

The Rehfeldt Family History

Origin of the name Rehfeldt

The deer field. From the Dutch rhee. A roe and feldt, a field.

Our Rehfeldt family history starts with John Charles (Johann Karl) Rehfeldt. John Charles Rehfeldt was born in a part of Germany that at the time of either his birth or his marriage, was evidently under the control of the French, a common occurrence along the border that separates France from Germany. With every war, and there were a number of them every century in Germany, the towns along the German-French border went to whomever won the war. (In Napoleon's time Germany almost as far as Hamburg belonged to France after one of Napoleon's conquests.)

On the 8th of July, 1867, John Charles Rehfeldt married Pauline Bruckner. Pauline was then 19 years old and her Charles was 19 years. Charles was a painter by trade and he had stated on his marriage license that he was born in France. Pauline and Charles Rehfeldt were married by Joseph Kuhn, Justice of the Peace. Pauline's brother, Charles Bruckner, whom Pauline was quite close to, was a witness to her marriage. The second witness was Matthias Schied.

Charles Rehfeldt never took out citizenship papers, and Wilhelm Charles Bruckner, Pauline's father, was never naturalized, and in those times a woman could not by herself become a citizen of the United States, so Pauline and her husband remained aliens, and died as German citizens. (Both of Pauline's brothers, Edward and Charles did become citizens of the United States).

Pauline and Charles Rehfeldt's first child, John A. Rehfeldt, was born in 1870. John was an extremely young man, and his intelligence and artistic ability shone in his face. He most likely got his artistic ability from the Bruckner side of the family as there were quite a number of musicians in that side of the family. John was a very talented young artist, and is remembered by the family to this day for his paintings of "Coxie's Army" and "Fritz's Last Travel", as well as a beautifully done self portrait. Pauline was very proud of her son's artistic ability, and his paintings hung in her side parlor which was reserved for special company. These paintings hung in her parlor, first on Antietam St, and then on Emily St until the day she died, some 30 years later. After Pauline's death, her son Bill continued to occupy the house on Emily St. Bill was very sentimental over family treasures, so much so that he was upset every time he gazed at these treasures and thought of their original owners, so finally Bill packed up everything belonging to his

mother Pauline and her son John and he lovingly placed these objects in his attic. When the younger generation of Rehfeldts and Bruckners would visit Bill they would persuade him to let them go into the attic and enjoy looking at all these relics from the family's past.



On the 18th of August, 1873, Elisabeth was born. Elisabeth was born into the toilet, her head having struck the bottom of the outhouse toilet. Elisabeth was rather simple all of her life, and Pauline attributed this to the fact that Elisabeth had suffered a head injury at birth.

Tragedy struck this young family twice in one year. On the 25th day of July, 1876, little Edwin passed away at the tender age of 6 months, 2 weeks, a victim supposedly of tuberculosis. Then on the 25th of August, 1877, little Lizzie passed away, only 4 years and 7 days old. Both little children rest in stranger's ground, as Pauline and Charles did not at this time in their young marriage possess sufficient funds to bury their two children in a private cemetery. (But it was because the children were buried in a public cemetery that we had such easy access to these records as these records were in the possession of Burton Historical Library in Detroit.)

The next year, on the 19th of October, 1878, Mathilda (Tillie), the longest lived of the Rehfeldt children, was born. Tillie had a very sunny, happy disposition, which is characteristic of so many of the Bruckner family members, and also a very quick wit. Tillie was extraordinarily intelligent, and used her intelligence in helping others out of their dilemmas. Tillie was always there to offer a bit of assistance when needed. Tillie was quick to offer assistance, be it intellectual or financial. Tillie had a heart of gold, a heart that was unbelievably big! And you could always count on Tillie to find the bright side of life. Tillie had a sense of humor that was infectious. One always had a wonderful time when one was with Aunt Tillie, and one never heard an unkind word uttered against another falling from Tillie's lips. She was the kindest and dearest of persons. The one shame in life was that Tillie could not pursue a higher education due to the fact that she was a female in a time when a woman's place was in the home. That was certainly a big waste of an excellent mind.



TILLIE REHFELDT DOENCH MEINKE VANDERVOORT
& FRED MEINKE

Tillie was the oldest sister of Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl, and also her favorite. Tillie was very good to Nellie all her life. Tillie made Nellie's wedding dress by hand, gave Nellie her reception, and drove her to the train station for the start of their honeymoon. Years later, when Bill disappeared, Tillie often fed Nellie and her children and gave them carfare money. Tillie was always a light-hearted, good natured, loving person. When Nellie died in March, 1955, Tillie had been sick and could not go to Nellie's funeral, so she sent her best friend in her place so she could tell Tillie all about Nellie's funeral. Tillie died on the 23 of January, 1965. She was the longest lived of the Rehfeldt children.

On the 7th of January, 1881 Hattie was born. Hattie also had a very sunny disposition and was willing to lend a helping hand. Hattie, however, never had the time available to help as Tillie had as Hattie had a big family while Tillie had only one child, Helen.



HATTIE REHFELDT FORKEL

This is a picture of Nellie's sister Hattie when she was in her 40's. Hattie had a hard life after the depression. Her husband Ed lost all his real estate in the depression except their cottage on Elizabeth Lake. So the family moved to the cottage, and ended up staying there for the rest of their lives.

Charles Rehfeldt Jr. was born in 1883. He was the oldest of the surviving Rehfeldt sons and the only one to have children. Charles had two sons, Charles III and John. Only Charles III had children. He also had two daughters, Marge and Eleanor. He also had a very pleasant disposition and was a kind, mild mannered man.



CHARLES (BUD) REHFELDT
&
ANNA KRAFT REHFELDT

Nellie Rehfeldt was born on the 3rd of November, 1885, on the election day! Election day in those times was a very loud, boisterous, exciting day, full of loud talk, campaigning and drinking. It was a day full of hoopla! Nellie had a very fun loving, easy going nature. Nellie always had a smile on her face and a kind word on her lips.



