That Led to This

by Erna Romberg Bartels

Written in the 1960s

Erna Romberg Bartels, age 52

1. Introduction

This story, which I choose to call "That Led to This," is mainly about the children of my parents. It was written not with intention to boast but to give descendants of this family a better idea of what things were really like. I have written according to what I have been told and as I remember things, and I do not claim that everything is exactly correct.

This story is of two ages. One is the horse and wagon age: making a living at home, saving, and rare trips by wagon or train. The other is the auto age: war and inflation, a depression, more wars and inflation, better homes with many electrical appliances, eight-hour work days, complaints about hunger, government handouts to many, 16 hours of TV, hippies, riots, and trips to the moon.

In 1870 my grandparents Mackensen moved from their Holland, Texas, farm to Belton where Grandfather bought a store. Caroline, my mother, was thirteen; her sister Anna was eleven. Bernhard was starting to school, and Louis was just a playful little boy.

Holland was at that time called Mountain Home. Salado, about ten miles away on the spring-fed Salado River, was a town of perhaps 3,000 people. It had the Saint Arnold College. Salado once lacked only a vote or two of becoming the capitol of Texas.

Mother met Father while visiting in Burnet County in 1876. They married in Belton the next spring.

Mother had a sewing machine but said a trousseau should be made by hand, so Mother worked diligently to get things just right. The underskirt she wore had hand embroidery and rows of tucks. She probably sewed on it by day and into the night with nothing better than a kerosene lamp for light.

Mother, who had a leaning to plumpness, was cheerful and talkative. Father was quiet and inclined to seriousness. He had, however, a good sense of humor and could be quite witty.

Both of my parents were of German ancestry and were medium blond. Father was a tall and slender teacher. He, according to styles of that day, wore a long beard and cowboy boots. German was spoken in the home.

Mother must have been a pretty young woman — rosy-cheeked, well-built, and strong. According to a picture, she wore her hair parted in the middle at that time, which was probably more stylish than becoming.

My parents had very good educations considering the times. Father attended college in Germany two years. Mother attended a private school in Burnet County for two years. There she took lessons in music and some other courses. She played the piano. Father could play the piano, too, but played mainly violin and once gave violin lessons.

After my parents married on March 15, 1877, they lived at Cypress Mill, where Father taught school. He and Mother had many good friends and kinfolks there. The same year my parents bought a small ranch of 700 acres, the old Cleveland place on the Little Cypress. Father kept sheep and taught also.

The first three children were born at Cypress Mill. Otto was the oldest. He was a nice looking and intelligent boy. Next came Annie and Ida.

After five years, they bought the "Romberg Ranch" 16 miles from Cypress Mill, which had 2300 acres. Father’s brother, John, was a co-investor in this sheep ranch. My parents

stayed only three years before renting out the ranch and moving to Fayette County, where they would not be as isolated as at Cypress Mill.

One example of this isolation was the fact that Mother was all alone with three children when Herman was born. She had to ask Otto, who was 6 and 1/2 years old, to kindle the fire, and he managed to do so.

My father taught at O'Quinn, several miles from La Grange, for four years. Frederica was born here. Brother Otto took typhoid and was sick only a week. At that time a doctor did not need a certificate. Draw your conclusions. After the death of Otto, the oldest child of our family, my parents moved three miles to the Black Jack Springs community. The nine years spent there were pleasant ones. Our family lived close to several families of kinfolks.

We first lived on Aunt Ida's place. The house had two rooms, an attic, and a stone-f1oored porch. There were nice chinaberry trees in the yard but no lawn. There was, however, a large meadow in front of our home. The grass would be harvested for feed. Carl was born on this place.

My parents had five children when they moved to Aunt Bernhardine's place. She had farmland and pasture. Aunt Bernhardine, a widow at that time, was my father's oldest sister. Most of her eight children (two girls and six boys) were already away from home. Aunt "Dine" lived upstairs in her house of 13 rooms, and my parents lived downstairs. I was born in this big colonial-style house.

Aunt Dine had married Ludwig Franke in 1852. He taught in Baylor College at Industry, Texas. He was a teacher of French, German, piano, and guitar, probably mainly music. He was a state representative at Austin when he was fatally attacked and robbed.

After four years on Aunt Dine's place, my parents moved back to Aunt Ida's farm. By then two more rooms had been added to the house. Felix and Louis were born here.

Father, fortunately, had two brothers living close by. They lived peacefully and contentedly. They may have been like their poet father, Johannes Romberg, who found dealing with money matters distasteful. The womenfolks were industrious and not too demanding. Uncle John always took a part in choral clubs. Uncle Bernhard liked talking about world affairs while sitting in his breezy passage. Father wrote poetry. He owned a big telescope and was interested in stars. The three brothers enjoyed playing chess. All smoked pipes.

School was taught near the house of Uncle Bernhard. The house had been built for Aunt Helene and her husband when they married. At noon Father would eat at Aunt Berline and Uncle Bernhard's since they were so near the school. Aunt Berline would read to her family while they ate, and then the matter that had been read would be discussed. Aunt Berline, a high-minded person, always read a poem before going to bed.

Father taught school and farmed on the side, and later he was county surveyor for some years and came home only on weekends. Mother, with the aid of a hired hand and the older children, looked after the farm.

People those days farmed with walking plows and planters, and much work had to be done with a hoe. The children had to help with the hoeing and picking of cotton. Ida and Annie helped with the loading and unloading of feed.

On about May 1, the cotton chopping vacation would start. School would resume some weeks later when, hopefully, the cotton had been thinned and weeds brought under control.

A better school house (of one room) was built at another location. Father started surveying land, so there were others who taught there. It was still a small school. Children could go to school barefooted. Clothes were almost all sewn at home and could be handed down from one child to

the next.

Since Father was away from home much of the day, it is lucky that Mother was such an able and good housekeeper. We were seven children when Felix was born in 1896.

Young people had to work in the field those days and help earn the living. One time when there was a dance a young lady sprained her ankle. "Take off your shoe," some helpful person insisted. Off came the shoe and the stocking, and there appeared a very dirty foot. The girl had probably hurried home from the field, helped with the work at home, and had not taken time to wash off the field dirt before dressing.

People were modest. One time when our hired hand came home late, Mother appeared in a doorway wearing nothing but a nightgown. She was chasing a stray dog out of the house. With rare presence of mind, the considerate man turned and, seeing a box of screws, acted like he was hunting for something out in the moonlight, thus to spare mother embarrassment.

The summer of 1896, Aunt Anna and Uncle Benny Fuchs came to visit us and stayed all summer. Uncle Benny was not well.

It was that summer that Mother and Father took a wagon trip to Lockhart to visit the Ohlendorfs. We had to camp one night on the way. Part of the road went through sandy country. To make things easier for the mules, some of the older ones of us walked. The trip was, however, very enjoyable. "Aunt" Emmie von Roeder had a large family, and the teenagers had lots of fun. I still remember "Uncle" Herman von Roeder, who had a long and bushy beard.

Since it was hard for Mother to go shopping in town, we ordered much from Montgomery Ward and Company. Aunt Anna was amused about us ordering so much from this company. We children would say, "Montgomaly Ward."

I have a picture of a school festival that we attended in 1896. About 85 people attended. Although most of the people were plain country folks, the men wore their dark woolen Sunday suits. They probably had no second-best clothes. Their hats were mostly of felt, and some wore ties. The older men all had beards. Most of the womenfolks wore hats. Annie and Ida, still teenagers, wore skirts and shirt waists. Frederica had a plain sailor hat with hair hanging down in two braids. Carl, smiling, wore a plaid shirt that bloused. It probably was made of a left-over scrap of goods. Herman wore suspenders. I had tried a good way to get attention. Felix, sitting on Mother’s lap, spoiled his picture by turning his head. Mother wore no hat, and she probably did not own one. Behind Mother stood several women, their skirts reaching down to the dust.

At Black Jack Springs our social life mainly consisted of meetings at the homes of our kinfolks. There would be coffee, cake, and perhaps buttered bread with homemade sausage and cheese.

People were kinfolks-loving and neighborly partly because they had need of each other’s help. As far as I know, we had good standing with all the kinfolks and neighbors. Mother was against starting any kind of fuss. She said once there is a rift, it is not likely that things will ever be quite the same even after making up. The person who gives somebody a heated sermon is likely to punish himself. I read that when people marry, they seldom acquire the kind of relatives they would have picked out for themselves. They had better get along. One can always make new friends, but the relatives remain your few relatives.

Of course, at Holland the farming differed from that in Fayette County, where we had more and heavier dews and lighter soil. One had to learn the proper time to plant the crops. Some people planted "according to the moon," but we never did.

Both Mother and Father considered their children their main crop and wanted to rear us right. We children said "Mama" and "Papa" to our parents. The term "Daddy" was not common like it is now. And at that time children were not "babysitted."

Parents managed to get obedience without harsh punishment. If we delayed obeying when Mother spoke a command, Father, if he was there, saw to it that we obeyed. There were no exceptions to doing what we were told to do, but no harsh punishment was ever needed.

Mother tried to make being good easy. For example, she would put breakable things out of a small child's reach. She said children are inquisitive. She also said one can sometimes avoid punishment by ignoring a small offense or diverting the child's attention. Mother believed in keeping us so busy doing good things that there was not time for meanness.

Time made changes. Frankes were the first of the kinfolks to leave Black Jack. Some of the boys became rice farmers at El Campo. My parents moved to Holland in Bell County at the end of 1898. Some years later, Uncle John and Aunt Jolina, along with Aunt Ida, moved to Schulenburg so their daughter, Hedwig, could live with them while teaching music. Uncle Herman (Bauch) and Aunt Erna moved to Schulenburg, too.

Only Uncle Bernhard and Aunt Berline remained at the beloved home. Ernst married and took care of his parents and the farm. Ernst and his wife, Maynie, wanted things to remain like they had been for years, and I remember well the roomy gray house surrounded by walnut trees. There was a wide passage through the house with a porch at the south end sheltered from the north wind.

When Grandfather Mackensen gave Mother the farm at Holland in 1898, Father went to Bell County to look the place over. The farm of 180 acres, 40 of which were in pasture, was crossed by two tree-bordered creeks, and the farm buildings were protected from the north winds by a grove of trees. There were a hog shed, a barn, a seed house, a log cabin, and a smoke house. The dwelling house — the last thing you got to — did not look much better. It was of authentic barn style.

My parents thought they would like to live on their own place, so the preparations for moving were made. My parents found it hard to leave the pleasant Black Jack neighborhood but thought it best to move to the farm that they now owned. Mother was returning to the farm where she had lived as a girl.

The last week of 1898, my father and cousin, Fritz Bauch, drove to Bell County with two loads of farming equipment. Moving to Holland was a big undertaking. Mother sold and gave away some things because the plan was that no railroad car was to be rented. However, in the end, we did rent a railroad car, and more furniture could well have been brought along. Mother and we children rode the train to Holland on January 1, 1899. That winter was an exceptionally cold one, and there was snow on the ground all the way. It must have been an interesting trip for Mother, who liked to see the country. She also liked to study people. Louis was only four months old. She dried his diapers on the heating pipes near her feet.

We had zero weather all the first week, but Ida, Frederica, Herman, and Carl started to school. Papa and Fritz chopped wood to keep warm. We small children hardly left the fireplace, but I remember my curiosity would not be allayed, and I did run around the house once outside. Between the kitchen and the living room was a nook about four by five feet that seemed just right for a play house, but it was too cold to play.

It was an unusually cold winter. One morning, there was snow on the ground. Herman,

delighted, ran down the stairs and jumped into the snow with his bare feet and called out, "Whoopie!"

Our house was a common box house. It had three downstairs rooms with a porch and a somewhat dark attic with a small window at each end. The attic was the boys' room. The kitchen was added to the larger part of the house. One had to cross the porch to get to the kitchen. This house had to do for my parents and eight children, counting Annie, who would be teaching school. Our living room had to serve as a bed room and had a double bed with a trundle bed under it . . . but we had a piano. Didn't that show we were people of refinement?

Since Mother had no rocker, she, and I guess Papa, drove to Bartlett by wagon and team and bought the needed rocker and some other needed things. It may have taken half a day to drive the 18 miles to Bartlett and back.

The land around Holland was good farming country. Since people farmed with mule power and strength of arm, farming was much work.

Conrad, the baby of the family, was born on the farm at Holland in 1902.

No matter what the size of the house, people were very friendly. One time two Mormons came, and Father asked them in for supper. The Mormon religion was too extreme for one devout neighbor, and he came "toting" his shotgun to run the Mormons away. Father told the neighbor, "This is my home, and these are my guests." The neighbor carried his heavy shotgun home unused.

I can't remember our big family all leaving the house at the same time, and the times when there was no one about the house must have been rare indeed.

2. Feeding the Family

The welfare of our family depended much on Mother. She was well-educated but also practical. A housewife in the old days not only had to feed her family but also often had to be the family's barber, gardener, poultry man, mechanic, builder, doctor, and what all?

Mother, who was a strong and lively child, became a well-built, energetic, and industrious woman. She was an orderly and capable housekeeper. She has also been a saving one, for money had a way of being scarce. Mother was a talkative and well-informed person. Did anyone ever win an argument against Mother? Mother kept her health and strength. We children got sick sometimes, but I can't remember Mother ever being sick. Mother was cheerful by nature. She said, "If you are unhappy about something, start singing and soon you will be cheerful again." Another thing she said was that we would not be satisfied if everything went right all the time.

While I knew her, Mother wore her hair loosely puffed around her face and twisted to a coil on the top of her head. Astonishingly, she could keep her hair neat although she usually used only from three to five horn hairpins.

We usually got up early, and there was not much idling done. Mother said a person sometimes feels lazy; but if one makes himself work, his blood goes to circulating and he is likely to feel spry again soon. Fortunately, Mother was good at putting us to work. Each child had to take his or her turn at doing certain jobs to help provide the family with food and clothing and to keep the house clean and orderly.

In the early days at Holland, we even carried from our spring all the water we used at the house. There was kindling and wood to be gotten for the kitchen stove and the fireplace. Mother, in about 1910, was very pleased when she obtained a cast iron stove with a water container at one end to provide hot water. Of course, we had no electricity. We used kerosene lamps. As a whole, people would get up at daybreak and would not stay up very late at night. Some days had to be met with courage and determination. When a child was very ill, Mother seemingly did not get tired until after the crisis passed.

Yes, housekeeping in those days meant work, and supplying the table with food was the most important.

Mother, with usually some help, did the cooking. Such jobs as setting the table and washing and drying the dishes went to us girls.

The first thing we heard in the morning might be the coffee mill. Father was likely to be the first person up, and he would cook his coffee and eat cake or cookies which mother would keep for him in a tin ex-lard bucket.

The grocery stores did not have nearby all the good things they have today. There were no trucks that brought cheap vegetables from distant places. The farm woman, usually with help from her children, had to raise garden vegetables for her table.

We took wheat and corn to Summer's Mill and had it ground coarse for bread. The hull of the corn was removed, but the wheat was ground whole. It made good bread. We always had gruel for breakfast. Most often it was of the ground wheat, but we also cooked oatmeal and corn meal. In the winter time, Mother baked cornbread in a skillet in the fireplace, sometimes every night. Most people baked their own bread. Many people served hot biscuits every morning and cornbread for dinner. Dr. Maines, who one time ate of our good bread, said, "Hot

biscuits are not fit for a dog to eat."

Mother sometimes pinched off a piece of dough for a little bread for one of us children. It was fun to squeeze, roll, and mold the dough for the little pone of bread.

At dinner time we might beat a plowshare to call field workers home. We didn't have many delicacies on the table, but good country cooking. Since we had no refrigeration, the food left over from dinner was served among other things at supper time and was usually eaten up then. Sometimes some food was taken to the spring and set in the cool spring water. Not much was thrown away. We cleaned our plates; nothing was said about dieting. Mother would cook mush for the dogs with maybe a bone in it or just grease, which was usually plentiful.

We liked to call the best bite of such things as the coffee cake the "Hoemann", and it would be eaten last.

We had milk in its various forms — sweet milk, clabber, cottage cheese, and "Kochkaese" (a yellow and sticky boiled cheese). Sometimes we had hand cheese which was more trouble to make than "Kochkaese." Mother put the biscuit-sized pats in a crock to ripen. We had the old-fashioned churn with crock and dasher, and when Grandfather visited, he liked to do the churning for Mother. In the summer time we sometimes put a wet cloth around the churn to keep the cream cool while it was churned. Our spring house was built in 1909. It was an ideal place to keep milk cool and a good place to keep many things.

When Carl got old enough to keep bees, we enjoyed eating honey. It was especially good eaten fresh, but it kept any length of time. We bought some cider vinegar, but vinegar could also be made at home using honey.

In the springtime we liked to eat poke greens, which could be classed a blood purifier, and the weed "lamb's quarters" was delicious. Dandelion made a good salad. Mother would serve it with bacon grease and vinegar. There were mushrooms, but Mother was afraid to cook any of them.

We always had a vegetable garden. Early in the year, Mother would start tomato and cabbage plants in (pots) to have plants to set out as soon as the weather would permit. Mother would give her surplus plants to the neighbors. We would always have a big patch of Irish potatoes each spring, and sometimes we would have a smaller patch in the fall although they were likely not to make well in the fall. We kept our potatoes under our house, which was two or three feet off the ground. The potatoes kept well there where it was cool, dry, and shady. We raised watermelons and cantaloupes. We often cooked the white part of the rind of watermelons after soaking a while in salt water. This water was discarded, and the rinds were cooked in new water. Vinegar, sugar, and cinnamon was used for seasoning.

In the summertime when there were many mouths to feed, Mother liked to serve plain cake and pudding often. One could use the plentiful milk and eggs for them, and these dishes helped out well. Mother liked serving refreshments to guests. She said, "It helps to entertain." Other dishes popular when eggs were plentiful were flannel cakes — thin pancakes that were as big as the bottom of the frying pan. Sometimes we fried windbags in deep fat. They would puff up like cream puffs. We always made our egg noodles ourselves. Mother could make very good dumplings of about the same kind of dough as is used for cream puffs.

Grandfather expressed his surprise over Mother's ability at setting a good table. He was a moderate eater. For supper he liked a bowl of clabber with some of the cream left on. Over this we would put a layer of graham bread crumbs. For sweetness some honey or dark molasses

would be spun over the top.

Every summer we had okra and tomatoes. Mother called them "thankful vegetables" because they could well stand hot and dry weather. When Mother canned tomatoes, we boiled them ½ hour, but 15 minutes would do for peaches.

When we had plenty of cabbage, we sometimes made sauerkraut. It could also be made with turnips. We usually had plenty of cucumbers and would make dill pickles. Being sour, they would keep well in a crock, but we would heat them and then can them in jars for winter use.

It was rare that Mother used a recipe for her cooking.

There were wild nut trees on the creek east of us. I remember us picking up some for the halves. This means we had to give halt of our harvest to the land owner. The nuts must have been quite plentiful some years, as there were squirrels and crows that did not pick them for the halves.

Since all farmers raised chickens, fried chicken was a popular dish. One time Ida helped a neighbor girl dress some fryers for a special meal. Ida thought it a pity to kill fryers so young. When she came to the entrails, she threw away the measly gizzard along with the entrails for the cats to eat. "Oh, Ida!"exclaimed the friend running into the yard to save the gizzard. It was to go into the giblet gravy.

We hardly bought canned goods. Sardines were about a nickle a can, and when a person was away from home and needed a snack, sardines and crackers made a cheap and easily obtained snack.

We all were interested in improving our farm. It had been rented out for many years. Papa planted many fruit trees. Those on the place were already old. When these peach trees began bearing well, Mother cooked peach butter, thick and brown, in the big copper kettle that had come from Germany before the Civil War. One time Lucy Thornhill came over and saw the big pot of peach butter and exclaimed, "What do you want to do with all that peach butter? Feed it to the hogs?" It was wonderful to eat it with the skillet cornbread which Mother baked in the wintertime.

There were lots of ways of being saving. Some friends of ours after peeling and canning peaches would use the better part of the peelings for cooking jam. These people also liked to use the softer part of watermelon rinds raw for a salad.

