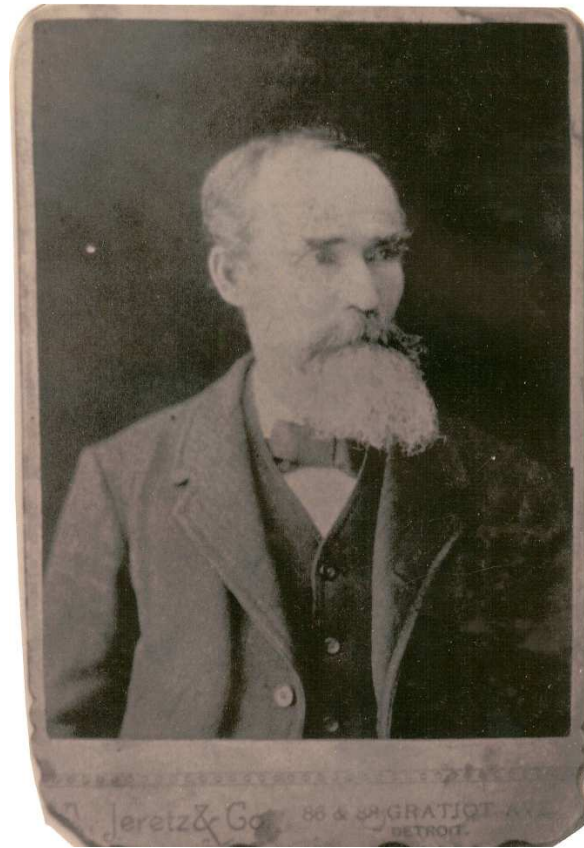


# The Ott Family History



**Wilhelm Ott**  
**Father of Elizabeth Ott Bender**

This is a portrait of our great grandfather, Wilhelm Ott. He is the husband of Sophie Becker Ott and the son of Peter Ott and Eva Carolina Knapp Ott. He was born in Baden Baden Germany. He married Elisabeth Braun and had 2 living children Pauline and Adolph Ott. Elisabeth died of cancer at age 43. Wilhelm then married our great grandmother, Sophie Becker Ott and they had 3 living children: Elisabeth Ott Bender, Agnes Ott Koch Mc Dermott and Anne K. Ott. Wilhelm had a son by each of his wives: Otto and Wilhelm Otto. Both sons died in infancy. Wilhelm died at the young age of 53 due to stone lung. He carved his own tombstone in his last days. He lies buried in Mt. Elliott cemetery.

The Ott family became related to the Bender family through the marriage of Henry Charles Bender to Elisabeth Ott on August 2nd, 1894.

The Ott family originated in Baden-Baden in the black forest of Germany. Peter Ott was a shoemaker in the black forest in the first half of the 1800s. He is famous in our family for having killed a wolf in the black forest with his bare hands. Peter Ott was persuaded to leave the Black Forest and immigrate to Michigan at the persistence of his cousin Charles Knapp, who had a flourishing business on Atwater Street on the Detroit River in downtown Detroit which he founded here around 1840. David Knapp and Charles Knapp were stone cutters who built a number of impressive buildings in Downtown Detroit including the Detroit Library on Farmer Street behind the J.L. Hudson Company.

Wilhelm Ott came to Detroit in 1870 with his wife Elisabeth Braun Ott, his son Adolph (spelled Adolf in German) born in Baden- Baden in 1864, and his daughter Pauline, born in 1869. Also traveling with him to America was his mother, Eva Carolina Knapp Ott and sister Angeline Ott. His father Peter apparently died in Baden Baden as we have no record of him. All of the above named family members moved in with Wilhelm in his home on 514 Alfred Street. Elisabeth Braun Ott succumbed to cancer at the young age of 43 in 1877, leaving Wilhelm disconsolate.

He then married our great grandmother, Sophie Becker in 1878. They had 3 children, Elisabeth, Agnes and Ann.

Wilhelm went to work for his cousins, Charles and David Knapp in their stone yard on Atwater Street as a stone cutter together with his Knapp cousins. Wilhelm's lungs were destroyed by the "stone lung disease" from inhaling stone dust for years. He passed way in 1893 after suffering horribly from this. Most of his cousins bled to death from the stone dust destroying their lungs and causing them to succumb to severe hemorrhage.

