

Johann Penner, Pastwa, 1817; Peter Unrau, Franzthal, 1819; Cornelius Funk, Schardau, 1819; Peter Schmidt, Waldheim, 1819; Johann Wiebe\*, Rudnerweide, 1833; Jacob Janzen\* (died 1854), Schardau, 1833; Johann Peters\*, Friedensdorf, 1834; Daniel Janzen, Schardau, 1840; Abraham Matthies, Rudnerweide, 1840. *Diakonen*: Franz Görtz, Alexanderwohl, 1809; Aron Dirck, Pastwa, 1817; Cornelius Richert\*,

Franzthal, 1819; David Nickel\*, Rudnerweide, 1840; (Gerhard Kliewer\*, Schardau, 1840).

#### Gemeinde zu Gnadenfeld

*Ältester*: Friedrich Wilh. Lange, Gnadenfeld, 1839, zum Ältesten berufen 1841.

*Lehrer*: Benjamin Lange, Gnadenfeld, 1830;

Abraham Retzlaff, Gnadenfeld, 1830; Abraham Sudermann\* (b. 1790), Berdjanski, 1823 auf Heubuden bei Marienburg in Preussen gewählt und im Jahr 1840 nach Russland gezogen.

*Diakonen*: David Voth, Gnadenfeld, 1814; Martin Unruh, Gnadenfeld, 1830; Abraham Rempel, Gnadenfeld, 1842.

---

## A Short, Short Story About an Old, Old Notebook

by Lorraine Frantz Edwards\*

A late evening phone call...a friendly voice...arrangements to meet...the romance begins: a cousin romance of excited chattering about grandparents, aunts, uncles....

In our fifties; face-to-face for the first time; so much to talk about; so little time. "Bye; let's get together again...."

Long after they're gone, I thumb through the pages of the loose-leaf notebook they loaned me. First cousins, once-removed, had obviously spent years collecting information on their relatives (not all of them "my" relatives). My evaluation of their book: laborious labor of love.

I'm a writer and I aspire to publish two family history books. I'm preparing my books in a late-20th-century method: computer and desktop publishing.

However, I must give credit to nineteenth and twentieth century relatives who have preserved part of their heritage on scraps of paper tucked into a Bible. Where would I be without their record of names?

I'm a compiler of Showalter family history. At least two dozen people (some

total strangers) have shared their data with me and their information may have come from two dozen sources.

With my computer, I am able to "file" information on each individual, "store" the data, "search" (for names), and "retrieve" (names and info.). This two-inch thick notebook of information promised to supply dates and/or spouses that I did not have.

As much as I love my computer (and refrigerated air conditioning in my car and home!), I want to be sensitive to the time and energy that went into preparation of this loose-leaf notebook. I want to know more about my forefathers. I'd like to insure that their names are preserved forever!

My grandparents, John and Ina Bird (Smith) Showalter, and six children left Oklahoma in 1920. In California, they found work in the orchards and orange packing houses.

My early years were spent in and around packing houses but I was too young to understand the process of "grading" and "packing." Permit me, however, to draw an analogy between now and then:

- letters (and notebooks) come down the "conveyer belt"
- information is "graded"
- ultimately "packed" and
- eventually "marketed."

The product is different: they handled oranges; I handle information. Times have changed: the small farms of my Pennsylvania and Virginia ancestors are gone; the

orange groves of my youth have been replaced by subdivisions.

Handle enough information, grade enough fruit, and you weed out the inferior data, the culls. Somewhere along the line, someone tried to hang our family on the wrong branch.

Prior to perusal of the loose-leaf notebook, another cousin provided information regarding her extensive research of census and court records.

She states: "Magdalena's Letters of Administration listed her children's names, one of whom was Noah. I feel that this definitely established Noah as the son of Abraham (son of Henry) born about 1791, and Magdalena (also known as Mary Magdalena Ronk Showalter) born about 1792. They were married March 12, 1812, in Botetourt, Va."

In the loose-leaf notebook, an unmistakably old piece of paper (dated 1953) lists Noah Showalter, son of Abraham, with his wife and children. Noah's brothers, listed on the yellowed page, are identical to those listed by my cousin in her 1985 research.

Further, this charming bit of folklore is inscribed on the aged paper: "Abraham—wife cut 3rd set of teeth at age 85."

I'm curious (aren't you?) about whether Magdalena Ronk Showalter's subsequent teeth were "normal."

I wonder if any Ronk/Showalter researchers have additional information on this phenomenon.

---

\*This compiler of Showalter/Frantz family history lives in the high desert north of Los Angeles at P. O. Box 2076, Lancaster, CA 93539-2076. Author of "My Favorite Genealogy Software Program" in the July 1988 *MFH*, she will gladly exchange information on these two surnames and related families.