For some years we had a patch of wild dewberries, but it got so weedy that it was thought best to plow it up. We also kept a barrel of wine. The wine was only served on special occasions but was also used for soup. It was made from the plentiful mustang grapes.

Our wintertime meals differed somewhat from spring and summertime ones. Every winter we had several hogs to butcher. But we butchered only one at a time so as to be able to make good use of the smaller pieces.

The butchering of a hog was not a pleasant job. The meat being greasy, the work had to be done out of doors at an improvised table. Butchering had to be done on a cold day so that the meat could cool out so it would keep. The big slabs of bacon and ham would be well salted and placed, each piece separate, on a wide shelf or table in the smoke house. The next morning it had to be placed, well salted and partly peppered, into a big box or half of a wooden barrel. Then it would be left a week or two so as to salt through, and not until then was it hung up to be smoked. We liked to use entrails in which to put our sausage. These entrails had to be cleaned and turned inside out. If there was more sausage than we had entrails for, we would

use cloth bags, also. Salt and pepper had to be used not only for flavor but also for a preservative. Mother also used saltpeter. After the smoking, Mother would sometimes pack her hams and bacon in ashes to make them keep well when needed in later months. In the summer we would sometimes butcher a pig and a calf at the same time so as to be able to make more sausage, and we sometimes made jerky beef. It was delicious and nourishing, but it sometimes took a good bit of chewing to eat it.

After each hog killing came soap making, for which various odd scraps of fat were used.

In the summertime a farmer would sometimes kill a calf or a cow and peddle out the meat. Some years later, farmers would join a meat club. Each member had to take his turn at furnishing a cow or calf to butcher. The butchering was done on Saturday so there would be plenty of meat for Sunday — maybe for all the week. The meat was not delivered to the members. They had to see to it that they got their meat. We always had a flock of chickens, and Mother would sometimes raise nearly a hundred turkeys to sell. We would not eat more than one or two of them.

In the wintertime, we had skillet cornbread for supper almost every night. If we had no fire in the fireplace, a fire could quickly be kindled with corn cobs. And it was in the wintertime that Mother sometimes cooked a big iron pot full of hominy. And we might have some fried hominy daily for a week.

Mother liked to buy a 25-pound box of prunes in the fall and serve them with boiled lima beans.

On a cold winter night, Mother sometimes cooked a big pot of hot soup for supper. It might be a milk soup with egg dumplings or a soup made from the dry hulls of mustang grapes. The hulls would be boiled and discarded and dumplings added to the soup.

We sometimes cooked candy to eat, but bought candy was not eaten. It was sucked to make it last longer.

Chewing gum was rare at our home. One time we gave Louis a piece of wax and told him to keep chewing it. After a while, he came back and said he was still hungry. One time after we had the teachers for dinner, Louis, a small boy then, was chewing a huge wad of gum. He said he found it sticking to a tree. Whose gum had it been?

We all sat down at the table at the same time, and although grace was not said at our table, we children were expected to behave ourselves properly. The food that Mother served was eaten by all, and no one was allowed to say, "I don’t like this."

For daily use as a tablecloth, we used a black oilcloth used for buggy tops. This was much more durable than the pretty white oilcloth.

We seldom used our best silver and linen. When Louis was perhaps five years old, a pastor Romberg from Austin and the Lutheran preacher from Bartlett had supper with us. When little Louis saw the supper table, he exclaimed, "Neue Messer! Neue Gabeln!" (New knives! New forks!)

After dinner, the noon meal, Mother would read and take a nap and would often freshen up with a sponge bath afterwards. She did enjoy reading, and often she would put down a book with regret and say, "I have read until I have become joined onto my reading matter. A person must go to work again."

Mother liked doing a bit of fancy work at night. She said it keeps a person from getting sleepy so soon. We took no sleeping pills, but I can't remember anyone complaining about sleeplessness.

Of course, there were letters to be written. Most people had no telephone. Sometimes when a job is distasteful like writing a certain letter, it gets to looking worse and worse the longer one puts it off. Mother said, "Once you get started, you may do better than you thought."

3. Clothing the Family

Keeping a family clothed was also work. Our clothes were mostly of cotton, and we made most of our clothes ourselves. Mother was a good seamstress. In the nineties cotton got as cheap as 4½ cents a pound, and eggs as cheap as 4½ cents per dozen. Once when sickness had sapped the bank account, Mother sewed shirts, receiving 25 cents for the sewing of each. She could sew three or four a day in her spare time. One time, when we already lived at Holland, Mother cut out and sewed a pair of pants tor Papa. Once Mother must have taken the coat of a Sunday suit to town to see it she could get a pair of pants to match. The merchant said, "It you can't get what really matches, it is usually best to get a coat that looks like it wasn't meant to match."

The scraps of goods left after cutting out a dress would be saved tor making quilt tops or smaller things like pin cushions and doll clothes. Although dolls could be bought for as little as a dime, I remember having a big homemade rag doll.

A woman would usually choose Monday for washing, as it was considered the hardest work of the week. Our washing of clothes was done under a shady bois de arc tree near the spring where water was plentiful. We had tubs, baskets, a rubbing board, and home-cooked soap. We always heated or boiled most of the clothes. Punching them with a dasher while they were in the pot helped to get them clean. Clothes could also be cleaned by soaping them and leaving them a while, then beating them with a paddle.

We had a clothes puncher that had some suction to it. Although arm operated, we considered it a labor saver. We would hang some clothes up on the bushes and fences close by. We had no synthetic materials at that time, so no drip-dries. Someone had to help Mother with the washing.

After washing would come ironing. We used the sad heavy irons which we heated on the wood stove or sometimes, in the wintertime, at the fireplace. Most clothes would not be ironed but were smoothed by hand, folded and put away. We did the pressing of men's Sunday suits, but since they were mainly for church or funerals, we never had much pressing to do. Each of the girls, when old enough, had to iron her own dresses.

To cut down on the work of washing, Mother advocated washing the sweat out from under the arm of a Sunday dress, which was considered fit to wear again without washing the whole dress. Another time saver was to go over a slightly worn dress with a cloth dipped in water to which some starch had been added. One rubbed away the dirty spots and moistened the rest of the dress. Then going over the dress with a hot iron made it look as if newly washed. We wore aprons more then. This not only kept the dresses cleaner longer but also helped retard wear.

With so much work washing clothes, we did not wash the sheets but once in three weeks. The first week of use, a sheet was used on top of the bed as a bedspread. The next week it was used to cover up with, and the third week we slept on it. Since we slept upstairs, we could throw back the quilts in the morning and let the bed air; and we would not make up the bed until later when we would be upstairs again, often not until after dinner.

We had some bought blankets, but our quilts were all home made. In the springtime, washing the quilts and putting them away could be quite a job. One neighbor lady said she would wash just one quilt every time she washed. That way the washing of quilts was not so much of a job.

When men’s ready-made shirts got cheap and plentiful, we did not sew men’s shirts any more, but we usually sewed the buttons on more securely right away or they might otherwise come off and get lost before the garment wore out. Zippers had not been invented.

Mother usually did the mending. In my mind I can see Mother now sitting on the roomy porch peacefully mending and patching. The boys mostly wore overalls which were practical. Knees would wear out; so a better piece of goods was stitched to the left side, leaving only a neat round hole on the right side. If a patch wore out before the pants did, the patch could be replaced by a new one. A worn dress could be made into a "nightie" or into aprons. The worn aprons would make dish towels and rags. A greasy dish rag could be used to clean off the wood stove and then was burned in the stove.

We threw nothing away that could possibly be used. We had a drawer that served as a catch-all. It was for small misplaced things such as a lost hair pin, a stray button, a screw, a piece of string, half of a used pencil, etc. Empty spools could be used to make nick-nacks.

For her sheets, Mother liked to buy brown domestic 46 inches wide for making full-sized sheets. When well worn in the middle, she would tear the two pieces apart and sew the outer sides together so the better parts of the sheet would get the wear. Smaller sheets could be made out of worn ones, also pillow cases.

At one time it was stylish for children to wear black bloomers. They were considered a sensible style since small children in playing were not careful to keep their panties from showing. Later on when Shirley Temple made short dresses stylish, a neighbor girl about 8 years old stooped, and one could see her panties. Afterwards, Mother said to me, “Ich bitte dich!" (I beg you!) This was long before women wore mini skirts.

In the springtime, woolen winter clothes had to be packed away. We had a huge wooden chest for storing the woolens, and with the blow of the first cold norther, the smell of moth balls could be expected in church.

Children would wear union suits in the winter time. Some would wear them all winter whether it was hot or cold. In the summertime, we children went barefooted at home, but women wore black or brown cotton stockings all summer.

Going shopping was not one of the weekly jobs those days. So seldom did Mother go shopping that we still ordered many things from Montgomery Ward. There was another big mail order house which later grew more popular with us, Sears and Roebuck. In the fall Mother would drive to Belton with some of her children to buy the needed shoes at Hammersmith's.

I would have three school dresses. One year a dark blue dress and a light red one and an old Sunday dress to help out. The next year, I would have a medium blue dress and a dark red one and maybe a pink ex-Sunday dress.

Women did not wear trousers, and short hair did not come into style until about 1925 and then had to be cut by a barber. Many men and some women, too, objected to that. It was not approved by the Bible, some said. Of course, it was some trouble to care for the long hair. We had no hair dryers. Mother said to help keep the hair clean, brush it well or stroke and rub the hair with a towel. One could clean the hair with cornmeal. Bathing suits needed to go at least down to the knees. At bathing beaches, women wore stockings and special shoes for bathing.

At that time hats were worn more than now. It was the proper thing for women to wear a hat in church. For a short time, hats made of crepe paper were sylish for Sunday wear, and they were flattering though cheap.

I had a pretty pink hat, but what should be my luck! It flew off my head and into the water by our bridge. Another hat was made for me and I was satisfied. Although a hat to be worn to the field might cost about 35 or 50 cents, we sometimes strengthened the brim of a hat by sewing cloth to

the underside. Corn shucks were good for repairing the brim. They had strength and stiffness and were of a matching color.

What beauty aids had we? When I went to school there was the beautiful daughter of one of the merchants who wore her hair in beautiful long curls. Her mother rolled up her hair every night. Women wore false hair and "rats" (no wigs). Annie once had a roll of wire to use to make the hair puff out all around the front of her hair.

People were starting to wear false teeth. One could tell they were new teeth, being so even and so strikingly white.

4. Family Health

One didn't hitch up the buggy and go to the doctor about every little illness or injury. Home remedies were used more then. Kerosene and salt are good disinfectants. Vinegar relieves inflammation in case of a sprain. Soap and sugar can be used to draw a carbuncle to a point. Honey is good for healing sores or alleviating coughing. Soda is good for burns and also for insect stings. A teaspoon of soda could be taken as a purgative. Onions were used for ear ache, mustard plaster for chest colds. Sweat baths could be taken to get rid of "the poisons of the body."

A friend of mine said when one of her children got sick, she would give them a purgative and then a dose of Grover's Chill Tonic. Castor oil was a popular medicine. One good conscientious father gave his children a dose of castor oil each Friday. This was the old-time castor oil undisguised and sometimes rancid. It was despised, but he felt the family had to be kept well.

One did not have vaccines to prevent or lighten cases of measles and whooping cough, so we all had those diseases. When measles hit our family, the doctor was called, and when he saw so many people in bed he said, "It's just like a hospital." One time when I was already in school, there was a meningitis scare and people were really scared. The doctor told us to take 1/4 teaspoon of soda morning and night.

When one of my cousins had trouble with his legs, the doctor said he should drink grass tea. There was plenty of grass, and I guess the vitamins (not heard of at that time) in the grass cured his trouble.

It was not customary to have regular check-ups. The doctors didn't have such a handy variety of gadgets for taking tests. A patient was told to stick out his tongue, and the pulse beat was counted — what else?

One time I had a wart on one of my nose holes, so I was taken to Dr. Crosthwait. What did he do? Just tied a string around the bottom of the wart. It turned dark and after some days dropped off.

We once had neighbors who said their cow had hollow-horn, and that was given as the reason for insufficient milk. They sawed into a horn and put some salt into it to remedy the matter.

We did not have screens. That was bad, for one and the other took malaria. Mother would sometimes kindle a smoky fire in a pan and fill the rooms with smoke to drive away the mosquitoes. People were only beginning to find out that insects could carry diseases. At that time people thought vapors from rotting leaves and stench could cause diseases.

One man who got sick was given a shot by his doctor, and in a short time afterward the patient was dead. Another person had a strange feeling in his back, so he had his back washed with carbolic acid.

Eggnog was one of the first things that could be eaten by a convalescent, so mother kept a bottle of whiskey for medicinal purposes.

One did not have the poisons one has today. One time in her early married life, Mother was determined to get rid of a bed of red ants that were in her yard. She used a hammer when she had time and got rid of them.

5. Our Cottonwood Home

Why was money so short? Not only were we a large family, but also we had the ranch to pay off for many years. I conclude Mother, the housekeeper, felt the pinch of this more than Father.

Cousin Erich Perlitz was twenty years old when he came to build the first part of our new house, and he drew up the plans according to our wishes and superintended the work of building it.

To the old house we added, on the first floor, two entrance halls, a big living room to be used for parties, a library for our many books, and a room for Grandfather to use when he visited us. Over these rooms were three bedrooms connected by a hall.

High ceilings were considered cooler than low ones and besides they happened to be stylish, so 12-foot ceilings were chosen.

The roof was to be fairly steep so as not to leak. It didn't leak for years, luckily, for who wanted to climb such a high roof?

We sealed the halls but left them unpaneled. The wood trim and floors were left unfinished for some years. We papered the living room, also the library, which had an almost wall-sized bookcase. It was stained red and the walls were papered green. The rest of the rooms were left unsealed for years. For the living room paper we chose a plain tan one. What astonishment when we noticed Louis was scribbling on the wall! He had expected us to still finish the room with flowered paper.

This newer part of the house was higher off the ground than the old one. There were two steps to climb when going from the old part into the new. We still had to walk out on the porch to get to the kitchen as in the earlier days. If people liked something bizarre, we had it. Our house looked like a monstrosity.

The new part had two stories, and it was to be airy — was it airy! Most of the walls were single, and the upstairs rooms had no ceiling. Curtains took the place of doors up there. The three clothes closets had one shelf at the top. Nails were driven into the walls to hang the clothes on. A curtain hid the clothes.

It was nine years that we lived in this monstrosity — a big white hull added to the little grey mud-dobber part. Then in 1910 the kitchen was torn down and the remaining two rooms of the old part were moved to the horse lot to be used as a barn. Finally Mother got her cooler kitchen, a roomy dining room, and a large front porch. This addition was smaller than had been planned. It badly needed an enclosed back porch. In spite of repeated planning, it never was added. A "chicken ladder" type of second staircase led to the big boys' room upstairs above the new addition. Lumber cost two or three times as much as it had cost in 1901, so the three rooms and porch cost about as much as the first part of the house had cost.

The dining room had a fireplace built by confident Carl, who had attended A. & M. two years. Carl was smart, but one could not expect him know how to build a fireplace to get the most heat from it.

The big new porch on front of the house, to the east, was a favorite place to sit in the summertime. If there was a breeze, you had it there, and there was a good view to enjoy while sitting in the swing and chatting. Grandfather liked to take off his shoes and enjoy comfort while smoking his long-stemmed pipe, which was often homemade.

Strange as it may seem, a bathroom had not been planned either at first building or the

finishing of the house. A bathroom was added much later, squeezed under the stairs. Although it had only a shower instead of a tub, it was a big improvement.

The roof of the second part of the house was not built as high as the first part, but the home when completed turned out to be a whopper.

Housecleaning had to be done. Downstairs rooms were usually all swept in the morning and put in order. At the end of the week a more thorough cleaning had to be done. The floors of the old home were rough and unfinished, and a scrubbing with water and a broom might be needed on Saturdays, especially if it had rained. Ida had a method of settling dust. She would blow a fine mist by spraying water through her lips before sweeping.

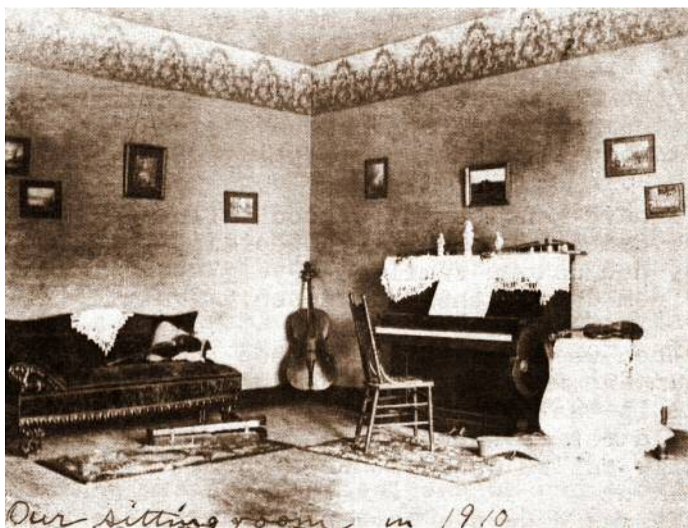
We added kerosene to the water used to wash the windows.

One time I left a piece of clothing on the floor upstairs. Mother said, "Go and pick it up.“ So I did and I was careful after that not to drop any garment on the floor but hung it on a nail.

We did not have pretty shelf paper bought at a store, so we used newspaper. One could, if one was artistic, cut a pretty edge with a scissors.

Mother once complained about not having enough places to store things. My father drove to town and came back with a surprise. He had bought a trunk for each of his children.

For many years our house was definitely mostly a cold house when the weather was cold, even the first years after we had a bigger, better house. Sleeping upstairs used to be almost like sleeping outdoors except that the wind did not strike you. The upstairs had no ceiling, and the roof was high. Mother and Father slept under a feather bed during the coldest time of winter. When the weather was cold one might go to bed with the union suit on. Stockings could be kicked off later. The more cold-natured could go to bed with a hot brick. Some people slept with their clothes on.



Our sitting room in 1910, with Grandfather Mackensen’s piano, Herman’s cello, Father’s violin, and Carl’s viola.

A cold morning was an event. In preparation for jumping out of bed, you could rub the skin until it felt real warm and one could rub the feet against each other. And it seemed to help to turn several times and grunt before making the determined leap out of bed. One dropped the warm nighty and would stand on it and jiggle to keep warm while dressing. Combing the hair could be done by the fireplace. Mother advised us to dress well when coming from the warm bed. Clothes could be shed after growing warm from exercise.

After baking bread in the oven of the wood stove, the oven would stay warm a long time. On a cold day, one could open the oven door and lay a newspaper down to put the feet on it. This made a cozy place to rest and read for a while.

Everybody owned a tea kettle. It stood on the stove, so there was likely to be warm or hot water any time of the day.

In the summer time the wash pan was placed on the banner shelf at the stoop behind the home, and in the wintertime the wash pan was kept in the kitchen with the towel hanging beside it. This made for much walking through the kitchen.

Since we had no bathroom, bathing in the winter time could be a problem. Saturday night or a warm day was likely to be chosen for bathing, and a laundry tub of warm water would be prepared for that. The children were the first to go to bed and got to bathe first. Several members of the family could bathe in the same water in front of the fireplace.

Do you know there is such a thing as taking a bath inside the bed when the weather is cold? In the morning when the bed is warm but the room cold, have a pan of water with a rag by your bedside. Squeeze most of the water out of your rag and wipe off with it. The rag will be cold, but your bed will be warm and you get dry under the warm quilts. Then count to three once or twice and jump out.

We all knew how to bundle up to keep warm. The five cattle lots were far from the house and the sheds skimpy. Hands might get cold and chapped, but we endured — just so there was warmth in the heart.

Improvements were made in the yard around our home. Gravel was hauled to put in the yard beside the front porch. This would help to keep dust out of the house.

Mother liked flowers. I remember a flower garden we had southeast of the house. We had phlox, larkspur, petunias, marigolds, stock, zinnias, hollyhocks, and other such hardy and "thankful" flowers. Our pot flowers were few, but we had an oleander plant that had to be taken indoors on cold days, and we had some ferns. Mother sometimes used the lacy looking part of asparagus plants to arrange a bouquet.