NELLIE REHFELDT DAHL

14 years old

1899

This is what Nellie looked like when Bill was courting her. Nellie loved to go to the dance halls every Sunday afternoon and dance all day. She loved to dance and her dance card was always full because she was such an attractive young girl. Every Sunday night Nellie swore she would not go to the dance hall again because her legs hurt so badly. But the next Sunday Nellie would always be back out on the dance floor!

William Rehfeldt was born next, the youngest of the surviving sons. William married later in life to Margaret, as he spent his younger years caring for his mother Pauline and her youngest daughter, Lizzie. William and Margaret, unfortunately, never had any children. They lived in grandmother Rehfeldt's house on Emily St until their deaths in the 1950's.



William supported his mother Pauline, his sister Elisabeth and her two children William and Marie until he was in his 40's. William met and married Margaret and from then on he lived alone with his wife. Unfortunately they never had any children of their own. They are buried in Forestlawn cemetery.

The last of the surviving Rehfeldt children was Elisabeth, the second child in this family to be named. William Rehfeldt took care of his sister Elisabeth most of her life, and after he married Lizzie moved to an apartment two blocks away from her sister Tillie who then watched over her for the rest of her days, until Tillie became too paralyzed to go to Elisabeth's house. But Tillie continued to send others over to look after Lizzie.

Charles Rehfeldt Sr. was an accomplished musician. He could both play several instruments as well as conduct an orchestra. However, in those times one could not earn enough money to support one's family simply by playing an instrument or conducting an orchestra, so Charles painted houses on Grosse Isle in addition to conducting the

orchestra. Nellie used to accompany her father many times when he went to Grosse Isle to paint houses, and she would play with the neighborhood kids while her father painted houses. But Nellie would often lend him a helping hand by cleaning brushes, handing him equipment, trim brushes, etc. Nellie and her father would return home hand in hand in the evening, happy and tired from their day's labors. Nellie adored her father Charles, and she so enjoyed these quiet moments in which she had her father all to herself. Nellie was probably Charles' favorite child, and he was very proud of his little tomboy. Sometimes Nellie would have to share her dad with her oldest brother John as he would accompany Nellie and Charles on a painting job, helping his dad out. John also ventured into another line of work, becoming an apprentice tinsmith. But neither of these lines of work suited John as he was a true artist at heart. It was such a pity that John died in his prime before he could develop his talents.

John had painted a number of pictures in his lifetime, some of which he undoubtedly sold, as he was a very fine artist. It is a pity that John's unsold pictures fell into the hands of non-family members in the 1950's when his Uncle Bill died, leaving no children. These pictures ended up in the possession of his wife's children by her first marriage.

Nellie spoke very fondly of her father Charles all the days of her life, and she often said that she was sure that she was her father's favorite. One of Nellie's favorite stories was the one in which her father was coming home from work one day and he spotted his daughter Nellie in a field beating up on the neighborhood bully, a boy about a year older than Nellie. When Charles got closer, he now observed that Nellie was in the process of beating the bully over the head with a pump handle! (From an outside water well). Charles heartily encouraged his little Nellie with the words, "That's a girl! That's my lolly!" Nellie was a real tomboy in those days and Charles loved every dirty smudge on her adorable little body.



NELLIE REHFELDT DAHL

10 years

1895

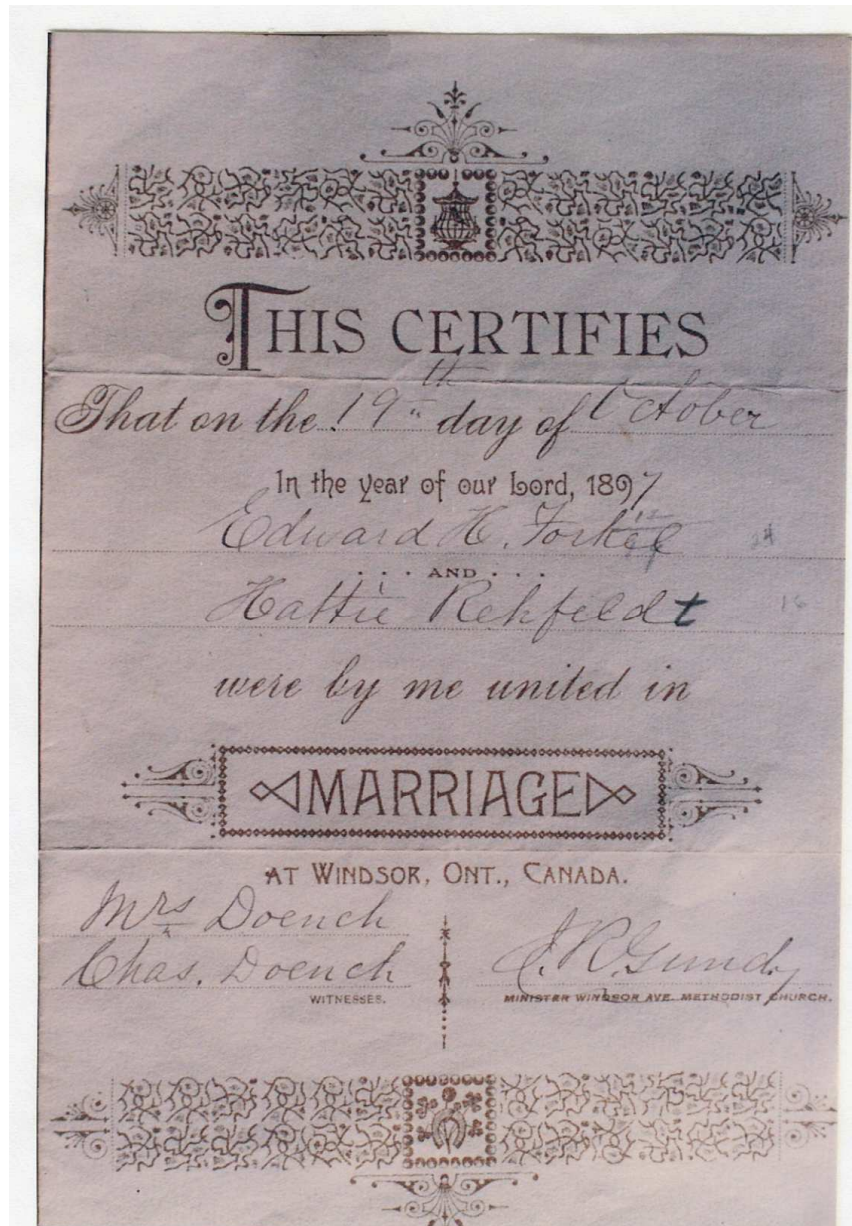
This is what Nellie looked like when she beat the kid over the head with the pump handle while her father looked on and encouraged her. This is also what she looked like when she had to drop out of school to nurse her father in his last days.

