

Esabinda Nance, wife of John Henry Becker

Esabinda Nance was the first child of Eleanor and James Nance. She was born July 8, 1856 at Coleta, Illinois. Shortly before her 18th birthday she was married to John Henry Becker, a young man of 21 years, on April 30, 1874 at Coleta.

John was a young blacksmith who had been born in Germany. They had six children, all of them born between 1876 and 1895.

John died in 1909 at the age of 62. Esibinda survived him by a number of years and passed away on April 30, 1943 at the age of 87 years. Both are buried in Riverside Cemetery, Sterling, Illinois.

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(I recall seeing her when I was a young child. My father took me to Sterling because he wanted me to meet and remember my great-grandmother. She lived in a modest frame home, and must have been in her eighty's. She was a slender woman of medium height with reddish-blond hair not yet turned white.)