Our Cottonwood Home, as we called it, was a wonderful place on which to grow up. There were large trees for climbing and grape vines for swinging.

West of the house by the field was a circular grove of trees which we called the little grove. It was one of our favorite places to play. One of the trees had a hole near the ground that made a little doll room.

The mulberry tree near our wood pile and the black haw tree, near the pig pen, provided tasty berries. We also had a plentiful supply of mustang grapes. We had a cluster of wild chinaberry trees in the horses' lane. Although the berries looked delicious, they were not good to eat, and Papa got rid of the trees because they would shoot out of roots and spread. Papa also got rid of some bois de arc hedges.

6. Farming

One may say that Mother "wore the pants" but she thought it was the man's business to look after money matters, and it was Father who attended to the business matters.

It pains me to think how poorly Papa was equipped for farming in the first few years at Holland. We kept two horses and two mules. One of the horses, Mack, was not very tame. The mules could be very lazy. The first year, Papa had no planting drill. He scattered the seed by hand, and Herman followed with a tree twig to scatter the seed better and to cover some of it.

Laying off rows was accomplished by the use of two long sticks and a walking plow. A pole was placed upright at each end of the field. You plowed as straight as possible to the stake ahead of you. When that row was completed, you plowed a row three feet farther over, but first you had to move the pole three feet from your furrow so you could aim at it on the return trip.

To plant corn and cotton, a row was plowed open with a sweep pulled by a pair of horses. Then a second person would follow with a walking planter. I don't know if we possessed a cultivator.

Father’s methods of farming may not have been the best. It was Grandfather’s idea that row crops should be planted high. That way the weeds can be chopped away easier. Later, Karl, my husband, said the cotton should be planted in fairly even ground. Then if you keep throwing dirt on the grass by cultivator and cover the grass, it will die.

One time Grandfather plowed the potato patch with a walking plow and a stubborn mule, I guess old Kate, who was perhaps more interested in nibbling clumps of grass than making progress at plowing. Annie, who happened to be about, had never known that this honorable and respectable gentleman (he had been a sailor once) had in his vocabulary the words necessary to cool his extreme exasperation.

Grandfather came to visit us for six months every year, and in the first years we were at Holland he helped with field work. I think the summer of 1919 he visited with us at Holland for the last time.

Grandfather was a most welcome summer guest. (When I speak of Grandfather, I mean Grandfather Mackensen. My other grandfather, I never knew.) Grandfather was modest and kind. He was well educated but also practical. He enjoyed to tell jokes and sometimes could hardly tell them because he got so tickled himself.

There was not much affection shown in our family, but Grandfather was very fond of his family. He especially liked little children. He would nudge them under the chin and say, "Niedliche Gwicke." (Little cutie pie) I never saw Father and Mother kiss each other. There was not much kissing done at all.

This farm had been rented out since about 1870, and of course renters were not too concerned about ridding the farm of weeds. Sometimes a pile of cockleburrs and other stickery weeds had to be burned.

We had not lived at Holland long before Annie and Ida decided to go to Fayette County to visit their darling Hedwig, a first cousin on the Romberg side, but Father said, "No, first we have to get the fields clean," and I don't know if they ever took that trip to Fayette County together.

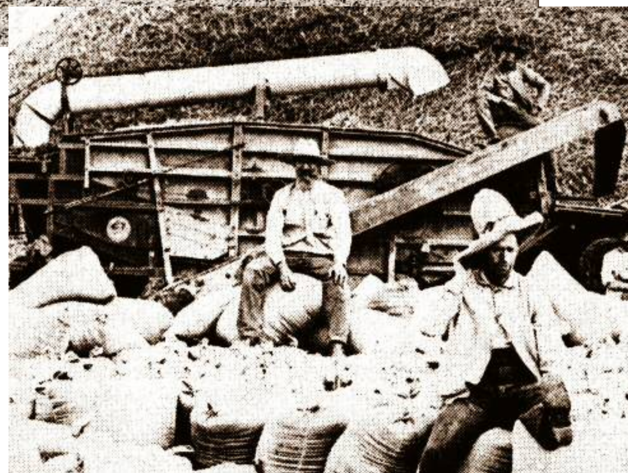
Among the worst weeds were the large blood weeds that made much seed, tie vines that

not only made much seed but came out from the roots, and cockleburrs that grew big and were an aggravation. The seed pods were sticky and clung to clothing and to the tails of the cows, as a milker soon was likely to observe. The plants seem to poison the soil. The pods had three seeds that came up in different years.

Although the farm had been lived on for many years, there was poison oak in our grove. Why had that never been inactivated? I one time decided to get rid of the poison oak in our grove and afterwards had so bad a case of poison oak that I was taken to the doctor. This weed comes up from seed, but it also comes out from the roots if chopped off. There is still some poison oak on the place.

In hot June came the threshing of oats and wheat. Father soon had a thresher and went from farm to farm harvesting grain. The first one he owned had no self-feeder and no blower. The bundles had to be cut with a knife and fed into the thresher. This took about three men. The straw had to be removed and distributed. This took about two men. Someone had to see about the filling of sacks and sewing them up.

Julius Romberg sitting on a sack in front of the threshing machine.



For some years, Mr. Ballard was the engine man and John Vernon the separator man would get oily, and the engineer who fed wood and water to the engine and kept it oiled could not keep from getting black smudges on himself and his clothing.

Father retained a tenth of the grain for toll. Loading and unloading sacks was hard work.

The man who pitched up bundles earned

one dollar a day, but a man who furnished a wagon and team and placed the bundles on his wagon got more.

The thresher men enjoyed the big dinner the farm women prepared. One man was an especially big eater. Every time he sat down at a meal, he would say, "This is my main meal."

Usually ice tea was the drink liked by most of the men. One man put a heaping teaspoon of sugar on a glass filled with clear honey and wondered why his sugar would not sink.

Somebody said chicken wings would make a person handsome. Then somebody else quickly spoke up and said, "Give **** two."

Moist grain could not be threshed, so it sometimes happened that people had to tear their shocks down to let their bundles dry and would then set them up in shocks again.

We threshed our grain near the cow pasture so the cows would have the straw to eat. Still some fodder had to be raised for the stock. The cattle liked the sweet sugar cane.

With July the picture changed somewhat. Threshing was over and the stubble land had to be flat broken with the plow. One started at the outer edges of a field and plowed round and round. It was monotonous work, and the rounds made would be counted to see what progress had been made. There were several grain fields to be plowed, and Herman and Carl took their turn at this work which lasted off and on for perhaps a month.

In the first years we lived at Holland, we made corn fodder. Mother said it was something one could have for only a little work. When the corn ears were fairly mature, one cut off the top of the cornstalk above the top ear. These tops were thrown on the ground in piles to dry. Then, early in the morning when not too brittle, they were tied into bundles ana set up into shocks. They were hauled in when dry and made into one or more fodder stacks. This had to be done right so the stalk would come to a point so the rain would leak off and not get inside the stalk. If it rained on the fodder before it was hauled in, the shocks sometimes had to be torn apart and the bundles allowed to dry on the ground.

Mature corn had to be broken and thrown on the ground in piles.

Later someone might drive the horses while the others would throw corn on the wagon. Father would sometimes break corn by himself. He could tell the horses to go or stop as he kept breaking the corn, and the horses may not have known there was no driver in the wagon.

July was a month when work was not so pressing and pleasure trips could be taken. It was on July 16, 1904, when Mother and Conrad and I went to visit Uncle Louis Mackensen and Aunt Annie Fuchs in Houston. There I saw automobiles tor the first time. From Houston, Mother, Conrad, and I went to San Antonio for a visit with Uncle Bernhard Mackensen and Aunt Marie. Uncle Bernhard was a teacher and Aunt Marie an artist, so their house was attractive and pleasant. Ella, the oldest daughter, was my age. The other two children were still small. Mother brought home melon and flower seed.

Cotton picking was usually long drawn-out work, and sometimes in the early years Mother would go to the field, too, not only to help with the work, but to see to it that there was not too much playing done. We children welcomed the chance to earn some money, about the only chance, but we soon grew tired of this work.

In 1904, Carl was sent to school at the beginning of the school year when there was pay school. Felix and I started later. Carl, however, stayed at home some days to help get the last cotton out so the land could be plowed and leveled off and the grain planted.

On cold days one might take things easier except there were cows to milk and feed, mules to feed, and hogs to slop and feed. Eggs had to be gathered and chickens and turkeys fed, and perhaps there were plants to cover up to protect them from a freeze. The kitchen had to be supplied with wood and water, and the dogs and cats needed their supper.

Father thought it would be nice to have a place to bathe at the creek, so he built a dam by putting a big log across the creek, perhaps five feet high, and placing some boards against it for damming up the water. The boards would be removed when a heavy rain was expected so they would not wash away.

The southern part of Cottonwood Home, the Rombergs' residence near Holland.

7. Herman's Diary

In 1904 Herman kept a diary. Although there may not have been much that seemed worth mentioning, his account of the every day life gives a good picture of what our farm life was like at that time. Here are some of the things that he related.

June 5, 1904 (Sunday): It rained a bit last night. I am now reading "Die Tanzstundt," a story in a German magazine. We closed the dam. Carl has company and is running around in the world with them. Felix and I bathed while it thundered in the west. Carl and his friends wanted to wait till the dammed-up water would be deeper. The threatening weather grew nearer. Felix and I ran home. After a while, Carl and his friends came, too. It became very windy and rained well.

June 10: Today we tried to "drum together" enough men for threshing. Carl hauled two loads of wood to the field (to be used to fire the engine). We made a stack from two loads of oats before the people came for threshing. We had to have all the oats hauled over the bridge, as the thresher could not cross it. Papa and two others built a stack and we still threshed that grain. Tonight we had a little rain with north wind.

June11: At dinnertime we got through threshing our grain, so we threshed elsewhere this afternoon and got through with that also. Tonight it has sprinkled a bit. Our sacks are in the open. There are 1044 bushels from 25 acres. It is lightning in the east like it did last night. Ida took Annie to Holland who left by train for La Grange, where she will teach school after the vacation given in order that the children could do the needed cotton chopping.

June 26 (Sunday): Father and I drove to town to unload sacks (of grain). (If rain threatened, the sacks had to be hauled out of the field whether it was Sunday or not.) This afternoon I played my cello (violincello). Ida, Frederica, and I went to a meeting at church.

June 27: Father hauled toll. He sold his oats for 25 cents a bushel. There were 1000 bushels.

September 16: Our potatoes are coming up. I hoed them. Father plowed them. I went home and churned a bit, then finished hoeing. Then I went into the house. Someone sent me to the wash place where Mother and Ida were washing. Mother sent me to the field to take Father's place plowing. I soon finished it and now I am writing. Louise went to Holland this morning. It is drizzling a little tonight. It thundered in the north.

November 28: We killed a hog. It was so cold school wasn't held. Built a fence around the fodder stack.

November 30: Mother and Ida helped Thornhills butcher four hogs. Annie, Ida, and I went to a party. When we returned, it was 42 degrees F.

December 4 (Sunday): Father went to town and Carl to Thornhills. It was 39 degrees F at dinnertime.

December 5: It was still cold, but Carl and I attended school. Dug roots at the hedge. Father planted a tree.

December 6: The weather still was 39 degrees F. Some worked at the hedge.

December 7: I plowed.

December 8: Father planted a tree. I dug roots at the hedge. (This hedge that is mentioned must have been the bois de arc hedge that we wanted to get rid of because it crossed a field.)

8. Father

Many farmers liked to go to town on Saturday and sit around and talk and maybe whittle on a stick, but Father did not loaf on the streets. Still he was well known and one time said people knew him like a spotted dog.

Once when Father went to town, everybody seemed to notice him and was particularly friendly. Finally someone told him that people were thinking he had inherited a million dollars. A millionaire had died, but Papa was not one of the heirs.

One very muddy day when we had gotten on to rural free delivery, the mailman delivered the mail riding horseback. Papa asked the mailman, “How many pounds can one send by mail?" The mailman replied, "Fifty pounds." Papa said, "Think I will have a sack of flour sent out by mail. "The mailman said, "Don’t you do it!" But Papa was only joking.

Father, who did not care to read in the newspaper about murder cases, often served on the jury. He might make a remark about the lawlessness, but consider how things are now.

Papa paid perhaps several hundred dollars in taxes and complained about the taxes being high. What would he think of the many taxes we have today — even income tax and inheritance tax? In 1900 the cost of running the government was only 90 cents per person.

Father sometimes kept a hired hand. The usual salary of a farmhand was $15 a month with board. John Krause was one of the hands Papa especially liked. One time one of the Bauch boys came to work for us.

People borrowed a lot. Papa had a road scraper which had been lent from one person to another until Papa did not know where it was. Then one day he saw a road scraper on the road near his house. Thinking it was his, he took it home. Not long afterward somebody brought back Papa's road scraper.

One time when it was dry, one family which will be called "X" carried drinking water from the family "Y". When Mr. X returned a borrowed mower to Mr. Y, he said nothing about a broken piece. When Mr. Y got ready to use the mower, he was angry not only because a new expensive piece had to be obtained but also because of delay in getting his work done; so he rang up Mr. X to make complaint. Mr. X may have thought the piece had been about worn out and didn’t want to provide a new piece. Thereupon, Mr. Y angrily told Mr. X, "You can’t get any more water from us."

When Mrs. Y heard about it and Mr. Y had cooled off, Mrs. Y rang up Mrs. X and inquired about her family of children, and after the women had talked about the weather, styles, and kitchen recipes, or what all, Mrs. Y then said it was of course all right for the Xes to get drinking water from her house. "Mr. Y had been a little hasty and did not really mean all he had said."

Although my parents could not be classed as church goers, they set us a good example of righteous living and brought us children up to proper moral principles.

Both my parents were ambitious.

While Father worked in the field, he had time to think about the articles he wanted to write for newspapers. He was complimented on his contributions, for he was an educated man. He sometimes wrote amusing things, which were especially liked.

Father wrote many poems, some of which were printed in newspapers. Sometimes they were funny. When I was May Queen, Father wrote the speech which was all in the form of poetry.

Father would buy unfinished cedar pencils which he could get for ten cents a dozen.

There were a variety of ways in which one could save. Papa and Grandfather added pecan leaves to their tobacco to make it go farther. One could light a pipe with a folded piece of paper which had to be lit by a fire, of course. Ink could be blotted with ashes.

We had a big telescope and would sometimes look through it at stars. In 1910, we had a wonderful chance to see Halley's Comet. Wouldn't Father be awed by the flight to the moon? I was going to school when we had a sun eclipse. Papa took the telescope to the school house so those who wanted to could see the sun through the telescope.

Father had learned English and German from childhood and also some French since his Mother and Grandmother sometimes talked French, which they had learned as an accomplishment. Later Father got interested in Spanish and even Bohemian. Papa sometimes wrote foreign words on a piece of paper and would take it to the field so he could study them when he stopped to rest.

Papa liked to study plants, and he got Uncle Bernhard Mackensen interested in Botany. Uncle Bernhard had studied architecture but soon became a teacher, and one thing he taught was Botany.

Father worked to get a telephone company started. He was perhaps the president, the secretary, and the treasurer of the company. One time when building a line, Father got into an argument with Mr. Markham. Papa believed in putting bois de arc stumps into the ground to hold guy wires. Mr. Markham thought iron would hold better. Papa and Mr. Markham bet $100 on the matter, but of course neither would be there when either would win out. We were on a party line with perhaps six parties to the line. Did people listen in? They did with a good conscience. It was a good way to keep up with the neighborhood news, and it sometimes was quite interesting.

Although Papa farmed, he also made some money on the side by surveying land. The people for whom he surveyed would invite him to have dinner with them or else would take him to a restaurant to eat. He sometimes got quite a meal, but one time he got sauerkraut and white bread. Papa was not fond of sour things, and he later remarked to us that he didn't see why this old couple who seemed to be in fair circumstances ate no better meal.

Papa was not particular about food. A restaurant keeper one time exclaimed, "Thank goodness, here is a man who will eat his egg any way I fix it," and she remarked that the people who are particular about restaurant food often have nothing more than meager meals at home.

9. Miscellaneous

Not all time was spent working. There was also some time tor rest and pleasures such as reading. Papa, Mama, and Grandfather liked to read a while after dinner and then take a nap. For reading matter, Papa kept The Literary Digest and the Dallas semi-weekly news. The La Grange newspaper was sent to him free of charge because he contributed to it, and he may have kept the Lincoln Freie Presse, a German paper. Mother kept "Daheim," a paper printed in German. It probably was printed in Germany and reprinted in this country. We, of course, used kerosene lamps.

Since this was before we had movies, we played games for entertainment. We had a crocanole board that was used many a time. We had card games and dominoes, too. The game of Forty-Two was especially well liked at the time and people gave Forty-Two parties.

Father liked to play chess. Sometimes when there was no field work, he would walk to town and play chess with Mr. Mitchell, who liked the game.

One thing we liked to do on a Sunday afternoon was wander along the rock bottom creeks. The water was shallow enough to wade but had fish in them. In the fall of the year, there would be berries to eat, and sometimes we could pick up pecans for the halves. They were the native kind, small and hard.

The Ringling Brothers show came to Belton once a year, and I think we all went there by wagon one time. We had some neighbors who were rather saving. They went to the parade to "see the people" but did not attend the show. The mother kept no toys because they litter up a house. Her two boys had a cat, and it was lean, perhaps from too much handling.

This was long before we had television. There were other ways of entertaining one's self — parties, singings, ice cream suppers, box suppers, candy pulls. Forty-Two (a domino game) parties were popular when I was about sixteen.

The nearest church was a Baptist church. When one of the preachers preached about hell, you could almost see the flames of hell. Not much is said about hell any more. We instead hear more about the exemplary life of Christ. We had no nursery at the churches. A mother could place her baby on a folded quilt and give him crackers to eat. This would keep the child busy whether hungry or not, and the crackers would not soil the Sunday clothes. One time I heard a neighbor lady urging her small children to keep their feet down so it would not be so noticeable that they had no shoes to wear.

The first of April was always remembered, and we loved to fool each other or do something funny such as putting sticks under the bed sheet or putting a raw egg into the dish of cooked eggs. For a prank, Papa one time had his beard shaved off. He came home dressed in newly bought clothes, and when he said, "Good evening, Ma'am," to Mother, she did not at once recognize him, so said, "Good evening, Sir." She had never seen him beardless before.

Easter was always celebrated with an Easter egg hunt, and we often would hide the eggs several times to get more pleasure out of the occasion.

Herman was our Santa Claus. The tree was usually attained at Summers Mill. Herman would slip the tree into our living room the night before Christmas eve, and the room remained closed to us children the next day while the tree was secretly trimmed with old decorations and perhaps a few new ones in addition to the home-baked and trimmed cookies, popcorn balls, and strung up raisins — and what all was it? The cookies were coated with beaten egg white and sugar;

decorated with raisins, nuts, and candies; and shaded with cocoa. Mother would sometimes give some of the cookies to neighbor children to whom they would be a delight.

We children would come to the supper table washed clean and wearing some better clothing. We drank chocolate for supper and Mother would have the usual big loaf of skillet cornbread, butter, peach "muss" [mousse], and maybe some sausage from the smokehouse.

We never failed to sing "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht" before entering the living room. We would then catch hands and march around the Christmas tree singing, "Oh, Tannenbaum." The older people would enjoy seeing the surprise and wonder in the faces of the small children. One or two of the old dolls with maybe new dresses would sit stiff legged under the tree along with a few new toys. Other toys would be packaged and wrapped. The scent of cedar and tallow candles would prevail.

After the tree had been duly admired came the opening of the packages one at a time, and each would be passed around to be admired. Some of the lights would be blown out so we could enjoy the beauty of the tree the next night or at some other time.

After the celebration, Carl would shoot off a Roman candle or two. Usually a ball or two would be disappointing and would fail to rise very far and might waste their beauty on the ground. Carl would also have some fire crackers, and a loud pop might be followed by a joyous "yell of wonder." The firecrackers that would not pop could be held to a coal of fire and made to spew.

On New Years Day we would try to beat the other person in saying “Prosit Neu Jahr." Sometimes we would pour hot wax into water to read our future by the shape of the wax that would harden. It was easy to construe the meaning of the shapes according to our wishes. All of us looked into the future with confidence and good cheer.