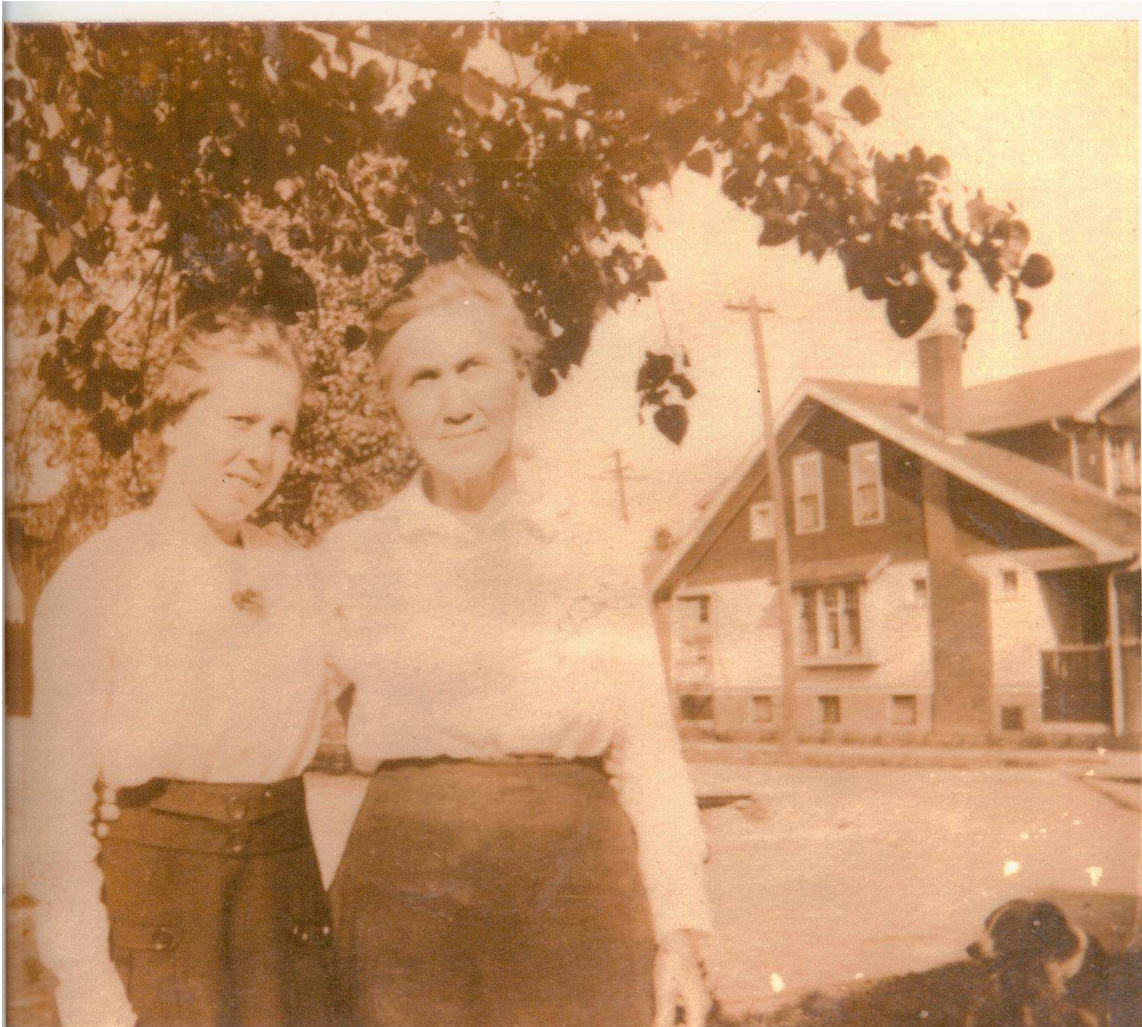
Wilhelm made good money cutting stone which gave his second wife Sophie sufficient income to live out her life in comfort to her death in 1926.

Our grandmother Elisabeth Ott was born on August 19, 1879 in either her grandmother Eva Ott's house or in Saginaw, Michigan according to two different records.



**Beatrice & Norman Bender, Sophie Becker Ott 1917**

Here is a picture of Beatrice Bender Gamache on the left, Norman Bender in center and Sophie Becker Ott on right. They are standing in front of the Bender house at Maxwell and Lambert streets in Detroit.



**Mildred Bender Neff and Sophie Becker Ott Mother of Elizabeth Ott Bender**

This is a picture of Mildred Bender Neff on the left and her grandmother Sophie Becker Ott on the right. Sophie is the oldest child of Johannes Becker and Elisabeth Friedrichs Becker. She was born in 1855 in Detroit. Her father was born in Copershoten Germany in 1824. Sophie grew up in an apartment her father owned above his Cooper shop. Her dad fought in the civil war, was wounded at Gettysburg and then made barrels and casks for the Union Army effort for the rest of the war. Sophie was an excellent seamstress and often castigated her grandchildren when their stitches were not uniform and small. Sophie broke her

leg in her later years when she was riding on a streetcar. The driver made a sudden stop and she was thrown to the floor of the streetcar. After that she always had a hard time walking.



This event was the biggest shocker our family had ever experienced. Elizabeth Ott Bender's sister, Agnes Ott Koch suffered the loss of her first husband to pneumonia, leaving her with his Gold Medal trucking company to run. She solved the problem by marrying her late husband's manager. However, the manager, Henry Mc Dermott turned out to be a heavy drinker and he ended up suffering from the DTs in which he saw snakes, bugs, etc. Agnes made arrangements to have him committed to dry out. He found out, bought a new car, put his wife and their children in it, leaving her children by a previous husband home He then drove to

the foot of Parker St and sunk the new car into 13 feet of water in the Detroit River. All family members, including him, were drowned. It was one of the biggest funerals that Detroit had seen at that time. People lined up for blocks to stream through the funeral parlor to view the 4 caskets. The family buried him with the family he had just drowned.