Tillie was the oldest sister of Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl, and also her favorite. Tillie was very good to Nellie all her life. Tillie made Nellie's wedding dress by hand, gave Nellie her reception, and drove her to the train station for the start of their honeymoon. Years later, when Bill disappeared, Tillie often fed Nellie and her children and gave them carfare money. Tillie was always a light-hearted, good natured, loving person. When Nellie died in March, 1955, Tillie had been sick and could not go to Nellie's funeral, so she sent her best friend in her place so she could tell Tillie all about Nellie's funeral. Tillie died on the 23 of January, 1965. She was the longest lived of the Rehfeldt children.

Nellie's sister had a hard life after the depression. Her husband Ed lost all his real estate in the depression except their cottage on Elizabeth Lake. So the family moved to the cottage, and ended up staying there for the rest of their lives.

Hattie's favorite story of her father, Charles, was that it was because of her father's penchant for a bucket of beer every Sunday afternoon that she met her husband, Edward

Forkel. Everyone had always remarked about how beautiful the Rehfeldt girls were, and beautiful young Hattie, dressed up in her Sunday best, went to the corner tavern to purchase a bucket of beer for 5 cents for her dad, Charles. Edward Forkel's father owned the corner tavern, and Edward happened to be there when Hattie stepped inside to purchase the bucket of beer, and Edward, knowing a beautiful girl when he saw one, made Hattie's acquaintance and the rest is history. Hattie Rehfeldt and Edward Forkel were married in the Windsor Ave Methodist Church in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, on the 19th of October in 1897, On Hattie's sister Tillie's 29th birthday. Hattie's sister, Mathilda (Tillie) Rehfeldt Downch, and her husband Charles Doench, were the matron of honor and the best man.



In 1896 the first tragedy struck the Rehfeldt family. Their beloved oldest son, John, was stricken by a mysterious illness and suddenly died. The doctors listed the official cause of death as tuberculosis, but the family steadfastly maintained that John died of the side effects of a vaccination that he had just received. The vaccination story is the far more plausible story of the two as we have a picture of John taken the year before he died, and he does not appear to be the least bit ill or emaciated, a typical look of one who was slowly dying of consumption. And John had too much vigor in his last year to have had T. B.

The family lived at 692 Beaubien at the time that John died, but the cemetery records listed 355 Erskine as the official residence for John. Possibly John was married and lived with his wife at this address. Theresa Rehfeldt was listed as the one who purchased John's cemetery plot, possibly Theresa was his wife. And being there were 4 graves purchased at that time, I wonder if John might have had children. John's plot was purchased by a Theresa Rehfeldt in section 41Y of Trinity Lutheran several days after John passed away. Theresa was listed as having worked only one year, in 1896, as a housekeeper for Charles Bruckner, Pauline's brother. Charles Bruckner evidently had a heart of gold, having hired Theresa as his way of helping her pay for the 4 cemetery plots. She used the money that she received from working for Charles Bruckner in order to pay for the 4 cemetery plots for her beloved John. If John was her husband, Charles Bruckner may have also hired her as a maid in order to kindly provide her with a roof over her head until she could get back on her feet again after the untimely death of her husband. Theresa even had a headstone set on John's grave so that he would never be forgotten.

Charles Rehfeldt had one known sibling, Louis (Ludwig) Rehfeldt. Very little is known about Ludwig at this time. It is also not known whether Charles and Ludwig were accompanied on their journey to America by their parents or not, but we would assume that the parents did come with the children, as Charles was only 19 years old when he married Pauline, and he was already in America at this point in time, and teenagers do not usually set sail to America alone, as this is too arduous a journey to undertake for one so young.

In 1920 Theresa Rehfeldt sold the remaining 2 graves of the 4 grave Rehfeldt family plot to a Lambert family in Utica, Michigan. In the interim between 1896 when Theresa purchased the Rehfeldt family plot in Trinity Lutheran cemetery, and 1920 when she sold it, she had married, and her married name was now Bender. William Dahl and Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl purchased their home on Seyburn about 1918 from a Lambert family, and it is wondered whether this could be the same Lambert family, as the two transactions occurred only 2 years apart, and within the same family.