10. Later Years

As the years progressed and we children grew older, improvements were made to the homestead. The log corn crib was the first shack we tore down. Carl built the spring house in 1909, and the big tin shed for the thresher was built about that time, too. Herman built his broom house in 1912. When Karl (Bartels) and I planned to get married in 1914, Father had the smaller dwelling house built west of the grove. It was Karl who added the red part to the tin shed. Later, he and Erich built the round house and the garage west of the grove in about 1917.

In the first years at Holland, our house was heated by the fireplace and kitchen stove. Later we put a heater in the living room and still later the fireplace was seldom used. The living room and the kitchen had big wood heaters; still one might hurry to get through the cold halls.

It was after the rainy summer of 1919 and a spell of malaria that the windows were screened to keep out mosquitoes and also flies.

More room made for better living and more guests. Visitors were always made welcome; in consequence I have always felt free to visit anybody any time. We had relatives every summer. Our Aunt Annie Mackensen and her children of Houston sometimes spent several weeks. Sister Annie thought it was good for us to have visitors so the boys would learn manners, but we would have welcomed the visitors anyway.

We always kept in touch with the Ohlendorfs. Grandfather, after visiting with us, would go to visit the Ohlendorfs for perhaps a week. Uncle Karl Ohlendorf was the brother of our grandmother, Auguste Ohlendorf Mackensen. We also kept in touch with the Fuchs family. Some of the Fuchs cousins rented Papa's ranch for many years.

Farm life was interesting. We, a large family, had many pets around us. Snippy on the porch would be half asleep but watchful. Poultry would rove over the yard — a mama hen followed by baby chicks, a rooster crowing, the gobbler showing off his feathers to the ladies. Bees humming around the flowers. Horses drowsily munching their corn; baby calf wiggling its tail while sucking. Hogs grunting, pigs squealing, cats following the milk buckets to the milk house to get the discarded foam. Fish swimming in the sparkling water below the bridge. The front porch was a pleasant place to rest — a view of fields, a buzzard outlined against the clouds, a spider spinning a nest.

I remember when one of my cousins had his first auto. It was something few people could afford. He would look his tires over for stickers in hopes his inner tubes would not get punctured. The tires were much thinner than now, and it was not unusual to see some traveler by the roadside mending his inner tube. When Herman had his first auto, the neighbor boys would catch a ride with him, and they would ride all the way to our garage and walk a piece back again. They did not want to miss any of the unusual ride.

Karl and I married in 1914. The next year Karl, who had been renting for the halves, wanted to buy Father's mules and tools and farm tor 3/4 of the crop. This was all right with Father, who was 64 years old at the time. He had been farming more or less for twenty-five years. It had been a vocation but not his avocation.

Karl had a Model T Ford so we could get around faster. Karl took Papa on various trips to such places as Hindes and the Romberg Ranch. Father had no desire to own and drive an auto. One time when we went to Fayette County, Ernst Romberg said that Father had said he had a good son-in-law.

Papa did all kinds of little jobs about the house such as chopping weeds and sawing and chopping wood for the stoves.

Papa one time went to Plainview, Texas, to visit relatives and liked the level land of plains so well, he would have liked to have moved there, but Mother liked her home in Bell County too well to try such a new venture.

Mother and Father took several long train trips to Georgia to visit Carl and Loula Mae and Conrad. Carl and Loula Mae took Mother and Father sightseeing to the Smoky Mountains, Stone Mountain, and other places which they enjoyed.

At the beginning of 1919 Father went to Hindes to advise Ida about a farm south of San Antonia. Mother followed so she could take care of Father. Louis went to help do the hard work. Herman went in the summer. Grandfather went to spend a week but stayed on. Karl and I moved into the large house. In the fall came the 1919 hurricane, which destroyed Ida's cotton. Ida did not complain or explain, but in the fall of 1920 she rented out the farm to a neighbor. Mother and Father and Herman came home and moved into the big roomy home with Karl and me. We lived together about seven years. Louis went back to A. & M. that fall.

On January 1, 1925, Angersteins came from Germany. Willy Angerstein was an engineer and Auguste, his wife, was Karl's sister. There were three children — Fritz, 14, and Lisa and Ruth, six and four years respectively. Having those kinfolks in Texas meant much to Karl and me and our children. Angersteins lived in Taylor perhaps 15 years and then moved to Austin.

Mother had the misfortune to break her hip. She was milking a cow one day when it suddenly turned and knocked Mother down. She who had been very active most of her life could no longer get around fast; so she chose the rocking chair kind of work, for I was there and could do the housework. She walked with a crutch and a 2-inch sole on one shoe for the rest of her life.

When Father’s sight grew bad, Mother would read to him. When she read the newspaper, it would often be mainly the headlines. Papa did not like to hear about such things as killings and rape. He would say, "Next." Later Mother's sight became poor.

Sometimes Father would play on his violin. One time when a neighbor came over, he asked Father to play a piece for him. Father played "Nearer My God to Thee." When he was through the neighbor said, “That is nice. Now play some real music."

Rosaline was a bright and happy school girl. It was when Nita was three months old that Rosaline broke out with the measles in school. Had we foreseen — but we did not foresee. Did we err? We loved her and meant well, but we were humans. Under the circumstances, things just had to happen the way they did. The sun came out after dreary days. The chinaberry blossoms lay thick on the ground when Rosaline left us on that spring day, May 1, 1924.

It was in the fall of 1925 when Ida came home with her little daughter, Annie Lee Igoe. How was she to make a living and take care of her little girl, too? Karl and I moved to the smaller house northwest of the spring branch. We had four children then. Ida kept house for my parents and Herman, for which she received some pay.

In 1927 Karl and I moved to Hatch, New Mexico, and two years later to Taft.

Ida kept house for my parents, but it was about time for Ida to have some of her usual hard luck. She took typhoid and spent a while in the hospital. A few years later, Annie Lee had to spend a while in a hospital, too.

Ida kept house and raised chickens on the side; later she raised chickens and kept

house on the side.

The Romberg family had several big reunions — two at New Braunfels, one in Austin, and one at Fredericksburg. The first in New Braunfels was especially well attended. Even some of the Fuchs and Franke family were there. Aunt Louise (Fuchs), Aunt Frederike (Perlitz), and Aunt Ida (Romberg), Father's sisters, and Father were some of the old members of the family who were there.

Father lived long enough to see the beginning of tractor farming — so much faster and easier than the old type of farming. He complained about high farm and school taxes. That was before we had so many kinds of taxes as now.

Father died on April 1, 1933. After Father was gone, Mother sold her Hindes farm and the Romberg Ranch and divided the money among her children. Mother liked traveling. For some years she would visit with us at Taft in the fall of the year. She would also visit with Louis and Hilda and with Frederica in west Texas, but in her later years she preferred letting us visit her.

Sometime during World War II, we had a family reunion at Holland. Brother Carl came from Georgia, and I rode the bus from Taft to Salado. At every stop, there were soldier boys. Many were telling their sweethearts, "Good-bye," and there would be tears.

Mother said to Carl, "Isn't this war bad?"

Carl replied, "Bad? It isn't bad, it is awful!"

In 1942 Ida moved to a farm east of Holland which she had bought, and Annie gave up her good position at Denton to come home and take care of Mother, Herman, and Felix.

Annie was sentimental. She was interested in improving the home and didn't mind spending money on it. Annie had the ceilings put into the upstairs rooms and had tin put on the old part of the roof. She had closets and shelves built. She had walls papered, floors and trim painted. She bought curtains for the windows — some had never had any. She put banisters around the front porch and had the floor repaired and painted and the steps renewed. She later had the whole outside of the house painted white. Was it any wonder that Mother finally asked Annie if she and Herman did not want to buy her farm? They did and owned it half and half.

In about 1948, cousin Erich came and spent a while at the farm. He improved the fireplace and suggested how to build the needed bathroom. It was built, and though the cost was not much, it has been a great improvement to the house.

Wanting to better the looks of the yard, Annie had some of the old sheds removed. The only two building left of those that were there when we moved to Holland are the barn and part of the old dwelling house which was moved to the barnyard.

For some years, Mother's comfortable wicker rocker stood by the window in the southwest corner of our big living room. Her radio stood on a table by her chair, and it was much company to her, especially when her eyesight gave out. There was no television yet.

Of course, we had the rosewood Chickering piano bought for Mother when she was eighteen years old. After about sixty years of use and disuse, it had been so much damaged by moths, silverfish, and even rats that it was unfit for musical enjoyment; so instead of having it repaired, there was talk of discarding it. But once after such heartless and disrespectful talk about her royal highness the piano, Mother said, "It will still do to set the lamp on." That settled the matter and the piano was kept.

Mother died on January 19, 1950. Although she had had ten children, she had only eighteen grandchildren. One, John Christopher, 54 years younger than her oldest grandchild, she never

knew. All of Mother's children married except three, and they — Annie, Herman, and Felix — still live at our beloved Cottonwood Home.

Annie Romberg, September 1970

Herman and Annie

Annie and Felix

The Rombergs’ Cottonwood Home, September 1970

THE LUDWIG FRANKE HOME

This summer, 1932, I had the pleasure of seeing, after more than eighty years, the roomy Franke home in which I was born and where I lived my first years.

It may have looked like my Aunt Bernhardine was very lucky when she, at the age of eighteen, married — in rough cattle country —the handsome, educated, and ambitious Ludwig Franke, whose ancestors belonged to the nobility and from whom he inherited an exceptional talent for music. Who would have thought of sickness, griefs, and many years of widowhood?

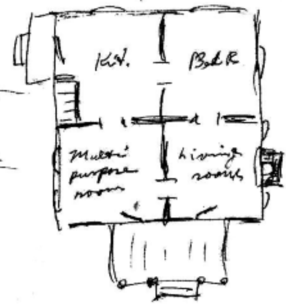
The two-story white mansion of the Frankes was surrounded by unusually big live oak trees. From the two-story front porch one could see a beautiful three acre piece of grassland surrounded by trees. Today one drives up to the house from the back. A one-story building that contained such as the kitchen and a wash room is now gone.

A part of the once front yard is now a thicket of small trees and "das Häuschen."

From the porch one could once see the home of John Romberg only a quarter of a mile away. On a hill a mile away the Bernhard Rombergs lived. Only a third of a mile away was Aunt Ida's rent house, where my parents lived two times, about six years in all. In front of this grey three-room house was a porch with flagstone for a floor and a cistern at one end. Over two rooms was an attic. The stairs went up from the kitchen. A bedroom added at the back was a later addition. I can imagine there is nothing left there but a tangle of brush, weeds, and scattered rocks.

In the wooded pasture behind the Franke house we find three graves surrounded by a low rock wall. With reverence I read the name of Louis Franke. (Louis is the French equivalent for Ludwig.)

In the distance are the Black Jack Springs. It is easy for me to imagine they were a blessing already three hundred years ago when Indians roved over this land — ten generations ago, when Christian Klein taught law in the University of Rostock in far off Germany.



The Franke Home

11. CAROLINE MACKENSEN ROMBERG
(Born Dec. 29, 1856 - Died Jan. 19, 1950)

My mother, the oldest child of Otto Mackensen, was born ten miles from Industry, Texas, on December 29, 1856. When she was but three weeks old, her parents moved to Fayette County.

Mother could creep very fast. She did not learn to walk until she was sixteen months old. She was late about learning to talk, too.

When Grandmother expressed her fear that there was something wrong with the child, Grandfather's comment was, "She is of too good stock to be dumb."

Once little "Line" crawled into the fireplace. Her mother heard the baby cry and saw that its clothes were burning. Grandmother immediately wrapped her child in her skirt of many folds and smothered the fire.

When Mother was less than four years old, her parents moved to Bell County. Their home was a three-room log house, the kitchen of which had no floor. Most people did their cooking in a fireplace, but Grandmother had a stove.

Grandfather cultivated a small field of corn. The sheep roved over the prairie where they were herded. Today almost all of this land is in cultivation. The few fences used at that time were made of rails or rocks. Some people had bois de arc hedges instead of fences. The nearest town was Salado, about eight miles distant. One or the other of the community would ride there once in a week or two to get the mail.

When Mother was but a small girl, she had to learn to knit stockings and to sew. Grandmother was particular, and when a mistake was made, it had to be corrected.

When Mother was a little older, she and her sister, Anna, had to watch the sheep. They were given dinner to take along. Lard was often used instead of butter. Sometimes they had sausage with their bread, but sausage was not plentiful. It was made of chopped meat packed by spoonfuls into the casings. The sausage tasted so very good that the two children would begin to nibble on it soon after they left home. When dinner time came, they would have left only the bread, if anything at all. Mother liked to gather wild flowers and to watch the buzzards soar about. Polecats were plentiful. Sometimes Mother would step on a prairie runner, a snake, with a bare foot.

It was very hard for the family when Grandfather had to leave to fight in the Civil War. Competent hands were scarce. An old man was found and hired to do necessary jobs about the place, but he was unsatisfactory, so another was hired.

The meals were very simple those days. Their bread was usually cornbread. There would be bacon, molasses or jerky beef to go with it. Grandmother liked to use some flour. During the war she gave a gold watch for a barrel of flour. Sugar was used sparingly. A bag of lump sugar hung under the roof.

Dishes were scarce at that time. When one of the children had the mishap to break a dish, she was sure to get punishment unless Grandmother did not know about it. The girls, therefore, sometimes hid a broken dish under the house.

The girls had one nice doll which someone had sent from Germany. When they sewed for the doll, they had to be careful not to lose the needle. Pins they could make out of mesquite thorns.

Mother was not afraid of the dark. For a while when she was eight she slept about 100 yards from home with her dog where the fence was faulty to keep wild hogs from getting into the corn field. Such things such as grapes, nuts, and dewberries were considered common property;

therefore, the land owner had to be an early bird if he wanted to harvest some of his wild fruits.

When a little baby brother arrived, a cradle was made out of a hollow log so the sisters could rock him. At first Caroline and Anna quarreled because each wanted to be the one to rock baby Bernhard, but it was not long until both of the little girls thought, "Oh, I'm so tired of him."

When Mother was eight, she was asked whether she would like to live with her grandmother in Austin County and go to school there for two years. Not having much idea of how long a time that would be, Mother was glad to go, so a neighbor, Mrs. Evens, who was leaving for Austin County, took her along. Her wagon was drawn by five yokes of oxen.

As planned, Mother stayed with her grandmother for two years and went to a German school with the children of her uncle, Karl Ohlendorf. The teacher was very strict. Perhaps he had to be, for he had about 50 pupils; besides, he had to teach all the grades taught at that school by himself. The primers of that time were very monotonous. For a long time the beginners only spelled. There were so few pictures in Mother's school books that she long remembered what they were like.

When the war was over, Mother was taken back to her home. She then went off and on to a school two miles down the creek. The school house was built of rough timbers. The windows did not have glass but doors that could be closed. The seats were made of tree trunks half split in two with legs attached. There was only one seat where writing could be done. The teachers (men in those days) kept a switch handy. The teachers would usually teach but a few months and then move on.

Some of the children had head lice. Those with more pride had to keep on the watch. Some of the children took milk to school. They would stick their bottles into the mud close to a spring to keep cool. Sometimes hogs would get there and root the bottles around.

When Mother was a child, there were very few houses of planks. Mr. Armstrong, a neighbor, had one, the lumber of which had been hauled from Houston. The home of Mother's parents was of logs. It had three rooms, a living room, a bed room, and a kitchen. The living room, of course, had a fireplace. Most people had no pictures to hang on their walls, but Grandmother had pictures. At the living room window ("Luke") she had a curtain. This was a rarity at that time. Mother thought it looked very pretty. They had a well-made bureau that had been sent from Germany and two large chests.

Caroline Mackensen, a teenager in Belton

When Mother was thirteen, her parents moved to Belton so they would have a better chance to educate their children. Here Mother had herself called Carrie.

When Mother was fifteen, she was sent to Burnet County to a Mr. Ebeling, a friend of her father, who kept a tutor for his children. Here she took German and other studies. She also took piano lessons. When she was seventeen, she returned to her home. Her father bought a piano so she could keep up her music and also teach her sister and two brothers. (The youngest was Louis.)

In the summer of 1876, when Mother was nineteen, Grandfather and she went to visit the Ebelings in Burnet County. My mother met Father, who was teaching there. Two weeks later, September 13, they became engaged.

On March 15, 1877, Mother and Father married. At first they lived at Cypress Mill, where Father taught the Cypress Mill school. The same summer my parents bought a small ranch of 700 acres, the old Cleveland place on the Little Cypress. Father kept sheep and taught also. Otto, Annie, and Ida were born on this place at Cypress Mill. My parents lived there five years. Then they sold it and Father and his brother, John, bought the ranch of Karl Perlitz, which had 2300 acres. They kept sheep. Herman was born on this ranch. There was no school close by, so when Otto became old enough to go to school, they rented out the ranch and moved to O'Quinn. There Father taught the O'Quinn school for four years. On this place Frederica was born, and later Otto died there of typhoid fever.

After living at O'Quinn four years, the family moved to Black Jack Springs. There, too, Father taught school. He farmed also with the help of a hired hand. The family lived here eight years. The first year they lived on Aunt Ida's farm. Carl was born on this farm. Then for four years they lived in the home of Aunt Bernhardine. That became my birthplace. The last three years at Black Jack Springs we lived on Aunt Ida's place again. Felix and Louis were born there.

Conrad, the baby of the family, was born at Holland, in Bell County, where the family moved to in December 1898. Holland is the place we children refer to when we say, "back home."

Mother, who was a strong and lively child, became a well-built, energetic, and industrious woman. She has been an orderly, practical, and capable housekeeper. She has also been a saving one, for money had a way of being scarce. In the nineties cotton got as cheap as 4½ cents a pound, and eggs as cheap as 4½ cents per dozen. Once when sickness had sapped the bank account, Mother sewed shirts, receiving 25 cents for the sewing of each. She could sew three or four a day in her spare time. She was a neat seamstress. In her early married life she made all the clothing her family needed, even suits for father. Some days had to be met with courage and determination. When a child was very ill, Mother seemingly did not get tired until after the crisis passed.

Mother was a cheerful and talkative person. She could tell of many interesting things, for the experiences of her life were many.

12. JULIUS D. ROMBERG
(Born Feb. 2, 1851 - Died April 1, 1933)

My father arrived in this world near Cat Springs in Austin County, Texas. When he was a baby, he liked to play in the sand of the San Bernard River, which was not far from the house. As Julius was the only one of the family who could become president of the United States, the other brothers having been born in Europe, he was nick-named "Presidente," which later was shortened to "Dente." He was called by this name until he was about twelve years old.

Being the youngest, my father was most likely the pet of the family. He must have been a big boy before he quit sitting on his mother's lap, for father could remember that his mother once gave him a slap and told him he was too big to sit on people's knees. That was the end of his babyhood.

When Father was about four, the family moved to Black Jack Springs. I imagine that in his boyhood my father liked to climb in the oak trees and swing on grape vines and that he played in the patch of joint cane behind the house. He liked to run away from his dog and hide. The dog would then hunt until he would find his little master.

When Father got old enough to work, he had to watch the cattle and sheep. This became a tiresome job. One time when Father was trying out some stunts on his horse, he suddenly found himself among the clumps of buffalo grass.

Julius Romberg, age 21

At age 22, a student in Schwerin, Germany

Father received his first education at home, as there was no school close by. The blue-backed speller was his first book. When he was fifteen, he boarded with some people who had several pretty, young daughters. All put on their company manners, and poor bashful Father hardly got enough to eat. One day after he had left the dining room, he unexpectedly returned. Imagine his surprise when he saw the girls standing around the table fishing around in the dishes finishing their

meal.

Father spent two years studying in Germany. One spring day when he was in Schwerin, Germany, he decided to go bathing in the lake. He found that the water was much cooler than the water in the creek at home would be at this time of the year. The next day a newspaper of the city stated that a courageous young American had started the bathing season.

One night Father slept in a "haunted" room. He heard plenty of noises but decided they were made by the mice and rats in the straw roof.

Thunderstorms seem to be more rare in Germany than in Texas. One night when there was a thunderstorm, father did not let this disturb his sleep. He was surprised when he found out that the other inmates of the house had been so afraid that they dressed and gathered in the living room.