Here is the Detroit newspaper account of the drowning of Elizabeth Ott Bender's sister Agnes Ott Koch Mc Dermott and her 2nd family by her 2nd husband, Henry Mc Dermott. Henry insisted on taking only his children for a car ride in his new car, making sure all Agnes' children by her first marriage remained behind. Henry was suffering badly from the DTs from his heavy drinking and he was livid with anger when he learned that his wife was about to commit him to dry him out.

Edward Paul Bender said he was getting out of work from the midnight shift and as always he bought a Detroit Free Press on his way home. When he read the headlines that Agnes Ott Mc Dermott had been drowned, he ran home and when he saw his mom's face he knew it was his Aunt Aggie.

Aunt Agnes had a tragedy happen to her a few years earlier, in 1918. Her son by her first husband, Harry Jr. was on his bike in order to deliver papers on his route when a street car came up behind him and ran right up his back, splitting the entire length of his back wide open. Harry was the same age as Edward and was a really sharp kid so Edward Bender could not figure out how he could have not gotten out of the way of the streetcar in time.

Several more tragedies happened in the Koch family the year after Agnes and her family were drowned. Agnes' youngest son from her first marriage, Jackie had

killed himself. Also, Anne Ott gave birth to a baby girl who died 4 months later and then a few years later she succumbed to uterine cancer and died.



**Agnes Ott Koch, Jackie, Harry, William Sr, Lillian, William Jr, Marvin  
1914**

Here is a family portrait of Agnes Ott Koch With her first husband, William Koch and their children. William was not the one who drowned her. He was a diligent, kind upright man. He established and ran a flourishing trucking company, Gold Medal. His family from left to right are: Agnes Ott Koch Mc Dermott, Jackie Koch (sitting), Harry Koch (who was run over by a streetcar at age 10), William Koch

Sr., Lillian Koch, William Koch Jr. and Marvin Koch. William Jr. was Bill Sr's adopted son born before he married Agnes. Edward Bender said these boys were a lively bunch. Edward said he had been struck by a car on Gratiot and had his leg set at Receiving Hospital. Then his dad Hank took him to the Koch home on their way Home. Dad hobbled in with his leg in a cast, went into a dark kitchen and the boys came jumping off the refrigerator and cabinets and onto him smashing him and his broken leg to the ground.



Here is a picture of little Henry (Harry) Mc Dermott, Jr. at age 3. He is the son of Agnes Ott Koch Mc Dermott and Henry Mc Dermott. It was a blessing that he had no inkling of what faced him and his family in 3 short years. In 3 short years he went from 1st grade into a horrifying watery death.



**William Koch Sr. and his sister and brother**

Here is a teenage picture of William Koch Sr., on the left and his sister and brother. This picture was taken about 1904. William was a decent honorable husband and father and he would have been horrified to know what happened to his family after his death from pneumonia. It was a sorry day indeed for the Koch family the day that William Koch Sr. hired Henry Mc Dermott as a manager in his company.



**Judge Louis Ott, son of Ludwig Ott & Louisa Schlechter**

This is a picture of Judge Louis Ott, first cousin of Grandma Elizabeth Ott Bender. Judge Louis Ott is the son of Ludwig (Louis in English) Ott Sr. and Louisa Schlechter. Ludwig Sr. is the brother of Grandma Elizabeth Ott Benders father, Wilhelm (William in English) Ott.

Grandma Bender was very poor all of her married life and often did not have money for necessities like food or coal. When the family had not eaten in more than a day there were times when in desperation grandma would have to go to the house of Judge Louis Ott at 4415 Meldrum in Detroit, near Gratiot, and beg the Judge for money. Edward Bender remembers going there one time with his

mom and he really looked forward to going in and meeting the Judge, but at the front of the home Elizabeth told him he had to wait at the curb for her as she did not want him to go in with her. She came out later, very stressed, with her face showing the strain she had just been through, but she had the money in her hand. Judge Louis Ott would always very reluctantly come through with the money after Elizabeth had worked him over, most likely just to get her out of his hair. His generosity in time of need may very well be at least partly due to Elizabeth's persistence.

Louis Ott, former Justice of the Peace, knows the discipline of hard work, and through his own efforts put himself through college. This is his birthday, having been born in Detroit October 15, 1876, one of three children born to Louis and Louise Schlechter Ott. As a boy, Mr. Ott sold newspapers on the streets of Detroit, and at 16 he went to work in a newspaper office. He found time to study law in the Detroit College of Law and was graduated in 1899. Following his graduation he worked in the law offices of Sloman and Groesbeck, and in 1901 established himself in private practice. In 1905 he was elected Justice of the Peace, leading the whole Republican ticket at the election. He was re-elected and served until 1914, when he again established himself in private practice, which he has continued since. September 6, 1906 he was married to Jennie G. Terry, of Detroit, now deceased. They were the parents of 10 children, seven of whom are living. Mr. Ott is a member of the Detroit, Michigan and American Bar Associations. His favorite recreation is motoring. The family home is at 4415 Meldrum Ave.