Charles Rehfeldt Sr. conducted a band and played an instrument on what was called "rooftop gardens" in those days. People used to sit on top of multi-story buildings in Detroit, where they would drink beer while listening to live bands play their favorite songs. (Usually good old fashioned German songs sung in their native tongue, the same ones that they themselves had sung as children on their native soil not so many years

ago). On May 13, 1898, Charles Rehfeldt, still heavy with grief over losing his oldest son in his prime, was conducting an orchestra, while imbibing in the liquid stuff with the spectators during intermissions. In all probability Charles Rehfeldt had had enough to drink that particular day, as he managed somehow to step right off the roof! He fell to the pavement below, badly shattering his leg bones. The doctor called to treat Charles told him that his leg would have to be amputated if he were to survive. Charles refused to allow his leg to be amputated, which might not have been an unwise decision, considering the crude surgical skills of the day, the lack of antibiotics, and the infancy of anesthesia. Charles lay in his bed at home for the next 2 months, suffering horribly. His wife Pauline went out to work to pay their ever mounting bills, and Charles beloved little Nellie was taken out of school to nurse the daddy that she so adored. Nellie loved her dad very deeply, and cherished every moment of being near to him and being able in some small way to ease his discomfort. Nellie, as well as all of her brothers and sisters, remember well that momentous May 13th when they were told of their father's grievous injuries. Nellie told me in the last year of her life how she remembers her mother coming to school to take her out in the middle of the day because her father had been injured. Nellie said that little did she realize as she left the classroom that day that she would never again see the inside of a schoolroom in her lifetime. She also had no idea of the serious consequences of her father's leg injury.

Charles' injured leg became badly infected and little could be done as there were no antibiotics in those times. Nellie nursed her father with devotion, religiously doing all the treatments that the doctor had told her to do. But love was not enough to save her father, for on the 13th of July, 1898, delirious with pain and fever that racked his entire body, Charles quietly passed from the face of the earth. Nellie was inconsolable! How hard she fought to save her father! And her best efforts were all in vain! What had she done wrong, or not good enough that he died? Nellie, 12 years old, was without the father she had loved so very dearly. The other Rehfeldt children were equally affected by the loss of their father. Charles had been a very dear father and now he was no more. Pauline grievously missed her husband, both as a person, and for his emotional and financial support in raising their large family. (at the time Charles died, Pauline had born him a baker's dozen of children, most of whom did not survive infancy). In mid July, 1898, Charles Rehfeldt was laid to rest beside his 25 year old son, John, just 2 years, one and half month later. It seemed as though John had called his father to be with him. Charles was the last burial in this Rehfeldt plot as Pauline was buried 28 years later in Elmwood cemetery beside her sister Louisa Bruckner Schonau Herbertz as the remaining graves in the Rehfeldt plot had been sold to the Lambert family. No head stone had been set on Charles' grave as his family was too poor to afford such a luxury at the time.

Pauline was now forced to go outside and work on a daily basis in order to support herself and her family. Pauline was also unable to maintain the family residence at 692 Beaubien, and in addition, this home probably held too many tragic memories for her to want to remain there, so in 1898 she and her children moved to 245 Rowena. For many years Pauline Burckner Rehfeldt worked for many of the wealthiest families in Detroit, the most famous being the Stroh family who is world famous for their brewery on Gratiot ave just outside of downtown Detroit. Pauline said that she would wash, starch, and iron

petticoats and pantaloons for the Stroh girls by the hour. Sometimes her daughter Hattie would come along with her to help with all of the housework in the Stroh residence. Pauline's younger daughter Nellie would stay home to take care of the younger children and do the housework at the Rehfeldt residence.

In 1900 Pauline and her children moved to 236 Canfield ave, now located across the street from St. Josaphat Church and one short block from I-75 freeway. (St. Josaphat Church can be plainly seen from I-75 as it sets right on the service drive of the freeway). Pauline watched St. Josaphat's Church being built as she would sit out on her porch on the warm summer evenings. Pauline liked to entertain her neighborhood lady friends on her day off, and she would set out an attractive luncheon for them. Pauline also observed another coming and going as she sat on her porch across from St. Josaphat Church. Pauline would smile a little to herself as she would watch the Catholic priest ride by with a lady friend in his carriage. The priest would so coyly sneak his friend out of the carriage and into the rectory that he never had a clue that the neighbors were sitting in their parlors enjoying all the comings and goings of the rectory! Pauline finished raising her younger children in this house. Nellie was married from this house on the 6th of September, 1906 and the youngest children William, Charles, and Elizabeth grew up here and went out into the world to earn a living.



William Rehfeldt

Brother of Nellie C. Rehfeldt Dahl
Nephew of Edward Bruckner I

Pauline then moved to 252 Alexandrine St. where she resided for only one short year before moving to a delightful home at 109 Antietam St. in Detroit, about 4 blocks away from eastern market. Pauline's sister Louisa Herbertz may have been instrumental in getting Pauline this house as Louisa lived right down the street and she was quite well off financially, her second husband, Dr. Herbertz, being a doctor of medicine, and her first husband, Henry Schonau, having left her a goodly sum of money and a house upon his demise. It is believed that the house at 109 Antietam belonged to Henry Schonau prior to his death, and that Louisa allowed Pauline to move in when she married Dr. Herbertz and moved into his home at 2001 Antietam, which was only a block away from 109 Antietam. Pauline moved into 109 Antietam in 1913, the year her granddaughter, Marie Dahl Bender was born.

Pauline's sons were good to her. In 1899, Charles Rehfeldt Jr, only 15 years old, went to work as a shipping clerk for Snedcor and Hathaway. He worked there for 3 years, and then became a packer. In 1902 he worked as a laborer, and in 1903 he became a painter like his father before him. It was in the year 1903 that William went to work as a clerk for Snedcor and Hathaway. In 1905 Charles became a driver and William became a packer. In 1907 Charles was a shoe truer and William was a clerk. Pauline Rehfeldt continued to work as a domestic in the home of a well-to-do family, and was ironing in the basement during an electrical storm, when her iron was struck by lightning!