One night when Father was on one of his ocean voyages, the fire bell rang. It fitfully rang and rang. As may be expected, much anxiety and confusion followed. Poor father thought, "Oh, why did it have to happen this time — just when I am on the ocean." But soon the quieting message passed around that there was no fire. The rain had made the rope that was attached to the bell shrink so much that the bell began to ring. A sailor in his efforts to loosen the rope had made the bell ring all the more.

One summer when Father was teaching in Blanco County, he met a rosy-cheeked young lady, Caroline Mackensen. A year later she became his wife. At the wedding he wore a black dress suit. His vest was double breasted. It was of white pique. With this suit he wore, as was considered proper, a pair of high leather boots. He did not know the girl he married very well, but he soon found out he had made a good choice.

Father taught school for nearly twenty years. He taught at a time when it was considered necessary to keep a bunch of rattan switches in one corner of the room, but he kept the room quiet without the use of these. He not only controlled his pupils, but he also controlled himself. He never talked in a loud and angry voice and never lost his temper — never. He could be very serious, very firm, and when he spoke a command, there was no doubt as to whether the command was to be obeyed or not.

When Father gave up teaching, he became a county surveyor. Sometimes he was away from home a whole week. One time after such an absence, a buggy was seen coming down the road at night fall. There was a scramble for the door; chairs were knocked over. A half dozen children ran up the road hollering, "Oh, Papa, Papa! Papa is coming home!" The noise stopped as suddenly as it had begun. The disappointed children sneaked quietly back into the house.

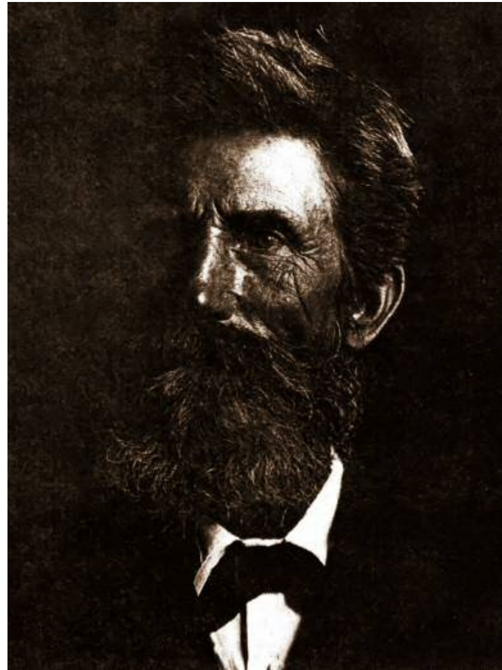
When Mother's father gave her a farm, the family moved to this farm near Holland, Texas, in Bell County. Father then farmed and surveyed land on the side. He ran a thresher for about ten years.

When Father surveyed, he sometimes went to restaurants to eat. One time he walked into a restaurant and asked for an egg. Upon being asked how he would like it prepared, he replied, "Just cook it any way you like to." Much surprised, the lady owner exclaimed, "Thank the Lord! Here is a man who will take his egg any way I fix it!" and added, "Most people are very particular about their food when they come here, and those who never get a well-cooked meal at home are usually the ones who are the hardest to satisfy."

My father was fond of music and liked to play the violin. One day a neighbor asked father to play for him. Father played "Nearer My God to Thee." When he had finished, the neighbor said,

"That's fine. Now play some real music." The neighbor preferred fiddle music.

Cottonwood Home at Holland was the home of my father the last 34 years of his life.



Children of J. D. Romberg:

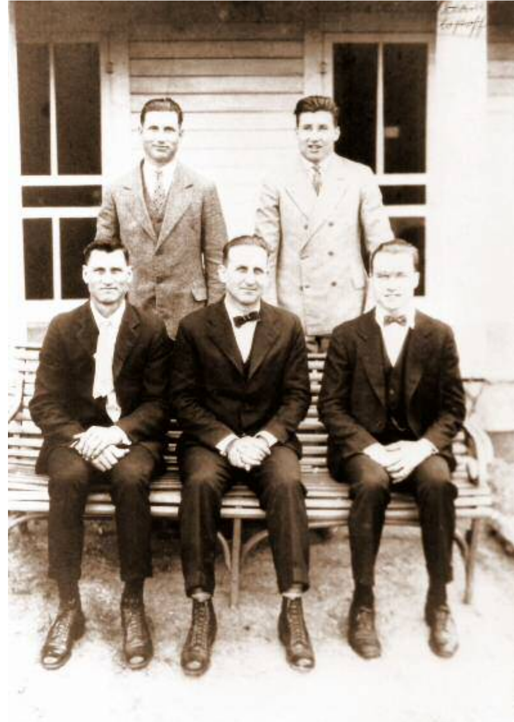
1. Otto John (March 30, 1878 – April 1, 1889)
2. Annie Auguste (March 30, 1880 – January 31, 1977)
3. Ida Amalie (March 27, 1882 – October 15, 1980)
   Married Robert Igoe on November 11, 1921
   Child: Anne Romberg Igoe, born June 3, 1924
4. Herman John (November 15, 1884 – November 25, 1971)
5. Frederica Louise (July 5, 1887 – January 9, 1979)
   Married Ray K. Thornhill on Sept. 1, 1904
   Children: Otto, Gertrude, and Margaret
6. Carl Bernhard (June 19, 1890 – June 18, 1977)
   Married Loula Mae Sharp on November 12, 1914
7. Erna Bernhardine (December 13, 1892 – November 24, 1991)
   Married Karl Richard Bartels on Aug. 18, 1914
   Children: Roseline, Sonja, Bernhard, Karl, Nita, Linda, and Helene
8. Felix Berthold (January 12, 1896 – September 12, 1991)
9. Louis Dente (August 24,1898 – September 25, 1989)
   Married Hilda Anderson on September 11, 1932
   Children: Eric and Conrad
   Married Gertrud von Helms-Schmidt
10. Conrad Julius (September 25, 1902 – December 12, 1999)
    Married Elizabeth Ashford on March 15, 1932
    Children: George, Caroline, Carl, Constance, and John

Romberg children in 1892 - Herman, Annie (standing), Frederica, Carl, Ida

Carl 16, Conrad 4, Erna 14, Felix 11, Louis 8

Louis, Conrad, Felix

Ida, Frederica, Erna, and Herman



Herman, Carl, Conrad (seated), Louis and Felix

Julius and Caroline Romberg's Golden Wedding (1927)
Seated: Erna, Julius, Caroline, Annie; standing: Conrad, Frederica, Felix, Carl, Louis, Ida, Herman

13. ANNA (ANNIE) AUGUSTE ROMBERG

When Mother was expecting her second baby, Annie, Uncle Bernhard took Grandmother up to the mountains by buggy to help. Before they reached my parents' home, it got so dark that Uncle Bernhard could not see well enough to drive, so they spent the night in their buggy. When night was over, they could see that they were not far away from where my parents lived.

Annie was born March 30, 1880, on the Cleveland Ranch in Blanco County, Texas. Otto, the brother, had been born on the same day of the month, two years earlier.

None of our family seem much alike. Each developed in a different way. Annie and Ida are but two years apart but Annie, when a girl, was carefree and full of pranks. She liked to tease.

At Black Jack the main playmate of Annie and Ida was their first cousin, Hedwig. She was as old as Ida but advanced for her age.

Were there boy cousins? Indeed there were. Most of the Franke boys were already away from home, but there were others: Walter, Uncle John's brown-eyed and curly-haired boy; and Uncle Bernhard's John, Ernst, Bernie, and Arnold. Then too, Uncle Herman Bauch had an adopted son, Carl Engholm, and farther away were the boys of Uncle Theodor and Aunt Sara Bauch. All were cheerful and talkative and all loved music.

When there was time for it, Annie and Ida took piano lessons from Aunt Jolina, a former music teacher. This aunt was somewhat displeased because Annie was playful and did not practice enough.

Annie was forgetful. One time Mother sent Annie to Aunt Dina's to borrow something. Annie had a fine time playing at Aunt Bernadine's and came home without the thing she was to borrow. She later became quieter and responsible. I read Annie's diary and saw how concerned she was about her behavior. She was ashamed of such little things as having been unfriendly.

Teachers were expected to be strict, but Father managed to keep order without undue harshness. One time Annie had a lady teacher by the name of Kuehl. Chewing of gum was forbidden, so when Miss Kuehl saw Annie chewing, she said severely, "Annie, what are you chewing?"

"Oh, just a tendon left from dinner," Annie replied calmly.

The girls received a German magazine called, "Das Kraenzchen" (the small wreath), which was passed around for everybody to read. Annie, anxious to get to read the stories first, hid it in her blouse when she went to the cow pen where there were farm cows to milk. One time Annie hid the magazine under the floor of the house and had trouble getting it out, and unfortunately got the magazine dirty.

Although there was not much chance to get a good education, there was the determination to become educated. Papa would give Annie arithmetic problems to work at home.

Aunt Jolina had been reared in Europe and knew well the need of economy there. She said Mother's children were too generous and might someday go hungry. Annie was one of these generous ones, but she hasn't starved yet!

It is lucky that Annie, the oldest child after Otto died, got to attend high school in San Antonio. She was sixteen (in 1896) and in the seventh grade when she started, living with Aunt Marie and Uncle Bernhard Mackensen. They had a little girl, Ella, five years old. Annie was very glad when school was out in the summer and she could go home. She went by train to Flatonia, the nearest train stop, and Papa met her at the station.

The second year, Annie stayed with Grandfather (Otto Mackensen) and Aunt Anna, who had not yet married. Annie in her diary told how happy she was to get to go home at Christmas time 1897. I was five years old and was sick with perhaps flu, and I, "Ernie", could see the Christmas tree only from my bed (probably the trundle bed).

The third year that Annie went to San Antonio, Aunt Anna had married and had step-children, Cora and Oscar Fox, staying with her, so Annie stayed with Aunt Frederica Perlitz, who had a family of seven girls and one boy, Erich. He was two years younger than Annie. They two would walk to school together. Since Aunt Frederica was a widow, Erich did not get to complete high school. He was still a boy when he started working as a carpenter, and when he received his pay, he turned it all over to his mother.

[The above three paragraphs contain some inconsistencies in ages or dates. Actually, Ella would have been 3 in 1896. Aunt Anna married in 1895]

Annie was in San Antonia when the Spanish-American War broke out. It was not a small matter to fight this war, but Annie, like most people, was very patriotic and very optimistic about the outcome of the war. I have heard that it must have been a boiler explosion instead of a treacherous cannon ball that started the war. However that may be, we fought the war and won.

The last year when Annie was called upon to do a bit of substitute teaching for a few days, she had trouble disciplining the students and worried about this. In her diary she wrote, "I must not be timid but firm." She also wrote, "I often feel so timid and discouraged that I would like to go home and crawl under the bed." But Annie later learned to be firm with her pupils.

Annie was going on nineteen when we moved to Holland. One time when it was raining, she had herself brought home by a livery stable man. He nicely drove up to the combination cottonseed bin and chicken house to let her out, not knowing the gray building a little farther off was the residence.

Big sister Annie was somebody special, and when she came home it was an occasion. Mother would say, "Clean up the yard! Annie is coming."

The first year, Annie taught at Cypress Mill where Lina Perlitz, a first cousin, had taught the year before. Besides English, the people wanted German to be taught. Annie stayed with the Hoppe's four miles from school. The Hoppe's wanted Annie to accompany their daughter, Bertha, to school. This was ranch country. The horse was unhitched and tied to a tree during school hours. Annie earned $27 a month and her board cost $5 a month. [This must have been the 1899-1900 school year, as there exists a letter written by Annie from Cypress Mill dated March 4, 1900, in which she mentioned it was her first year of teaching.]

Annie liked Cypress Mill because we had many kinfolks there. Among Annie's pupils was a bright little second cousin, Eugene Kellersberger. He later graduated from the University of Texas and spent 25 years as a missionary in Africa.

One summer here at Holland, Annie gave piano lessons. She would drive to the homes of her pupils and give lessons for 25 cents each. Annie later said it was a waste of time.

One of Annie's favorite piano pieces was "Way Down in Georgia," which she played by heart, as I well remember.

The first money Annie saved was spent on a bicycle, but one time when she rode from the farm to Holland, she decided such a ride over rough roads was not for her; so she gave the

bicycle to her brothers. They naturally did not want to ride a girls' bicycle and traded it for a boys' bicycle which was used a great deal. One time when Mother did not feel strong, she had her washing done by a Negro. The Negro boy had to deliver the clean clothes. One time when he had done so, he saw the bicycle and must have thought he would enjoy such a ride. As no one seemed to be about, he tried riding it down the hill to the bridge. Unfortunately, he did not do as well as he had expected but drove off the bridge and splashed into a mud puddle some eight feet below.

To show how prices have changed, I will tell about an amusing incident. Annie was driving to town when a neighbor lady came running out of her house and asked Annie to bring her a nickel's worth of soup bones from the butcher, and she was to tell him to leave plenty of meat on it so she could make hash the next day.

When I was about eight, Annie was at home awhile and offered to school in our corn crib. Not only did Frederica, Carl, and I attended this school but some neighbor children as well. They were Jessie and Bessie Dooley and Edgar and Steve Leffler. Annie taught four months and charged the neighbor children one dollar a month each, I think. I remember Mrs. Leffler quilted a quilt for Mother for which Mrs. Leffler charged a dollar. I remember I could not talk English well enough really to talk to Jessie and Bessie.

The next year, Annie taught at a small country school at Bergheim, ten miles from Boerne. The school was surrounded by farms and ranch country. To get there Annie went by train to New Braunfels. A trustee met her and took her to a school about 25 miles away. This trustee drove an open buggy, a kind of gig. Annie stayed in a private home not well suited for boarders. Her trunk was placed in the wide hall and was unhandy to the room which she had to share with the lady of the house. [There exists a letter written by Annie from Bergheim dated March 1902, so she may have been here, or at Cypress Mill, longer than one year.]

The third and fourth years, Annie taught at Cedar near La Grange. This was a more handily located school, but Annie also had some getting there. She went, by train to La Grange and spent a night in a small hotel. She rang up Mr. Dickert, one of the trustees with whom she expected to stay. He rang up Uncle John, but Uncle John, who lived 12 miles from La Grange, did not feel obligated to take Annie to the school at Cedar. What did Annie do? She paid a postman three big dollars to take her to Cedar, although he had to go there on his route anyway.

The Dickerts were good friends of Uncle John. They had a store. Cedar was a community surrounded by farms and pastures. During the cotton chopping season, school would turn out for about a month so that the farmers might get their field work done with their children's help. Mr. Dickert had a favorite phrase that he liked to use, "Such leads to such." I often think some unfortunate thing should not have happened, but if I consider the matter, I see things were bound to happen that way.

After her two years at Cedar, Annie went to Austin planning to study only enough to renew her certificate, but Lina Perlitz, who was studying at Austin, too, told Annie in no uncertain terms to get a B.A. so she would be able to get a better position and more pay. Annie took this advice and attended the University of Texas three years. The first of those three years, Annie shared a room with another student, Lettie Richter, and they did light housekeeping. It was Alma Schuddemagen (daughter of first cousin Anna Franke Schuddemagen) who gave Annie this idea of cutting expenses. Alma had been working for herself and sewing to pay expenses. Annie made some money a while by waiting on tables. Annie also took some courses by correspondence such as

history and English. Papa and Grandfather helped her with her math — solid geometry, trigonometry, and analytics. Grandfather lent Annie the $400 for attending U.T., which seemed like a big debt.

Did Annie have any suitors? Indeed she did, but Annie was not the marrying kind, too independent and too idealistic. Nor did she "have the proper eyes for the guys." One time when a young man had taken a shine at Annie, he asked, "Miss Annie, am I not more than a friend?"

She replied, "Yes, just like a cousin."

I remember when Annie first used rouge. Mother could hardly believe it. Was it necessary? Annie explained that electric lights are bright, and she used a little rouge to keep from looking too pale. Others used some, too.

After getting a B. A. from the university, Annie taught at Weatherford, west of Ft. Worth. The subjects she taught were German and history. One day when Annie walked through the hall, some girls were blocking the way. "Girls, get out of the hall," she said as she walked on to her room.

The superintendent of the school, who happened to be nearby, later came to Annie and reprimanded her. "If you speak a command, stay and see that you are obeyed. Otherwise, your word will not count." Annie let that be a lesson to her. She must have given satisfaction, for she taught at Weatherford four years.

In 1904 Annie and Cousin Eric Perlitz took a trip to the St. Louis Fair. Erich came on October13, and Annie and Erich left the next day. They returned ten days later after a very eventful trip. After a five-day visit with us, Erich went back to San Antonio.

It was in 1912 that Annie, after long planning, prepared for a trip to Germany. It was not only for pleasure that Annie wanted to go to Germany, but also because it would help her in her efforts to attain better teaching positions. Since Annie did not want to travel alone, I got to go along, and I think Mother secretly hoped I would become engaged to some desirable young man, a good German.

Cousin Hedwig gave us advice since she had been in Europe several times. She told us to wear a coat suit. With this we could have three shirt waists of different weight. To make the shirt waists look different, we could wear a different bow at the neck now and then. Each of us was to wear a hat and comfortable shoes and carry a raincoat, and the umbrella was to be shared. I bought another pair of shoes and another skirt in Germany.

The voyage across the ocean was from Galveston to Bremen by cotton steamer. It made stops in Havana and three ports of Spain. We passengers were allowed to go on land for sightseeing.

Of course, one learned to know the passengers well. There were several money-struck ladies and their admirers who preferred to stay off to themselves. The cabin companion of Annie and mine said it was her sixth ocean voyage but the first one on which anyone had acted like that. She said the people who really are somebody do not act "stuck up." Among the passengers was Ima Hogg (daughter of the governor) and a Miss Foley of Houston.

It was a hot and dry June when Annie and I left Galveston. When we reached Bremen, we were impressed by the greenness of the grass and trees and the beautiful rosy complections of not only the German girls but also the boys. Then came our trip up the Rhein, with its many old castles. Reinstein was an especially picturesque one. Of special interest to Annie was the old and famous college town of Heidelberg. A guide took us through the castle and told us about its history. The walls and ceiling of the school’s prison had drawings and scribblings all over them, and it bore some names of famous people.

When we reached Switzerland, we bought a two-week pass. The weather was clear when we took a train up to the top of Mt. Rigi. All at once the snow-topped mountains seemed to rise up around us. Another thing I remember well was a canyon called the Aahres Schlucht. All of Switzerland with its green pastures was like a park.

From Switzerland we went to Bavaria, where we saw the beautiful and costly castle of Herrenschiemsee, which was built by King Ludwig the Second. We spent a week in Munich, staying in a boarding house. It belonged to a doctor and his wife. It surprised us that the doctor was at home so much. Evidently the Bermans don't go to the doctor with every little ailment.

Annie and I got the impression that the German men are not interested in getting ahead like the Americans. They had time to sit around in beer parlors and joke.

While in Munich, Annie and I took a look at art museums and the like by day and perhaps the theater at night. One night we went to the Volkstheater, a theater for common people. There was much laughing, but we did not care for the coarse jokes unfit for American women to listen to. Shows and accommodations were cheap.

Of course, we had to go to the Rathskeller, the noted beer tavern. Germany has such dreary weather, maybe it is necessary for them to gather around a beer table often and joke. I enjoyed drinking malt beer. It has very little alcohol. Did we gain weight? We did. The people as a whole are plumper in that cold country.

One day Annie missed her purse. It was nowhere in the room, so Annie decided the maid must have stolen it. Fortunately, we later found it. Annie had left it in a pocket of the rain coat which she had left hanging in the hall outside our room all night. German people were not thievish. One could leave one's shoes outside the door at night, and they would be polished the next morning.

It was often necessary for Annie and me to ask policemen how to get to this and that place, and sometimes we made mistakes and got a gruff reprimand. Annie said the men in Munich were as coarse as bean straw.

Annie and I spent six weeks in Berlin. We stayed in a teacher's home. We got breakfast (rolls, butter, jam, and coffee) and two sandwiches for a mid-morning snack. Annie and I kept our sandwiches for dinner, which was not served at the home. This was all right with us as we usually were not there at dinner time. The ordinary water in Germany was not safe to drink, so when thirsty, Annie and I would buy mineral water which could be bought for about a penny a glassful.

Most people took a coffee break in the afternoon. Instead of layer cake, coffee cake was the usual cake served. The fruit cake topped with cream was as good as any cake I ever ate. I think the cream was allowed to sour a bit before whipping it. The Germans liked to serve soup for lunch and potatoes with some meat and plenty of thick gravy. Red cabbage made a cheap dish. For supper, bread was served with butter, cheese, and sausage. The German rye bread can't be beat, and the drink was usually beer. Fruit was cheap in Germany. One time Annie bought a paper sack of prunes for ten pfennige — about 2.5 cents. We were so delighted with the price that we bought another sackful. Some roads were bordered with fruit trees, and they had fruit on them.

We enjoyed seeing museums, theater shows, and operas. We saw Shakespearian plays for 75 cents each, and they were all played by the same company. It was disappointing to find out the handsome hero was married.

The Germans liked to eat sweet chocolate while watching a show. One time, at one of the operas, I saw a man with long, well-kept fingernails. I had never seen a man with such fingernails, and I think at home he would have been called a sissy. The European men were conceited, and the

women seemed glad to wait on their men.

A German-American and his German brother one time visited Annie and me in Berlin. The American walked beside Annie and me, but the German preceded us and swung his ornamental cane and paraded gracefully on the sidewalk, making a spectacle of himself.

One Sunday, some minstrels sang some religious songs in English. They sounded beautiful to us, traveling from far off Texas. One song was "I Shall Know Him."

We also went to see an exhibition at the airport. Airplanes were not common then, and I assure you there were no sonic booms.

On Seeden's Day, Annie and I watched the soldiers marching in a parade that came along the Siegesallee (Victory Avenue). There was so much crowding and pushing when the Kaiser passed that I saw nothing of the Kaiser, but Annie claimed she saw the plume on his helmet.

One thing unexpected but pleasant that our trip had to offer was visits with relatives in the Hartz Mountains. We went there both before we went to Berlin and afterwards. It was Grandfather who wanted us to go to Badenhausen in the Hartz Mountains where he had grown up in the ancestral home of the Mackensens. Grandfather had not heard from his two older brothers for about 20 years and didn't think they were still living, but he thought some of the younger relatives might be around. So we went to Badenhausen.

The people, when they heard we were related to the Mackensens, treated us in a respectful manner although our Mackensen kinfolks were no longer well-to-do. The old home place had gone to the youngest son instead of the oldest, and unfortunately he squandered his money.

The old home of the Mackensens burned to the ground and had been replaced with a smaller dwelling house. Of the old buildings, only the barn was still left. It was being used to grow mushrooms.

Both Uncle Louis and Uncle Bernhard, our great uncles, were still living. We visited Uncle Louis first. He was bedridden. When he heard that grandfather was still living and well, he shed tears. Then we went to see Uncle Bernhard, who was boarding with a Mrs. Schubert in Bad Grund. He cried when he heard grandfather was still living. "Oh, mein Ottchen, mein liebes Ottchen!" (Oh, my little Otto, my dear little Otto) he repeated. Uncle Bernhard had been in America, and he and Grandfather had fought with the Southern army during the Civil War. He told how things were in America, but much had changed in the 60 years he had been away. He said when a train couldn't get up a hill, it was backed up and got up more steam and another try would be made.

I know that chatting with us was a great pleasure to Uncle Bernhard. He called me "mein Maeuschen" (my little mousie) although I only lacked five months being twenty years old.

While in the Hartz, Uncle Bernhard, Annie, and I visited a distant cousin, Gustav Peters, who had a young wife and two small children. What Annie and I especially remembered about Gustav Peters was that he scolded his young wife loudly although she was anxious to please him. A man in Germany has to assert himself. A bread earner and defender of the nation should get special considerations. When Annie and I said our good-byes, Gustav wanted to kiss Annie good-by, but Annie, who probably never had been kissed by a man, drew away in consternation, and a handshake had to do.

Another family that we visited in Germany was Tante Riekchen (Aunt Friederike Warnstorff). She was a widow with several grown daughters, but I think she did not fare too badly, having been a favorite of her father.

One especially nice visit that we had was with the Sindrams. Uncle Bernhard went along. The

Sindrams were distant relatives of ours and lived in the house where our great-grandmother, Caroline Thiele, was born. She was the daughter of Dorothea Sindram Thiele (1777-1839) and Ludwig Thiele, a collector of taxes. The Sindrams owned a dairy farm, and as is customary in cold and wet Germany, the barns were close to the house. There was one on either side of the paved road as one drove up to the yard and dwelling house. The manure, both liquid and solid, was gathered daily. Still there was odor to which no one seemed to object.

The Sindrams must have been pleased with the prospect of having two American young ladies visiting. They liked to tease, or were they intent on making a match? That evening they had a university student visiting and he sort of proposed to me, but I was in no notion to marry him, nice though he was, and stay in Germany. When we young folks played blind man's bluff that night, Gustav, the manager of the farm, picked and caught me every time. Mrs. Sindram suggested that Gustav and I get some apples from the attic. Gustav was at once willing, but I was wary and asked Mrs. Sindram to go along.

Annie had said that Father needed a hired hand, who would be treated as one of the family. At the dinner table the next day, Gustav expressed his willingness to be that hired hand, but he said that he must be provided with a wife. Mrs. Sindram and Annie were of the opinion Gustav should see after that himself. I stared at my elderberry soup and turned hot.

Later, Mrs. Sindram said I had encouraged Gustav too much, but I was not at all aware of having encouraged Gustav. Uncle Bernhard mumbled for a day or two as if he thought these presumptive young fellows were not good enough for me.

When back at Mrs. Schubert's, she, Annie, and I went to a kind of harvest festival. Mrs. Schubert's son, his wife, and about five children went, too. Mr. Schubert spent his money playing cards and drinking, and the whole time it was the young mother who had to carry the baby and look after the other children.

While we were staying with Mrs. Schubert, a wedding was taking place next door. Everyone was happy. The bride was beautiful and smiling. Mrs. Schubert and a friend, who were working, made some remarks about the wedding, and one of them said something like this: "Everything is wonderful now, but the bride will soon find out how things will be."

There were more women than men in Germany, and a suitor might ask his prospective father-in-law, "How much is the money gift that you offer?"

At one store, Annie and I saw a man picking out a hat for his wife. A hat would be worn at least several years with maybe a different trimming each year. Annie had her hat retrimmed, and it cost her, I think, 75 cents for the band of flowers and the required work.

When we had snow in November, Mrs. Schubert bought woolen stockings for Annie and me, as we had none heavier than cotton.

Uncle Bernhard gave Annie an oil painting of his mother and jewelry she had worn and told her to divide these things as she saw fit. He had the picture carefully crated in a box and had a handle put on to carry it by. We carried it by hand and kept it in our cabin during the voyage home. The lumber of the box was such wonderfully soft and thin wood that brother Conrad used it to make a box for holding our mail. It looked like a little fenced-in yard with a gate.

After the first World War, Grandfather and some of us others sent money, food, and goods to those kinfolks in Europe. I was told that one time when someone was cremated, the kinfolks in America sent the ashes to Germany as had been requested by the deceased. The urn was sent with food packages packed around it. The hungry people who received the package ate all

the foods in their foreign looking containers — even the spicy ashes.

We had been in Europe for six months. On our first ocean voyage (to Europe) we had to get up earlier every morning, and I remember hating to get up. On the way home we enjoyed the extra hours, staying up late and getting up late.

When Annie and I boarded the return steamer, *The Rhein*, there was on the passenger list the name of Karl R. Bartels. Who was this young man? He had grown up near the city of Hannover and had been educated for the occupation of "Kaufmann" (merchant or business man). He was happy when after twelve years of study and three years of apprenticeship, he, because of a heart weakness, did not have to serve in the army. In the fall of 1909, he came to America to the windy and often frigid city of Chicago. There he worked as a bookkeeper for one dollar a day, I think. Karl was homesick the three years he was in Chicago. He went back to Europe in August of 1912, intending to stay. He told his nephew, Bruno, "Find me a job," but it wasn't long before Karl said, "Never mind, I'm going back to America."

Karl wanted to leave for South America, but he had a bad carbuncle on his shoulder and postponed his trip. He decided to go to California and boarded a ship going to Galveston. It was about the third day we were on the steamer that Karl and I got introduced, and we were "infatuated" at once. Handsome Karl with a mustache and pince-nez glasses sat at the captain's table.

Annie was alarmed about our courtship. She did not like German men, if men at all. She wanted me to do some reading instead of loafing around all day. She slowed things up, but the affair continued. We did not become engaged on the trip. Karl went on to Los Angeles, California, and I returned to Texas, and we did not marry until a year and a half later.

When Annie and I returned to Holland about Dec. 8, our home town looked very junky and dry. It was too late for Annie to teach that school year. She worked in Ida's studio at Lockhart during the Christmas rush season.

Annie was at the University of Texas when she was recommended for a position at the college in San Marcos. Annie was told to go to the station to meet the president of the college, who was to be there. So Annie went and looked around. Then she went to where a train was coming in. She saw a man who looked distinguished and walked up to him. She asked, "Are you?"

And he said, "Are you?" A deal was made, and Annie taught at San Marcos that summer.

The next place where Annie taught was Port Arthur in the flat country in East Texas. One time when it rained, there was so much water in the streets that the professors waded barefooted as they helped teachers and students get to higher ground and on to their homes.

The war started in 1914 shortly before Karl and I married. It was Annie's third year at Port Arthur. German became an unpopular subject and was discontinued.

The school employed her at other things. She spent all spare hours learning typing and shorthand. She had considered teaching physical education but thought she was too old for that.

When summer came, Annie taught in summer school for six weeks and then went to Chicago to learn the Gregg method of shorthand. While she was at Chicago, Felix was at the Great Lakes, Illinois, Naval Station. Sometimes on weekends they would have a big parade, and Annie would go to see them.

Annie and Felix

It at first seemed like bad luck that Annie had to change her subjects for teaching, but it turned out to be a good thing because she did not have so many papers to grade.

When fall came, Annie taught near the border between Idaho and the state of Washington. She was sick with the flu when she arrived at a hotel at this place — sick and far from home. She had to ask the management to have the maid stop at her room at times to see how she was getting along.

Annie succeeded in renting a room close to school and was fortunately able to attend the first teacher's meeting. Annie thought it would be appropriate for her to say something when she would be introduced since she was a new teacher from far-off Texas. When she had finished her short speech and received applause, the superintendent said, "Tell a woman not to say anything and she will say something anyways."

Annie did not like the superintendent at all nor the school, and she was happy when the University of Texas recommended her to the president of The College of Industrial Arts (C.I.A.) in Denton, Texas, where a teacher was needed. The president, who already knew Annie, asked cousin Lina Perlitz, who was the Dean of Women then, if Annie would be competent to teach a business course. Lina replied, "I think she would fit into the system." The president then wrote to Annie and asked whether she could teach bookkeeping, shorthand, and typing. Annie wired back that she could teach shorthand and typing but not the bookkeeping. Thereupon, Annie was accepted, and she could leave Idaho at once because the high school had closed because of influenza.

Annie's years of teaching at C.I.A. started in 1918. Annie was glad Lina Perlitz was at C.I.A., too. Lina Perlitz was the supervisor in the teaching of Latin, Greek, French, and German. Annie soon had many other good teacher friends such as Mrs. Chapman.

Annie also studied business, psychology, English, and United States history. She may have taught some of these subjects at times in her long career at this institution, which later became Texas State College for Women (T.S.C.W.) and then Texas Women's University (T.W.U.) .

After Annie had gotten stronger in her subject, things got easier for her, but there still was plenty of work. She also had to take her turn at such things as being on the uniform committee. She didn't like that, as keeping the girls in the right kind of uniform was hard to enforce.

At one time, Annie had to be house mother to 600 girls. She had to teach only one class at that time, but she did not like keeping watch over so many girls and was glad when somebody else took over.

Annie's first investment in land was about 1919 or 1920. Taking her father's advice, she bought for $165 per acre a farm west of San Antonio on what was known as the old Castroville Road. She later sold it at a little profit and held a vendor's lien on it. Then a developer bought it, paying $500 per acre. Soon the depression hit, and as Annie still held a valid lien, she got it back. Later she sold it again. Annie later bought the Greenplace at Holland for $55 per acre.

After her death, Felix sold it for $525 per acre to settle her estate.

While Annie was at C.I.A., Lina, who had been Dean of Women ten years, went to Europe and met Mr. McFarland. When they married, he worked in Chicago for the Sante Fe Railroad. Then they moved to Buffalo, New York, and finally to Austin, Texas. In his retirement years there he made and sold wooden toys for children.

Annie took courses at the University of Texas and Southern Methodist University to attain her master's degree. But still she studied, and she had about attained her doctor's degree when she quit teaching.

When Ida left Cottonwood Home to move to her own place east of Holland, Annie wanted Mother to stay at Denton with her, so Mother stayed some weeks. But she wanted to go home and take care of her "boys," so Annie decided to retire and live at Holland. When Annie left T.S.C.W., the teachers gave her a suitcase so she "could come back soon." This was in 1942. The first thing she did was to have the indoor bathroom facilities put in along with a septic tank. She also decided she would have to learn to drive. She did so by driving around in the pasture.

It was while Annie was at Mother's that she and Herman bought the home farm. She and Herman also bought a place east of town.

Annie liked having company in the summer. She had a collection of horseshoes which were used for the game of pitching horseshoes.

Mother grew blind in her last few years, but she kept her strength until the last weeks and passed away Jan. 19, 1950. The grief over Hilda's sudden departure was spared her. After Hilda passed away, Annie often kept Eric and Conrad at Cottonwood Home at vacation time. Conrad was much interested in radios and liked working with them. He was allergic to the pollen of corn and could not work in the corn field like Eric could. Annie put Conrad to work at carpentry jobs. He was glad to do these, as it supplied him money for his hobbies.

The maiden lady of a large family is likely to be called on to do all sorts of love work for the other members of the family — usually without pay and sometimes without thanks. While Annie taught school, she was usually at home during the summer to be of help to Mother. Annie, being the oldest of the family, felt responsible for the welfare of her brothers and sisters. I know she helped out one and the other of the family with money, although most people would not have been so generous. It was while Annie was at Denton that Sonja attended C. I. A. Annie paid $250 of her first year's expenses. When money became more plentiful, Karl offered to pay Annie back, but Annie would not accept any money. She said she had also helped some other nieces to get their education.

When Grandfather in his last years got so ailing that he needed more attention, Annie spent several summers at Houston to help Aunt Helene. Annie later went to Houston again after Aunt Helene had a bad fall from which she nearly bled to death. But then Annie herself needed to see a doctor and called on Karl and me to come to stay with Uncle Louis. I stayed, but Karl went back to Taft. It became necessary to put Uncle Louis into a nursing home. With Frederica's concurrence, Felix and Annie then went and got him and put him in a home in Temple.

Aunt Helene's possessions were either given away or taken to Holland, where Aunt Helene made her home with Annie several years. After Uncle Louis passed on, Aunt Helene remained at Holland and seemed content there.

Annie decided, though, that the home at Holland was too cold for Aunt Helene to spend the winter on the farm, so it was thought a good idea for her to stay with me at Moody

House in Galveston. As an inducement to get Aunt Helene to go there, we said she could visit the Pat Murphy's every weekend and help Annie Laurie, Hedwig's daughter. Aunt Helene and Annie Laurie had always been very close. Both had lived at Houston.

Felix and I took Aunt Helene to Moody House. Aunt Helene and I shared a big room with a private bath and a walk-in closet. Every Saturday morning, one of the Murphys would come and get Aunt Helene and bring her back on Sunday night.

When summer came, I left Moody House to visit with my children, and Aunt Helene stayed at Annie Laurie's home a month or two, but it was too much work for Annie Laurie. She and I then took Aunt Helene to her sister-in-law, Olga Romberg, in Gonzales.

The time came when this was too much work and responsibility for Olga. Felix and Annie then came and took Aunt Helen to the Will-O-Bell nursing home in Bartlett, and this is where she spent the rest of her days.

Annie kept house for her bachelor brothers, Herman and Felix, at the beloved Cottonwood Home. She had many nice antiques. Most prized was the large painting of Great-grandmother Mackensen. Then there was a decorative platter of Dresden china which came from Germany before the Civil War. A big silver spoon or ladle had come from the Romberg family. It bears the date 1769. There were two sewing boxes. The one from the Ohlendorfs has some secret drawers. The other is from the Rombergs. It is on a stand. Great-grandmother Friederike Hast once had 40,000 marks in gold in it. It went to pay the debt of a nobleman. Great-grandfather had spoken good for the debt. He was gone, but our Great-grandmother paid the debt although legally she did not have to do so.

There was an interesting picture, a copy of one done by hand, of the old Mackensen homestead, where the Mackensens lived for generations, and there were copies of old paintings. These were just a few of Annie's treasured possessions.

Annie was sentimental and tried to keep the old "Cottonwood Home" as it was when Mother lived there with her large family.

On March 25, 1975, Annie fell while watching Mrs. Barabas in the garden. She was taken to Temple and given a check-up at Scott and White Hospital. After about a week, she was taken to the Will-O-Bell nursing home at Bartlett.

Annie, who passed away January 31, 1977, lacked two months of becoming 97 years old. Only about a week before she died, she sat down at the piano and played music which she had memorized about eighty years before. Until the last Annie felt like she had to be an example to others. She sat and walked holding herself properly erect, and she remained dignified until the end.

Annie had been a board member of a museum in Salado and left them some things from Cottonwood Home.

Annie had taught a period of around forty years in about ten different schools. How many pupils had she taught? How many classes had she taught? One of her friends, probably a pupil of hers, once wrote, "How often I have thanked God for Annie's help and encouragement. Without it my life might have been quite different."

Romberg Resigns After 25 Years

Mrs. Loveless to Teach
3 Classes Temporarily;
Other Courses Cancelled

After almost a quarter of a century of teaching at TSCW, Miss Annie Romberg has submitted her resignation, effective at the end of this semester, A. S. Lang, director of the business administration department, announced this week.

Temporarily Mrs. W. M. Loveless will replace Miss Romberg in three of her classes, Dr. Lang said. Her other classes will not he offered the second semester unless there is a demand for them. In that case, other arrangements will be made, Dr. Lang indicated.

Miss Romberg came to TSCW in 1918 as a tutor in the business administration department. Her rank was raised first to assistant professor and later to associate professor, which she holds at the present time. She was director of Lowry Hall in 1922.

She received her B. A. degree from the University of Texas and her M. A. from Southern Methodist University. She also did post graduate work at the University of Chicago.

Miss Romberg plans to retire and make her home with her elderly mother near Holland, Texas. Dr. Lang said, “We release Miss Romberg, very reluctantly because of our high regard for her personally and for her excellent qualities as a teacher.”

Annie and Erna

14. IDA AMALIE ROMBERG IGOE

It was an March 27, 1882, that Ida was born near Cypress Mill at the Romberg Ranch (formerly Cleveland Ranch). She lacked only four days being two years younger than Annie and four years younger than brother Otto. She was three years old when my parents moved to O'Quinn in Fayette County and seven years old when they moved to Black Jack Springs.

Ida was a shapely and pretty girl. She had small feet like Papa's, and she did not walk her shoes over. Her hair was not curly, but there was a good amount of it. Ida was strong and industrious, and she was good at taking care of the younger children of the family.

Ida attended the country school at Black Jack Springs, and she also took some music lessons from Aunt Jolina when opportunity permitted. At that time it was considered important for a girl to learn to play the piano if she was to be somebody of refinement. She would not necessarily have to learn much, just so she could show off a little at a party. To most girls, it was just about a waste of time. Not all had talent for music, and unfortunately pianos cost so much that most girls couldn't afford one after getting married — not for a long time.

At the Black Jack community, Annie and Ida's main playmate was Hedwig Romberg, Uncle John's daughter, who was about the age of Ida.

One time when Hedwig had a birthday, big-hearted Aunt Ida gave little Ida a gift, too. When the gifts had all been unwrapped, little Ida said, "Hedwig got all that, and I got just this!"