In 1906 Pauline's younger daughter Nellie was married to William Frederick Dahl, a young man she had been dating for 5 years. Nellie and Bill had met at age 15 while ballroom dancing, a very popular Sunday afternoon pastime just before the turn of the century. Nellie was married to Bill in Sacred Heart Church, a church that Bill had attended all of his life, which was located at 1000 Eliot St. on the near east side of Detroit, presently located near Mack and the I-75 freeway. (This church can be seen while driving by on I-75). The reception afterwards was held at her sister, Tillie Rehfeldt Doench's house at 686 Baker St. on the near west side of Detroit, a block from Clark Park. (Nellie often enjoyed telling the following story about Clark Park on the near west side of Detroit. Nellie says when she was very young, about 5 years old, she used to live about a block away from Clark Park and used to go there often to play. Nellie said that one day she was in the park, playing by herself, when all of a sudden a man came up behind her, put his arm around her and started to carry her away! Suddenly Nellie's brother Charles came into the park to play, saw the man with his arm around his sister taking her away, and started screaming bloody murder and running toward the man and his sister Nellie. When Charles started raising all that ruckus, the man let go of Nellie and ran away! That sure was a close call for little Nellie!)



When Bill was courting her, Nellie loved to go to the dance halls every Sunday afternoon and dance all day. She loved to dance and her dance card was always full because she was such an attractive young girl. Every Sunday night Nellie swore she would not go to the dance hall again because her legs hurt so badly. But the next Sunday Nellie would always be back out on the dance floor!



NELLIE'S BRIDAL BOUQUET
6th of September, 1906

This is Nellie on her wedding day. This picture is a high-lite of Nellie's bridal bouquet, and also her tiny waist.

Tillie was the best of sisters, warm, loving, kind and generous. Tillie used to make all of Nellie's dresses and used to fix Nellie's hair in a very becoming style every time Nellie went out on a date with Bill. And now on Nellie's wedding day Tillie had made her wedding gown and again fixed her hair. But Nellie did not look her very best that day. For Nellie was so worried about getting married that she couldn't sleep a wink and had cried half of the night with worry. And unknown to Nellie, Bill was just as worn out from staying up all night worrying too! But Tillie made the day a very memorable one for her little sister. Other than the church arrangements, which were the bailiwick of the Dahl family as they were the Catholics, Tillie had made all of the arrangements for the wedding and had the reception in her house.

Nellie's wedding gown was outstandingly beautiful, with much fine lace detail lovingly worked into it by her sister Tillie. And Nellie was so proud of her small waist line in those days. Tillie dressed Nellie on the wedding day, fixed her hair, and set the headpiece into her hairdo. Tillie was so proud of her little sister that day!

The Rehfeldt family felt strange in the Sacred Heart Catholic Church that day as they were protestants, both in Germany and in their new homeland, and the Catholic Church services seemed rather strange to them. But to Nellie what seemed the most strange that day was the fact that the father who loved her so dearly in her childhood was not here to give her away on this, the most important day of her life. I am sure that Nellie fervently hoped that he would be there with her that day in spirit. (Bill had the same ache in his heart on the wedding day as his father was also deceased, both Nellie and he having lost their fathers within a year and a half of one another.)



Tillie sure was a loving sister that day, but not that night! Bill & Nellie slept at Tillie and Chuck Doench's house on the evening of the 6th of September, 1906, after the wedding reception as they were planning on leaving by the nearby train station for Niagara Falls the next day. So Tillie, who always loved a good laugh, decided to have a little fun at her little sister's expense. It seems that Tillie (not loving Tillie, surely?) snuck into Nellie's and Bill's suitcase while they weren't looking and sewed up the arms and bottoms of Nellie's new nightgowns and Bill's sleeping shirt. Bill and Nellie sat on the edge of the bed in Tillie's guest bedroom and very patiently undid the million fine stitches that Tillie had gleefully put into their sleeping clothes. Nellie and Bill, both bashful on their first night together, blushed scarlet while removing those stitches! I have a strong feeling that Tillie was no longer Nellie's favorite sister, at least not for the remainder of the night! But the night shirt episode turned out not to be the only one that night! Once Nellie and Bill undid all the stitches, bashfully changed their clothes and got into bed, lo and behold, Tillie had another surprise waiting for them. Tillie had filled the bedsheets full of rice! Tillie was full of the dickens, and I am sure that she giggled and laughed halfway into the night, on that September 6, 1906! But Nellie and Bill dead like a dog from no sleep the night before and all of the festivities of the wedding day, were not in the mirthful mood.

Nellie and Bill left Tillie Rehfeldt Doench's home the next day and traveled by train to Niagara Falls for their honeymoon. (Tillie's house was only a few short blocks from the train station on the near west side of Detroit). After their honeymoon in Niagara Falls they returned to Detroit and lived with Nellie's mother Pauline Rehfeldt for a short time, then moved into a place of their own, returning briefly to stay with Pauline Rehfeldt in 1909 and then again in 1910.

Nellie and Bill's first child Mildred Dahl Stocker was born at 693 Hastings St. in Detroit on the 3rd day of May, 1908. She was a pretty blue eyed, blonde haired child, and full of spirit, a trait that she maintained all of her life. Mildred Dahl Stocker married George Stocker on the 5th of June, 1979(?) in a large wedding ceremony, then living with his parents for about the next 5 years before striking out on their own. Mildred had 4 children, two of whom died in infancy, and a third, Earl George Stocker who died at the age of 6 of acute appendicitis, an affliction common in the Dahl side of the family. A fourth child, Doris survived into adulthood.

Nellie and Bill's second daughter, Dorothy, was born in Pauline Rehfeldt's house on the twenty-seventh of December, 1909 at 236 Canfield. Dorothy was another pretty blue-eyed, blonde daughter. But Bill was a little disappointed as he was hoping for a son.

Nellie and Bill's third child, Elenore Dahl McKinnin was born on Hastings St. on the 12th of February, 1912. Elenore differed from the first two daughters in appearance in that she was brown haired, brown eyed like her mother Nellie. (The first two girls looked like their father Bill in coloring in that he was blondish haired and blue eyed). Elenore resembled her mother Nellie in build, voice and shape of her hands.

Nellie's fourth child, Marie Dahl Bender, was born on the 13th of November, 1913 near what is now Van Dyke and the I-94 freeway. When Marie was born Nellie asked if it was a boy or a girl. When the doctor replied that it was a girl, Nellie said, "Another girl!?!?, take her away!!" But Marie got even with them! Marie was so small when she was born that the doctor feared for her health, so he wrapped her up, placed her in a cigar box and put her in the oven to warm her up! The ten days later Marie caught the whooping cough and Bill, her father, figured that it was the end of her for sure. Bill used to put his finger down her throat to pull up the mucus to keep her from choking to death. The parents had her baptized only 10 days after she was born as they were sure she wouldn't make it. And while they were baptizing Marie, they thought of something else that they had neglected last year, their daughter Elenore had not yet been baptized. So Marie went to the altar in the arms of her godmother Anna Kraft while her sister Elenore walked up the aisle.

Nellie and Bill's fifth child was born 1 ½ years later, their boy at last! They named their first son William Frederick Dahl Jr. They spoiled their little Willie to death! William always seemed to be Nellie's favorite child as she had waited so long for her first boy, but Bill, on the other hand seemed to prefer his little "Weewee" (Marie), maybe because he almost lost her at birth.

Bill and Nellie's sixth and last child was Harold Joseph Dahl, born on the 21st of August, 1917. Harold, no doubt had a rough first year of life as his mother was dreadfully sick before and after he was born. When Nellie was about 3 months pregnant with Harold she suddenly developed a paralysis that involved her entire body. This paralysis lasted until Shorty (Harold) was nearly a year old.

Tragedy struck Pauline's life twice in one year in 1917. First, Pauline's daughter Nellie suffered from a paralysis and needed someone to help with the house and the children as she was unable to rise from her sick bed for over one year. Pauline would go over to Nellie's house several times per week to help with the house, children and Nellie's personal needs. Hattie and Tillie would go over to Nellie's house often although both sisters had small children of their own, especially Hattie who had about 6 children at this time. Then on the 10th of November, 1917, on a day when no one was at Nellie's house, Nellie's daughter Dorothy was sitting on the back steps of her grandma Dahl's porch down below talking to a friend. Her sister Mildred was standing up above on the upper porch, saw her sister Dorothy, and started spitting at her from up above. Dorothy left the porch due to this and walked around to the front of the house. While in the front of the house Dorothy saw a school mate across the street. The school friend called to Dorothy to come across the street. Dorothy darted into the street without looking. A truck barely missed her, then a car struck her and she went flying up into the air like a rag doll, then bounced off the pavement and landed in a heap, like a pile of rags. She was covered with blood from head to foot, and every bone in her little body was broken. Her face was so badly damaged that she was not really too recognizable. The man who hit her lived on that block and was sure he had hit his own daughter. Mr. Zanith, the driver of the car, was then told that the girl he struck was one of the Dahl children. He felt just awful and he never really got over this shock to his nervous system. Bill's mother lived downstairs

from Bill and Nellie so she practically saw the accident happen. Little Elenore went running upstairs to her mother shouting "Dorty hurt, Dorty hurt!" Nellie said she was frozen with terror as she feared that something dreadful had happened but she was unable to move a muscle to get out of bed to see what had happened to her child. And at the same time, Dorothy's father Bill was coming home from work in his car and was upset because the traffic was backed up all the way to Mt. Elliott and he had to get out of his car and walk. As Bill was coming down Kercheval when he heard the crowd all murmur "Here comes the father now!" Bill saw his freshly dead daughter in a pool of blood in the drugstore laying on the floor just inside the door, and promptly went into shock. He thought it was his older daughter Mildred who had the same coloring and was about the same size, but Mildred met him on the sidewalk and said "No pa, it wasn't me, it was Dorothy!" Bill then went to Pauline's house a little later after making all the arrangements to have his daughter removed from the drugstore and taken to the funeral parlor, and after having broken the news to his wife Nellie. On the 12th of November, 1917 (9 years to the very day before Pauline Bruckner Rehfeldt was to pass away on the 12th of November, 1926) little Dorothy Dahl, Pauline's granddaughter, was laid to rest in the babyland section of Mt. Olivet cemetery in Detroit. It was a shame that she could not have been buried next to her grandfather, Charles Rehfeldt. Little Dorothy, 8 years old, and gone forever, just because she failed to look both ways before crossing the street. A very high price to pay for one small act of disobedience.

For months after Dorothy's death Nellie was inconsolable, so Pauline and her daughters went frequently to Nellie's to console her and to help her out. Mr. Zanith, the man who struck Dorothy, was also inconsolable. He purchased a new coat for Nellie to attend the funeral, and then he paid for physical therapy sessions for Nellie to regain the use of her limbs. Pauline and her family babysat, and Dodge Main sent a car over for Nellie to be taken to physical therapy. Nellie had to be laid down on the back seat of the car due to her paralysis, and every mile was an agony for Nellie as she suffered from severe muscle spasms when jostled around. But within the year Nellie was able to walk and to function fairly normally again, but her muscles were never quite the same, and she suffered from a Parkinson like tremor and bending forward and pigeon toed walk in the later years due to this undefined paralysis suffered in 1917.

But Dorothy's death was a void that no one could fill, and whenever Pauline would visit Nellie, she couldn't help but look at the big Teddy Bear on the stool in the front parlor and think of the little blue eyed, blonde haired girl who would never again play with her big teddy bear or sit on her little stool.

One of Pauline's favorite pastimes in the evening was to go visit one of her daughters and they would go with Pauline to the silent movies. Pauline and Nellie would sit side by side in the show, watching the jerky movements of the characters on the silent screen, read the lines that appeared on the bottom of the picture screen explaining what was happening to the characters in the movies and what they were saying to one another, and listening to the piano player play the ever increasingly frantic music as the heroine would find herself in ever increasing peril. Pauline could not read the screen by herself so Nellie used to read it to her.