I was a special pet of Ida's. She was somewhat exasperated when one of the Romberg boys placed chinaberries between my toes and made them spread out like a fan.

Ida was seventeen when we moved to Holland. The weather was bitterly cold when she started to school, and she complained of frostbite in her feet. She continued to go to school but must have found it hard to adjust to this town school. For one thing, Ida, who knew English when she read it, had hardly spoken English at all.

We had a lower and a higher class of each of the grades. This was because we did not have free school until December, and many of the children from poor families would pick cotton in the fall and could start at the beginning of the lower class in December.

The school books had to be bought. None were free. Since my family saved most of the books, we had quite a row of them. We used pencil tablets and pencils. The paper would be somewhat rough and of a light tan color. Ball point pens had not been invented.

Most of the pupils got passed to the next grade at the end of the school year except those in the seventh grade, which was hard, and one usually needed another year for those studies. Passing seven grades was enough education for most people those days, and one could honorably drop out of school with some excuse such as, "I quit on account of my eyes."

Only the three youngest of our family graduated from the Holland school. Herman soon got discouraged. Ida's help was needed at home. Frederica finished the eighth grade. Carl entered A. & M. when he completed the ninth grade. I finished only part of the ninth grade.

There was some regret among the farmers when nine months of free school was attained and the lower grades of the classes were discontinued. The children had to start school at the first of the school year if they were to stay up with their classmates.

I one time had a desk that had no place to write on. It had a shelf for books under the seat. The Holland schoolhouse was a big wooden building with six rooms. They were heated by coal stoves. Maddox was the superintendent and also the teacher of the highest two grades. He was the one

who had to spank the naughty boys if such punishment was needed.

We drank well water. There were perhaps ten dippers at the beginning at school, but some would be lost, so there later might be no more than three. Germs could be passed around easily. There were also chances of getting head lice. Besides the big school building, there were two outhouses, for Holland had no plumbing at that time.

There was an hour off for dinner. The country children would bring their lunch in dinner buckets. These dinner buckets had to be sunned at times, as they were likely to take on a "grey" odor.

Ida took some more music lessons at Holland. (One time when Ida was in a recital, she wore her hair in a nice long plait down the back and tied with a ribbon. To Ida's dismay, the other girls wore their hair on the top of the head. When the next recital came, cost what it might in time and pains, Ida wore her hair on top of her head. But what a surprise, the other girls wore their hair braided and hanging down at the back!

Our neighbors at Holland all talked English, but there were many Germans around Bartlett — the Pochmans, Friederichs, Lindemans, Spiegelhauers, and many others. The German church permitted dancing, so dances were popular. When a dance was given, somebody had to go around and do the inviting. We had no rural telephones.

The Germans not only worked hard, but they also ate well. One night Carl and Ida ate supper at one of the homes of friends. The beef sausage was delicious but hard. As one person tried to cut into the sausage, a piece of it flew back on the serving dish. Another person was butchering away, and when he was successful at cutting it into, a piece of sausage flew onto another person's plate.

One English American who ate supper with us made a sarcastic remark about how fond the Germans were of sauerkraut. Mother was quick to reply, "The Americans like it, too. They don't know how to make it."

We did not always have church at Hackberry, but we could at least have Sunday School. At our Sunday School the lesson was read and then discussed. One lesson had a phrase in it that at that time could cause embarrassment. Ida said to me, "You do not have to pronounce every word distinctly." Our teacher had evidently read the lesson over. He said, "We will not read the lesson, just discuss it."

Of course, Mother wanted her girls to marry. It was almost a disgrace for a girl to become an old maid, which a girl might be called if she reached the age of thirty unwed.

There was more prejudice as far as nationality is concerned than now. Were we too German to appeal to the English Americans, but too American to be suited to a boy of German rearing?

At that time, girls would make fancy work for their hope chests. Ida liked fancy work, but was she planning on marrying? Ida had seen enough of working and saving and taking care of children to know married life was not altogether rosy.

Mother felt sure Ida, strong, industrious, and pretty, would marry and make a good mother, so no effort was made to prepare her for a business career. Unfortunately, there were not many well-educated young men close at hand, so it was a good idea to send a marriageable daughter on a trip. Ida spent a while in San Antonio with Aunt Anna (Fuchs) when Ernst was a baby. She came home on a visit at Christmastime and brought the quiet and plump little fellow along.

One time later Ida was sent to Cypress Mill to visit at Aunt Louise's and to take music lessons. After Ida came home, a suitor showed up. He was from Germany. Instead of dressing in Sunday clothes, he asked for a job picking cotton. There he was, looking like a hungry farmhand. Ida gave

him no encouragement, but he took an interest in me. I was going on fifteen. This silly fellow thought all he had to do to be accepted was to propose. I didn't encourage him, but he later wrote to me and sent me some dried flowers along in his letter as if that would mean much to me!

Ida had too much pep and ambition to be satisfied with marking time at home, stirring rice, sweeping out, and running errands while waiting to get married. Did Ida want to get ahead? She studied typing and shorthand. I sometimes had to dictate to her, and when she thought she had learned enough, she got a job in a Holland land office. At that time it really was something unusual for a girl to seek such employment. One of our neighbor girls once said with some condescension, "Where is Miss Ida's shop?"

Many people would go to town on Saturdays, especially the men. They would like to sit around and talk. If they had a piece of wood, they might whittle. If they got thirsty, a glass of soda water cost five cents. Some chewed gum, and some chewed tobacco. One time when Ida was working in the land office, one of two men in the office told a very funny joke, but suddenly there was silence. The joke was one that shouldn't have been told in the presence of a lady. Ida felt sure there were eyes upon her, and although she had trouble keeping from laughing, she kept on with her typing as if she had not heard a thing.

After several tries at being a stenographer, what did Ida try next? She went to Gonzales, where she had a cousin, Marie F. Fouts, who had been a music teacher. Ida stayed with her a while and taught music. She was in Brenham one time, too, I think.

Father said, "Ida had brass. I know she didn't have much silver, and she had no special training in anything." Father one time said that he could just as easily have charged $5 a day instead of $3 when he started surveying at Holland. Maybe he did now consider that if he hadn't been so modest in his charges, it would have been better for his family.

It was fortunate that Ida decided to become a photographer. She came home and took photography lessons by correspondence. After making some pictures for the neighbors, Ida went to Lockhart, Texas, and after working in a studio a few years, she bought the studio. She was in Lockhart about ten years in all.

A photographer needs to be an artist. Ida told us how a photographer can make a person look more attractive than he really is. Often it is necessary to take a person's picture from a certain angle. If a man has a big nose, a front view is likely to be better than a side view. If he has large ears that stick out, take his picture from the side. If he has both a big nose and big ears, the picture may be taken at such an angle that neither the nose nor an ear look too conspicuous.

Do you want your face to look clear? Then don't powder your face. Powder will make your complexion look blotchy. Girls would come into the studio and spend time primping. But before Ida would snap a picture, she would wipe off the powder as well as she could and maybe smear some face cream on certain places of the face to give highlights. Then she liked to put her clients at ease so they would be natural looking. Not until then did she really snap some pictures.

While at Lockhart, Ida learned Spanish. She said that Mexicans like to talk their language and will deal with people who can talk a little Spanish. Mexicans made good clients. Some people liked to have enlargements on their walls, and they were satisfied with that. Some people would say, "We have a Kodak," and they cared for no formal photographs. Mexicans liked to have their pictures taken often.

One way to please a dark-skinned person was to smear red paint on the glass plate (the negative) on the other side from the face. This made the face lighter in coloring on the finished picture.

Ida said that everybody should have a good picture of himself taken occasionally. It often happens that somebody passes away without leaving a good likeness of himself. One time Ida was asked to enlarge a snapshot of a man standing under a tree. He had a hat on that darkened his face even more, but since it was the best picture of the deceased, Ida was asked to make a good enlargement of the picture. She did the best she could.

Ida was especially good at making pictures of babies. She liked to take them so a part of their sweet and fat bodies would show.

One time Ida accidently upset a pan of water that had films in it. One of the films was of a boy whose mother came to Lockhart for a short stay. Since Ida could not get another snapshot of the boy, she sketched a cap on the boy's head where the film had been ruined. When the father came for the finished picture, he was much pleased. Then he noticed the cap which the boy had not worn. The man was, however, so pleased with the pictures that the unknown cap did not matter.

Since Ida was mostly alone in her studio and always had to have money on hand, there was some danger of being attacked and robbed. Annie advised Ida to keep a small pistol, but Ida was a courageous person, and I don't think she ever kept one.

Ida probably worked past banking hours on most days and had to take her money to the place where she stayed. One time then she had entered her room, she noticed a shadow on the wall. She moved sideways to see if it was her own. The shadow quickly vanished.

Ida liked Mexican food and showed us how to make hot tamales. We had the corn shucks and the cornmeal, but steaming the tamales and all that was too much work for serving them often to a large family, so we served them about once and that was all.

Did Ida like Lockhart? Not only was she successful as a photographer, but she made many friends there. She liked especially well to go to visit the Ohlendorf relatives, cousins on my mother's side, who lived about eight miles from Lockhart. Ida visited with one and the other of the families many times on Sundays when there would be pleasant gatherings which usually lasted till after an early supper. In later years, Ida enjoyed attending the Ohlendorf reunions at Martindale at Benno's farm and pasture on the river.

Unfortunately, working in the darkroom strained Ida's eyes. She was advised to do some other kind of work for a while. What now? Go back to office work? Try music again? At one time Ida left and let two cousins run the studio, Laura and Louise Goebel. Both were interested in young men, and both soon married Lockhart boys.

For a while, Ida lived in Brownsville and made pictures there. She stayed with some people called Castanlledas. Ida attended a bull fight and took some pictures, but that remained her first and last bull fight.

In 1918, when Karl and I were already wanting to locate on a farm of our own, Ray saw an

advertisement of a 40-acre irrigation farm for sale at Hindes in Atascosa County, south of San Antonio. Partly to have a pleasure trip, Karl drove down there with Papa, Ray, and Ida. Karl was not interested in buying the farm, but Ida thought she would like to buy land. Since she had not received much education, Father and Mother wanted to do Ida a good turn and decided to help her buy the farm so she presumably could raise chickens, turkeys, and perhaps vegetables and fruits. The water flowed beautifully, but nothing was said about it being too salty for irrigation.

Ida was optimistic and wanted to buy more than 40 acres, so a larger farm was bought. It was partly in cultivation, but a large part of it was in pasture. Father did not know, when the buying of the bigger farm had been agreed upon, that Ida did not have much money to invest. The glutton, optimism, had taken a nice sized bite out of her savings.

There was no long waiting for bad luck to start. By a mean premeditated trick, Ida got beat out of the rent from the crop that was on the land she had bought.

In the beginning of 1919, Mother and Father moved to Hindes to keep house for Ida, and Louis went to help with the field work. Herman boarded with Karl and me a while and then went to Hindes, too. In the summer, Grandfather also went to Hindes to visit a few days, but he stayed for weeks.

In the fall the cotton opened up and Ida went to San Antonio to get pickers. Then came the 1919 storm. A part of the roof of the home was torn off, and rain poured in. Grandfather sat with his feet in a tub so his feet would keep dry. There was a wagon full of cotton standing in the yard. There was some talk of standing in the shelter of the wagon if the house should become unsafe. But the house was strong, and it stayed.

When Ida returned from San Antonio, the cotton in the field had all been picked — by the storm. There was a stack of Sudan grass fodder. Its top flew off, and it got water soaked and rotted.

Ida had wanted to raise a nice flock of turkeys. She bought a prize-winning gobbler, but evidently too late. It took time tor this outsider to become properly befriended with the hens. All the eggs were infertile.

The next year, in 1920, a field of potatoes was planted. There came a late cold spell, and it was decided to use smudge pots if the weather got down to freezing, but when the smudge pots were ready to be taken to the field, it was seen that the tops of the plants were already frozen. A field of watermelons was planted, but the rats were very numerous that year. They nibbled on the watermelons, causing spots that made the melons unfit to sell.

Another thing planted was a field of sweet potatoes. The vines grew rank, but for some reason there were no sweet potatoes to harvest. The most disappointing thing was that the water was too salty to be used for irrigation. The land that had been bought in good faith was only suited for dry farming. It was not very good cotton land because boll weevils could survive in the wooded area nearby, and they could get an early start — doing their harm. (By 1970, most of the land around Hindes was being used for grazing.)

The south Texas ranch country, with thickets of stickery brush and clusters of prickly pear plants low to the ground, made a good place for the deadly poisonous rattlesnakes to hide. People had to be careful of where they stepped, especially at night, as the rattlers did not always "ring their bell" before striking. One time Father hung up a skinned rattlesnake and let the thin oil drip down into a pan. This grease was supposed to be good for curing rheumatism, with which Father was sometimes plagued. The meat of rattlesnakes was supposed to be tasty, but my folks did not

care to serve it.

Ida was never a person to complain and did not complain about her bad luck, but she must have been dissatisfied with her venture in farming, for she rented out the place and started making pictures again. Father, Mother, and Herman came back to Holland in the fall of 1920. Louis found other things to do.

Ida was not a person who cared to confide in others or to ask for their advice, so one could expect some surprises. Mother received a letter from Ida in which she wrote about common everyday things except in the last sentence, which said, "Bob and I went to Charlotte and got married." Mother exclaimed, "Je! Hat sich das Maedchen verheiratet! (Je! Has that girl gotten herself married!) Who was this man, Robert Igoe?

I never had the opportunity to attend a marriage of one of my sisters or brothers. They were more or less pop marriages. Ida's marriage at the age of 40 was more than a pop marriage; it was an explosion! It must have pleased Ida very much to write the startling news. She had at last found a man who was energetic, lively, cheerful, and talkative and who had the personality to win her consent. It was a case of "where you go, I go."

They lived on the Hindes place, where they wanted to farm and raise cattle, hogs, turkeys, and what not. This new venture started out optimistically, but Bob, who had been in the army many years, was no farmer. Ida made a deal with Father in which Papa became owner of the Hindes farm, and Ida and Bob went to New Mexico to live. Bob was once a night watchman at the big Santa Rita mine in New Mexico.

Another big surprise that Ida gave us was to tell us she had a little girl, born June 3, 1923. We were all astonished but greatly pleased. Ida was delighted. She named the little girl Annie Romberg Igoe but called her "Pueppechen" (little doll). Mother called her Annie Lee to distinguish her from her aunt.

After luck had played peek-a-boo for a while, Ida’s marriage, which had started with big optimism, ended tragically. Little Annie was a bright, energetic, and cheerful child, but Bob did not see his promising daughter grow up.

In the fall of 1925, Ida and Annie Lee came home to Holland. What can a single parent accomplish when there is a little child who is to grow up under the right care and influences? The plan was cooked up that Ida was to keep house for Mother, Father, and Herman. Karl and I with our four children moved to the other house. We stayed there two years and then moved to Hatch, New Mexico. Ida tried chicken raising, but a spell of typhoid, unplanned for indeed, put her in the hospital for a long time.

Ida tried all kinds of ways of making money. She made bonnets and aprons to sell. Bonnets were not worn much anymore. At another time, she cooked peach butter. It would not sell. For a while, Ida tried to make money raising canaries. Cages were built and canaries bought, but they would not multiply fast enough There was too much work in comparison the meager earnings.

Ida one time bought a large incubator for raising chicks in town. She had to rent a room in town for the chicken business and for living. This occupation might have succeeded well enough, but Annie Lee was now in school and was free to rove under wrong influences while her mother worked. The daughter came first, so the incubators were sold and Ida returned to the farm with her one precious child.

When Annie Lee graduated from Holland, she attended T.S.C.W. (Texas State College for Women). She at first lived with her Aunt Annie and then lived in the dormitory. Annie Lee took,

besides her other courses in elementary education, some lessons in piano and voice. When she took practice teaching, she liked it so well that she took another course in it.

Before Annie Lee was about through attending college, Ida bought a farm five miles east of Holland and moved there. Felix thinks she paid only $16 per acre for this land. This farm had been in cultivation a long time. The house surrounded by large oak trees was on a hill buffered by a wooded pasture to the south. To the north was a fine view of fields sloping to a valley and the tree-bordered Darrs Creek. Farther away there were fields and farmsteads.

Ida enjoyed living on her own farm. Besides raising crops, Ida raised poultry. She made improvements to the farm. She built fences, a levee, and some water tanks. Life on a farm is not uninteresting. The farm animals become pets. One sees things grow. The weather is easy to observe.

One night Ida heard that the dogs in the dog house were restless, so Ida went outside to see what was the matter. There were dark clouds. The wind grew strong. Ida turned and went back to the house. She was almost ready to enter the door when a cyclone tore off part of the roof and then whizzed away! Since the old house did not seem worth repairing, a new, smaller house was built.

After Annie Lee graduated from T.S.C.W., she started teaching and taught at Moody, Holland, Monte Alto (in the Rio Grande Valley), League City, and Dallas. She has continued studying when the opportunity allowed. She took some work at the University of Texas and has earned a master's degree. She lacks four hours of having a Ph. D.

Ida spent more and more time with Annie Lee and finally moved in with her to keep house and help her. Annie Lee, who now goes by Ann Igoe, has become a successful and well-liked teacher of children in Long Beach, California. Her specialty is special education. Ann likes driving a car and took many sightseeing trips with her mother. One time they went into Canada. Although California is far from Texas, Ida and Ann used to come to Holland every summer to see after their farm. They enjoyed their many pets in their California home.

Ida stood erect into her 90's. She was 98 years old when she died on October 15, 1980. She is buried at Holland cemetery.

Ann Igoe adopted five children. They are Robert Igoe, Pamela Preston, Mateo Igoe, Angela Igoe, and Alvaro Igoe.

15. HERMAN JOHN ROMBERG

Herman Julius (later changed to John) was born November 15, 1884. He is the only one of our family born on the Romberg Ranch, which our family owned for fifty years. It was located 35 miles west of Austin and seven miles from Cypress Mill. I conclude my parents, who had four children then, owned a wagon and team for going to visit the kinfolks seven miles away. This must have been rough riding over rocky roads through cedar brakes where it was hot and dry in summertime.

I will explain how it happened that my parents came to this mountainous ranch land. When my grandparents Romberg lived near Cat Springs in the lower country, they and their family became well acquainted with the Adolf Fuchs family. My grandfather Romberg wrote poetry, and Pastor Fuchs (the name means "fox" in German) composed songs. This ex-pastor had a friend who wanted to return to Germany and offered his hill-country ranch to Fuchs at a very low price. Pastor Fuchs bought the land. He liked the beauty of the mountain country, especially along the Colorado River, and he built his home five miles upstream from Marble Falls. [According to Ottilie Fuchs Goeth's memoirs, page 24, her father obtained the papers for this land in Germany before coming to Texas. They were given to him by the brother of a soldier who was killed in Texas during the War of Independence. Each man was paid with a league of land because there was no money in the State Treasury. See also page 61 of Louise Romberg Fuchs' "Reminiscences."]

There were no schools and churches close by. At that time it was still unsafe to camp by the roadside at night. (Was there anything that looked like a road?) One could get lost. And of course there were rattlesnakes.

Despite the drawbacks of this poorly developed country, the Fuchs children made their homes in this territory. Two of the Fuchs boys married two of Father's sisters, and Father's sister, Friederike, and her husband, Carl Perlitz, also moved to that ranch country.

Father was asked to teach school at Cypress Mill, and he lived with his sister, Louise Romberg Fuchs. Soon after my parents married, they bought the 700-acre Cleveland Ranch about two miles from Cypress Mill. Father continued teaching and hired somebody to care for his sheep.

Three years later Carl Perlitz got dissatisfied with ranch life and wanted to move and try farming. It was then that Father sold his small ranch, and he and his brother John bought the 2300-acre ranch from Uncle Carl Perlitz. The Perlitz family moved to Copeland, Texas.

Father quit, teaching to devote his time to the big ranch and his sheep. A man who works mostly out of doors may find ranch life interesting enough, but for a woman who spends most of her time indoors and has to look after her little children, it can easily become monotonous.