What everyone remembers best about the silent screen movies was the fact that the movie would build up into an absolute fever pitch of excitement, and then the lights to the movie house would come on and it would be announced across the screen that the movie would continue next week. Well, naturally, every one would return the next week to see what happened to their heroine. Then a new movie would start that same night, work into a fever pitch, then the new movie would end right at the climax, and be continued next week. This would assure a steady return of customers, eager to learn how the movie ended. One of the famous series of silent movies that Pauline would watch was a series entitled "The Perils Of Pauline". Pauline was the heroine in each story, and every week she would find herself in mortal danger. Then the movie would end, and the next week, just in the nick of time, a hero, usually tall, dark and handsome would come along and save her! Pauline often pointed out to Nellie and Nellie's children, that her cousin, now retired, Hermann Bruckner, would occasionally be the piano player in the silent movie shows, probably more as a source of entertainment for himself than as a source of retirement income. There was also a Bruckner who had a minor part in the movie screen that Pauline would point out as being a relative. But no one seems to remember the name of that Bruckner.

Pauline used to have her family over often for Sunday dinner and she used to cook for days in preparation of this Sunday feast. Mildred Dahl Stocker and other grandchildren remember going to grandma Rehfeldt's house both on Antietam and on Emily and looking at her side board filled with every pie, cake and pastry imaginable. No matter what one's taste was, there was something there to please the most finicky of eaters. And the main courses! There were 4 or 5 different choices of meat, as well as potatoes, and a large variety of vegetables. After the many visitors were fed, there was always plenty left over. Mildred Dahl Stocker remembers talking grandma Rehfeldt out of the goodies before supper.

The two things that every single grandchild remembers Grandma Rehfeldt for were her wonderful cooking, but more importantly, her kindness, and her friendly, gentle way. No matter who you would ask about grandma Rehfeldt, the first thing anyone says about her is, "Boy, she was a wonderful grandma! She was so good, so kind, always with a warm, friendly inviting smile on her face I liked her so much!" Mildred remembers Aunt Louise always being at the family Sunday dinners on Antietam in Detroit. Mildred remembers her as not feeling too well, and Louise would often be reclining on the couch. Grandma Rehfeldt would always buy candy for her grandchildren when they would come to visit, but grandma Rehfeldt would always offer her sister Louise first choice from the bag of candy. Mildred always thought that rather odd, but figured that Louise must have had a rather sweet tooth, but was somewhat choosy over her choice of sweets.

On the 5th day of June, 1921, Louise was old and very tired, and knew she was not much longer for this earth, so she went to Elmwood cemetery, walked into the office, and declared that she was the rightful owner of the East ½ of lot 81, section 3, but was no longer in possession of the papers to this lot as she had lost her papers in a house fire some years back. She stated that she wanted to be buried next to her first husband, Henry

Schoenau, and that her sister Pauline Bruckner Rehfeldt was to be buried at her side. On the 27th of December, 1921, on what would have been her grandniece's Dorothy Dahl's 13th birthday, at the age of 77 years, 5 months and 20 days, Louisa Bruckner slipped away, her old and tired heart seeking its final rest. At her instructions, the ashes of her second husband, Dr. Fred Herbertz, which she had preserved for years in a fruit jar, was buried with her. Louisa left all her earthly possessions, including \$33,000 to her two siblings, Charles Bruckner and Pauline Bruckner Rehfeldt. Pauline inherited Louisa's house on Antietam that Pauline and her family had been living in for years, and Charles inherited the house that belonged to Dr. Herbertz and was left to Louise upon the death of Dr. Herbertz. All of Louise's possessions were put into a large barn behind Pauline's house, and Pauline told all her children and grandchildren to come and take whatever they so desired out of the barn. Louisa had many pieces of china, and knickknacks that were claimed by her many nieces and grandnieces. The \$33,000 was split equally between Pauline and Charles. Charles died on the 1st of November, 1923, and left his inheritance to his children, Edward Bruckner, Henrietta Bruckner Ingabrand, and his daughter by his second marriage, whom he had named after his mother and his sister, Louisa Bruckner.

In 1923 tragedy again struck the life of Pauline Bruckner Rehfeldt. Her old enemy, tuberculosis, claimed another member of her family, her 23 year old grandchild, Hattie, the oldest daughter of her daughter Hattie. Young Hattie contracted tuberculosis and was sent to Texas to hopefully get over this dreaded disease and return home to her young husband and infant son. While in a sanitarium in Texas, the doctor did a needle puncture of her lung to drain the fluid away. Hattie developed a virulent infection from the puncture and died. Hattie I and several of her children were in Texas with young Hattie when she died. Hattie I asked her older daughter Ruth, who had remained behind in Detroit, to ask her grandmother Pauline Rehfeldt if Hattie could borrow \$500 so she could return to Detroit with her family and bury Hattie in the Forkel family plot here in Michigan. Pauline most readily lent Hattie I the money and the family returned to Detroit and buried young Hattie. Hattie I was crushed by the death of her oldest daughter, and was physically and spiritually replete for a time after her beloved young daughter died. Pauline often came over to her daughter Hattie's house and helped her out. One day Hattie told her mother Pauline that she did intend to repay the money that she had borrowed to bury Hattie, and at this point Pauline told her daughter that she had given her inheritance from her sister Louisa a lot of thought since young Hattie had died, and that she had decided that it was much better to share the money with her family while they were young and had a real need for the money rather than to make them wait until she herself died and willed it to them at a time when the children would be older and in a better financial position. She realized that the money wouldn't mean nearly as much to them later on as it would at this time in their lives. Pauline told Hattie that her life would have been so much better, both for herself and for her children, if Louisa had shared her wealth with Pauline in the very lean years right after Charles had died, rather than wait until Pauline was 72 years old, and well taken care of by her grown children. So Pauline, after much soul searching, decided to give each of her oldest grandchildren the sum of \$500, and with each of her children she would share most of her inheritance now. As Hattie I was the oldest child, her funeral expenses were her inheritance from the

grandmother who had loved her. Pauline used her inheritance to purchase for both of her sons, Charles and William, a home at 7592 and 7598 Emily St. in Detroit, near 7 mile off Van Dyke. The rest of the cash she split share and share alike with her daughters. Pauline then sold her little home on Antietam to the coal company whose yard was next to her home, and the coal company razed her house to enlargen their yard. A sad end to a house that had seen first hand so much of our family history. Pauline then moved in with her son William at 7598 Emily. She took all her treasures with her, including her pictures painted years and years ago by her late, beloved son, John. She also took with her a large wooden music box, 2 alabaster vases, and other assorted valuable curios.

The home on Antietam, which was purchased by the Cornillie coal company, is the one that her children and grandchildren seem to remember the best. We have no pictures of the home, only one picture taken of the Rehfeldt and Dahl children on the sidewalk in front of the home. This home on Antietam had a side entrance off a common paved walkway that she shared with her son who lived next door. The side entrance led into a parlor, and of the main parlor was a side parlor, which was reserved for company, and in which hung John's painting of "Fritz's Last Travel" and also his own self portrait hung in this parlor. Off the main living room there was a bedroom. Next to the main living room was a dining room and off the dining room there was a second bedroom. In the back of the house there was a large, airy, well lighted kitchen which extended across the entire back side of the house. This kitchen did not appear to be a part of the original architecture of the house and was probably added on some years later. None of the grandchildren can remember a bathroom being in the house, so the backyard of Pauline's house there was a very large barn-like garage. When Aunt Louise died Pauline put all of Louise's possessions in the barn and told her children and grandchildren to come and get whatever they would like. Eleanor Forkel Pierce has a chocolate set and a tea pot that belonged to Louise, and then later to her grandmother Pauline. In the middle of the yard there was a large grape arbor between Pauline's and her sons' house. There was no fence separating the two backyards. The house itself was a one story white wooden house with a lot of fancy scrollwork, in the gingerbread fashion.



Chocolate Set given to Nellie Rehfeldt
by her mother Pauline Bruckner Rehfeldt
upon the death of Paulina's sister
Louisa Bruckner Schonau Herbertz

1921

Grandmother Pauline Bruckner Rehfeldt was healthy most of her life and was robust in her old age. Her family used to come over to her home for Sunday dinner and she would cook three kinds of meat and many side dishes for her family. She was an excellent cook, and loved to cook foods which pleased her family members the most. Ruth Forkel Everett remembers that whenever she went to her grandmother Rehfeldt's house, her grandmother would always fix her favorite dish, vanilla pudding with crushed strawberries.

Grandmother Rehfeldt had three known afflictions: a fallen uterus due to the number of children she had bore (13), and the long hours of standing on her feet while she worked for others. Grandmother Rehfeldt also had a touch of asthma. Grandmother's most serious affliction in her older years was her Bright's disease, which in laymen's terms is kidney failure. The undertaker had said to the family that he had removed over 100 pounds of fluid from her body that had accumulated as a result of her kidney failure! On the 12th day of November, 1926, our beloved Pauline Bruckner Rehfeldt, now 77 years, 4 months and 21 days old, quietly passed away when her kidneys stopped functioning, stopped more as a result of old age than of disease.

Thus ended the life of a beautiful, loving, kindly, gentle soul who had been born in Heidelberg, Germany, came to America on a boat from the port of Hamburg and settled in America. In her lifetime she had seen the invention of the automobile, the

phonograph, the silent movies, electricity, indoor plumbing, as well as the airplane. Pauline was a warm, loving grandmother who went out of her way to please her family and to make them feel more than welcome when they came into her home. Her grandchildren's friends were always welcome when they came into her home. Pauline had a very happy, pleasing disposition. She proved her love and concern for her family by going out to work after her beloved Charles had died, and by so generously sharing her inheritance from Louisa with her children when they were still young enough to enormously profit from this money. Pauline's kindness lived on in the hearts of her daughters, and we are all richer for having been the children and grandchildren of such beautiful women like Hattie, Tillie, and Nellie. Pauline is gone from out midst now, having joined her beloved Charles, and her son John, and grandchildren Hattie and Dorothy. But as we all well know, our beloved Pauline will not be forgotten by those who knew and loved her so well.



PAULINA BRÜCKNER REHFELDT
mother of
NELLIE C. REHFELDT DAHL
1919



Paulina Brückner Rehfeldt
1923



PAULINA BRUCKNER REHFELDT
1924



TILLIE REHFELDT MEINKE. FRED MEINKE AND
TILLIE'S GRANDSON. GUY FONTAINE

1928



THE VASE GIVEN BY 11 YR OLD NEILLIE TO
HER SISTER TILLIE ON TILLIE'S WEDDING
DAY

OCTOBER 1897

THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN OUTSIDE OF PAULINE REHFELDT'S HOME ON ANTIETAM ST.



SOME DESCENDENTS OF PAULINE REHFELDT

From left Pauline's grandchildren are:

1. Elenore Dahl McKinin, daughter of Bill & Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl.
- 2.
3. William Rehfeldt, son of Elizabeth Rehfeldt
4. Charles Rehfeldt, son of Charles Rehfeldt and Anna Kraft.
5. Dorothy Dahl, daughter of Bill & Nellie Rehfeldt Dahl.
6. Marie Rehfeldt, daughter of Elizabeth Rehfeldt.
7. Mildred Dahl Stocker, daughter of Nellie Rehfeldt & Bill Dahl.
- 8 & 9. The Dietrick children, neighbors only.



HATTIE REHFELDT FORKEL
& EDWARD FORKEL

1950



HATTIE REHFELDT FORKEL
sister of
NELIE REHFELDT DAHL.
1960



CHARLES (BUD) REHFELDT
&
MARGIE REHFELDT MORAN
HIS DAUGHTER
1957