[In the Introduction is written, "Mother was all alone with three children when Herman was born. She had to ask Otto, who was 6½ years old, to kindle the fire, and he managed to do so."There may have been some difficulty with the birth. This event led to the decision to move to the more populated area of Fayette County a few months later.]

After three years on the Romberg Ranch, my parents decided to move to the O'Quinn community in Fayette County, where Father had been offered a teaching position. O'Quinn was six miles from where Father's parents and some other kinfolks lived. One advantage of teaching there was that Father could live close to the school house. The trip to Fayette County was by wagon. It probably took several days, and it was necessary to sleep by the roadside at night. One night when it probably was already dark, a bed was spread at a place free of weeds. That night Herman got stung by a big red ant, and it was found out why that place had been bare. Herman

thinks he remembers getting stung, but since he was no more than a year old, maybe he just thinks he remembers it because he heard others tell about it often.

For several years everything went well enough, but then there was sickness in the community. The water must have been bad. When Otto took typhoid and did not recover, Mother did not want to stay at O'Quinn any longer.

My parents and their family, to which Frederica had been added, moved to a farm that belonged to Father's sister, Ida, and we lived at Black Jack Springs nine years, part of this time in the home of Aunt Bernhardine Franke.

Herman had sick spells when he was a child and could not go to school regularly, nor could he do hard work. When I was a baby, Mother took him to a noted San Antonio doctor who advised her on the proper food Herman should eat. After that, Herman's condition improved and he outgrew his ailment. [According to my mother, Grandmother was in the cow pen milking while pregnant with Herman. The bull jumped on top of her, squashing her down and Uncle Herman's head got mashed. Mother said, "It could be seen on his head later, and he had some seizures."]

It was a pleasant life we lived in Fayette County. Besides many educated and honorable kinfolks that we had living around us, there were also friends we liked very much such as our neighbors, the Roeves.

When we moved to Holland, a much different life started. Not only was the country new to us children, but also the people were strangers. Only Mother had known a few who had been neighbors when she was a girl.

Another thing that was quite noticeable was that the neighbors talked English instead of German, which had been talked almost exclusively in Fayette County.

The people at the beginning of this century were more prejudiced so far as nationality is concerned than today. I think it may be said that the Hollanders did not all welcome Germans and Bohemians; so when Herman started to school in Holland, he was teased and heckled, and he was so unhappy that my parents decided he might quit school and study at home, which he did. One did not have to tell him to practice his cello, read, work arithmetic problems, or improve his handwriting.

[In 1991, Karl F. Bartels wrote, "Herman did not receive the education that his brothers and sisters got. Likely he had epilepsy when he was young. Modern educators would say he had a 'learning disability' and would have given him special education. In life, he was only interested in simple things, and he never joined in intellectual discussions. Gertrude Krause, in answer to questions about Uncle Herman, wrote, "He definitely was not retarded. To me he seemed only somewhat slow — and shy in dealing with people outside the family. He had solid reasoning power, was creative with ideas, had good judgment. I cannot think of anything about him that was 'retarded.'"]

Herman was industrious and was a good help at home. He could be relied upon attending to his regular duties. After we had running water, he was the one who turned off the water before a freeze, and he would later turn it on again. This was one job that he always had. Herman was good-natured and helpful. Since there were sisters, Herman didn't do much housework except carry water to the house and churn, and he might turn the washing machine. Herman could milk, but to him would more likely go the work of shucking corn and the feeding of stock. His jobs included fixing the water gaps (fences across the creek) and killing the Johnson grass.

In 1904, at the age of nineteen, Herman started a diary, and it surprises me that with all the work and all the disturbance caused by a large family, he persisted so well in noting the work and occurrences of that day. This was written with pen and ink, as the ball point pen had not yet been invented.

Some of the things recorded may seem insignificant, but the money for rearing our big family greatly depended on the income of this farm, and that depended much on the needed amount of rain at the proper time. The weather also determined what the schedule of the day's work should be. And work there was for everyone from the oldest to the younger ones. Even Grandfather Mackensen sometimes went to the field.

Herman has seen many changes made on the old home farm since we moved there on January 1, 1899. The cottonwoods are gone; many of the wild trees have been chopped down to make room for the pecan trees. Parts of the grove are now a tangle of bushes and vines one cannot walk through. The fields have been terraced for some years. The field southeast of the house is now pasture, and weeds have grown up along fences. What the tractor can't get, let it thrive. Just don't look there.

Roads have been graveled. One can now drive from home to town no matter what the weather. As the road runs now, it is 3½ miles to town. And there is electricity.

We did not permit Johnson grass to grow on our land. Herman would dig out the main part of a plant and then put kerosene on the taproot, which would then die.

Herman, too, planted trees. He preferred elms because mistletoe will not grow on them as on hackberry trees. Herman said to get rid of a live tree, don't chop it down, as it will then sprout from below. Instead, take off the bark all around the stem, and the tree will die slowly and will not sprout from the roots.

In our big home, we usually had plenty of room and plenty of beds. Herman would sleep in a double bed all to himself. One time when there was more company than usual, Mother said, "Someone can sleep with Herman." Herman at once protested that wouldn't do.

"Why not?" Mother asked.

"Not enough room," Herman replied, and that was explanation enough.

The old-time brogans were hard soled. One night when Herman went up the stairs, Annie called out in a loud whisper, "Walk on your tiptoes!"

Herman replied, "I am."

One time Herman went to Houston for a visit with his Uncle Louis Mackensen, who had a beautiful homestead by the Brays Bayou. There were big pine trees and acres of lawn on which the flock of sheep would graze. Among these sheep was a ram who wanted everybody to know he was the big boss and protector of the sheep, and when a person wasn't looking, Mr. Ram might give a sudden hard shove from behind and send an intruder scooting away on hands and knees.

One time when Uncle Louis was at the shed in the sheep lot, the ram let it be known intruders were not welcome, and Uncle Louis, who was not a man who would put up with foolishness, grabbed a long stick. Then, placing the ram's head between his legs, Uncle Louis swung his stick to teach the ram a quick and inexpensive lesson. Unfortunately, the stick was so long that it did not strike the ram but the tin roof, with a loud bang. The ram jumped out of fright, and that sent Uncle Louis toppling down on the dung. Herman saw this happen and got a big laugh out of this, but not in his uncle's presence.

Once when Uncle Louis had some work to do, he asked his hired hand to come along. After a

little while, he looked to his right and to his left and asked, "Where has that beast gone to?" The hired hand, just behind Uncle Louis, smiled good naturedly.

The year 1905 must have been a rainy year. The crops looked beautiful, and the mosquitoes thrived. Herman took malaria, and as a change of air seemed one way to get rid of sickness, Herman was sent to Burnett County to spend a while at the home of Aunt Herline and Herman Fuchs. While there, he received the following two letters from Mother.

(Translated from German)

September 18, 1905

Dear Herman,

Father is hauling the third bale away (to the gin). Our picking is slow. Ida has stopped and is sewing as hard as she can for she wants to go to Gonzales in a few days and try typing again. Aunt Annie left Saturday (for Houston). I think Grandfather will soon be here. Emma had improved much (from malaria) but was not yet quite well.

Father has gathered all the corn he had behind the creek. It is larger and prettier corn than we have had for a long time. Father would like most to plow the corn field now. He has bought a stalk cutter and a wagon. Annie will go to Austin on Sept. 29. It will be really quiet here then. [children still at home: Carl, Erna, Felix, Louis, and Conrad] If we could only get enough cottonpickers for a few days, then one wouldn't have to fear that the cotton will rain out. Since we have so much dead cotton, not everyone would care to pick it.

Give my regards to Aunt Lina, Frieda, and Johanna.

Your letter has arrived. I hope you will soon be well again (flare-up of malaria). Please write again soon. Carl had the intention to write, too, but I don't know where his letter is, and I want to send this off.

If you do not have enough clothing, just go ahead and buy some in Marble Falls — maybe underpants or a common blue thick jumper that you can wear as a jacket, like Father has them. If you do not have enough money, just say so at once.

With greetings, your Mother,
L. Romberg

(She used the word, "Grüsse", which carries more warmth than "Greetings".)

October 4

Dear Herman,

I must now write to three of my children. (Annie, Ida, and Herman) Grandfather is doing the churning. That gives me the time to sit and write you this letter. Ida likes Gonzales very much, and I'm glad about that. I am also glad that your fever is gone (now). You should soon be fat and strong. I can well imagine that you like it at Uncle Herman's (home). They are all very good people. You must be gathering nuts by now. Where you are, the sacks must be getting filled faster than here. I think our nut harvest will be rather short this year. According to what one hears, the Lenier place has been sold. Father is gathering corn from the land near Nelsons. He wants to plant the whole field in grain. The children are picking on the fifth bale (of cotton).

They are picking near the gate. Most of the cotton is dead and not easy to pick. We are hoping to get pickers. Many people are already nearly finished. One should be able to obtain pickers.

In spite of rain, it is still so dry that I have not gotten turnips started. If I could water the garden, I would surely have good vegetables. I still have tomatoes. Carlie bought an $8.00-bicycle with his cotton-picking money. Since one of the wheels isn't good, he will order another.

Uncle Louis has invited Carl to come to Houston at carnival time in November even wants to pay for his trip. (Carl was to stay with Aunt Annie while Uncle Louis would be head of the poultry show.) Carl is naturally very anxious to accept. If it is possible, he is to go.

I must make sandwiches (mid-morning snack) for the children and then cook dinner.

Greetings from your Mother,
Lina R.

When Herman was twenty-one and thinking of choosing an occupation, he worked in town for a blacksmith for a while. One thing he learned were cuss words. Mama told him he had to unlearn using some of his strong expressions.

It was farming Herman chose for his occupation, and he worked for the halves a number of years. The land owner furnished the teams and tools and such things as seed, so it was an occupation easy to get into and out of.

At first we didn't have a stalk cutter (got one in 1905), so the cotton and corn stalks would usually be burnt to get rid of them. The only fertilizer we used was barn manure. One of our neighbors did not want to use manure. He said, "It makes the weeds grow."

I remember Herman laying off rows with a walking plow. When Karl came and saw how the neighbors laid off their rows with a cultivator, Karl fixed up an attachment for his, and that stopped the laying off of his rows by use of the walking plow.

When we children worked in the field, some of the older ones like Frederica might tell stories. One thing we liked to imagine was that we could fly.

Herman never paid us children more than ten cents a hundred pounds for picking, which my parents considered enough. To make up to me for my help, Herman one time decided to give me a nice present. Mother suggested getting a chest of drawers, but Herman decided on something different. Somehow I felt he was going to give me something special. When Christmas came, I reached for a big brown paper sack first, thinking it was something common. "No, no, don't take that first," I was told, so I concluded that package contained the gift from Herman, and it did. I opened it last. In it were boxes and wrappings, so I untied and unwrapped until I finally got down to the gift — a gold watch.

When I married, Herman again wanted to give me something especially nice. He chose a big mirror with a carved golden frame. Unfortunately, Rosaline, when a small kid, climbed to the mirror and made scratches with a rock. Sonja has it in the entrance of her house now.

One time when I was sixteen, Felix and I wanted to see who of us could pick the most. I even went to the field after dark, and Frederica kindly went with me that I might pick more than Felix had, and I picked 316 pounds that day—but never again.

In 1917, when Karl had bought his first auto, we, of course, wanted to take some trips. One of the first long trips was taken to Laredo, where Carl and Loula Mae lived. Frederica went along. The roads were very rough. My hair switch came loose and was found dangling at the

back of the car. At one town where we stopped, perhaps to get water, Herman was in such a hurry to get out that he jumped while the car was still moving. Bam! There he lay flat in the street!

Farming was hard and hot work, so Herman decided to change his occupation. He had Mr. Lanham, a neighbor, show him how to make brooms. He then bought Mr. Lanham's broom-making outfit and made brooms.

It was in 1912 that Father bought an old school house and tore it down and moved it to our farm. It was built up again north of the spring, and there Herman made brooms for twenty years. Making brooms had one bad drawback. It was sometimes dusty work, especially when removing the seed. The dust itched.

Herman would advertise his brooms by putting humorous poems in the town paper, "The Holland Progress." One poem I remember went like this:

Leap and sweep the room, knock the muddobber nest,
Use a Romberg broom, for it is the best!

Following is a poem Father wrote for Herman:

Mary had a little broom.
She bought it for a song,
And everywhere where Mary went,
She took the broom along.
She took it to the school one day
And swept with all her might.
It made the room look just like new,
So clean and neat and bright.
And all the children looked and cried,
"What charm has changed the room?"
The teacher promptly then replied,

"She used a Romberg broom."

One thing Herman never tried was bee keeping. He liked honey, but not stinging bees.

One time one of our neighbors brought Mother and me each a big round sausage. We were pleased to receive such a neighborly gift and enjoyed the sausage. A day or so afterwards, Herman saw the neighbor driving along sitting on his farm wagon. There were a number of sausages lying on the wagon bed. "What are you going to do with these sausages?" Herman asked.

"Oh, I'm going to take them to the field and somewhat split them open," the neighbor replied. This tickled Herman immensely, and he laughed and laughed when he told about it. Of course, the sausage had gotten spoiled.

Herman was always interested in the weather. He was in the habit of looking at the thermometer every morning in the wintertime and calling out the temperature. For some years he would keep account of the amount of rain we had.

I remember we had two bad wet years. When Herman bought his new buggy and was anxious to show it off, we had rain every weekend for seven weeks.

The wettest weather I remember having at Holland was in 1919. Karl threshed for ten weeks because the rain stopped the threshing so often.

This wet year had been preceded by three dry years, 1916, 1917, and 1918. 1925 was also a year which made a bad impression on the farmers. We had to haul water in for the household and stock.

The biggest rain we ever had came on Sept. 9 and 10, 1921. Thrall, Texas, in Williamson County, had 36.4 inches in one 18-hour period, a record that still stands as the greatest high-intensity rainfall in U.S. weather history [Texas Weather by Bomar]. We do not know how much it rained at Holland. The nearby Darrs Creek was out of its banks. The road that went from the Clark place to Harrels looked like a ditch and was so badly washed out that it was never used again.

Annie, who traveled by train from San Antonio to Denton after the rain, saw where a long stretch of train track had washed onto a field, and the railroad workers were busy.

The Goodnights, who lived a short distance to the west of us, were frightened by the black clouds and came over to stay a while. For a while there was such a downpour that the visibility was perhaps only 8 or 10 feet.

The coldest weather we had while at Holland was 10 degrees below zero in 1926. Herman and Felix were the only ones at home at the time.

The hottest weather that Felix knows of was one time when he plowed south of the house. It was so hot that he quit, and when he looked at the thermometer, it showed 112 degrees F.

There was a big flood in the fall of 1913. It washed away many bridges. Felix was at A. & M. at the time. He walked about 8 or 10 miles to see the Brazos. From the bank where he stood, he could see nothing but water ahead.

We may have had 22 inches in one day at Holland. Much damage was done to roads and ditches. Many bridges (41?) washed away. Summers Mill lost its mill and didn’t look like the same place anymore.

The worst thunderclap we had, as I remember it, was when one of our cottonwoods was struck by lightning. All of us did something unusual such as ducking and jumping. The

cottonwood got damaged from top to bottom, and it died and had to be chopped down. The other cottonwood died from drought.

We had nice peaches in our orchard, which the neighbor boys knew, too. One time a boy lost the heel of his shoe climbing one of the peach trees at night. The next Sunday the neighbor boys came over, and one of the boys had a heel-less shoe. He must have been hunting for the heel.

When we still had the old low kitchen, it sometimes got rather hot in there for eating, so Papa one time constructed a long table under a big hackberry in the yard near the kitchen. It was a pleasure to eat out there. One time, Mother cooked us a good chicken dinner and then went to the smoke house to refresh herself with a sponge bath while we girls served the dinner. The gnats were especially attracted by the chicken and were so bad that Herman decided he would outrun them. He ran, but the gnats still were around. He happened to notice the smokehouse and decided to dash into it and slam the door shut behind him. Hardly had he grabbed the door before the command, "Raus!" sent him flying.

People who live on the farm get attached to their farm animals. Herman could tell you about the horses and mules we had. Max never was very tame. We finally sold him to Cluster Maddox. Mother took a fright when she saw this man get on Max to ride him home. Cluster was a good rider, but he got pitched off. Some weeks later, though, Cluster came to show he did ride Max.

Old Grey and old Nap, two of the horses we had, were well liked. The small mule, Toby, was tricky and sometimes staged a runaway.

We had some cows that were very tame, but one black cow was a real kicker. I’m afraid Father had not milked that cow before buying her. I am sure Father had learned to milk, but I never saw him do this "woman’s job."

We had some good dogs. Snippy, the dog we had brought from Fayette County, seemed to be real smart.

It was a good decision when a German organization called the Sons of Herman decided to build a dance hall several miles southeast of Holland. Papa suggested that it be round, and that appealed to the group. That is the way it was built, and it was called the Round Hall. We had many nice celebrations in it, about one dance a month.

For the dedication, we had a big barbecue and a dance that lasted until 12 at night. Some of the good Herman Son brothers had red eyes from watching the cooking of the barbecue over smoky fires the night before.

Every May we had a May Festival which lasted all day until midnight. One time, I was the May Queen, and I chose Fritz Beyer to be the King. Some other years, the couples were Frieda Beyer and Ed Stabeno, Alma Lindemann and George Johetz, and Ina Molina and Alvin Becker.

German was taught in the Round Hall several summers. Cousin Elsie Perlitz taught two summers, and her niece, Hulda, taught one summer. They both boarded with the Preslers, who charged $15 a month, and the washing of clothes was thrown in free.

Some of the people who lived near the hall were the Zettlers, Lindemanns, Spiegelhauers, Storms, Presslers, and the Molinas. Mr. Molina was always cheerful and had a big smile. He later moved to a place about two miles from Taft, and he and his wife were good friends of ours many years.

The young people did not go steady those days unless they were engaged. The boys stood

in one corner of the dance hall, the girls in another, and when a dance started, the boys would go to the girl's corner to find a partner. One young man some years later said regretfully, "We do not have friends anymore — just sweethearts."

Later a big dance hall was built at Bartlett, and we went to dances there occasionally. To improve the grounds, it was decided by interested parties to plant Bermuda grass since it can stand drought well. So Bermuda seed was ordered and planted. It was not grass seed but Bermuda onion seed that had been planted, and a nice crop of onions was probably harvested.

There was a young man one time who had come from Germany. He would spin like a top when he danced. It made us girls dizzy, and in consequence, he did not find himself very popular. Another peculiar thing about him was that he wore a mustache. Someone asked this young man why he wore a mustache, which was not stylish here, and he replied, "It makes a person look manly." After that he was secretly called "The Manly One." He probably found out we were making fun of him, for he was later seen "unmanly."

Herman enjoyed showing off at the masquerade. One time he represented a turtle and another time Uncle Sam. But the best costume, and perhaps the most difficult to make, was his rooster outfit. I was not at home when he wore that, but the rooster's crowing, cackling, and scratching for feed was most amusing, so I was told. Herman had a good sense of humor. For years, whenever he sneezed he would resound with, "Whiss-key!"

I often rode to the German church with Herman, and sometimes we had dinner with somebody and stayed for Sunday afternoon gatherings.

For a few years, Papa kept a hired hand. Fifteen dollars a month and board was the usual salary. John Krause was one of the nicest. To keep from idling, he might shuck corn when there was no other work to do.

One of our hired hands was Henry. When the first World War came, he was anxious to fight for Germany. He was probably afraid the glorious victory would be over before he could get to Germany. He became a sailor and got into the war zone by saying he was a Norwegian, and according to what we were told, he was hardly at the battlefront before he got killed.

Herman was fond of children. He had a music box which he sometimes got out to play to children. It played a beautiful melody. This music box was already old when Herman Franke gave it to him. That was when our family lived with the Frankes. Another thing that Herman treasured was a small glass that may have been used to hold matches or toothpicks. It came from Aunt Ida Romberg long ago.

For many years Herman was the one who set up the Christmas Tree. One year he gave Rosaline two dolls. I kept them as long as I kept house, and I hope the child that played with them next treasured them. Herman was good at whittling wood, and he made children's toys, such as a water wheel.

Of Herman's nephews and nieces, I think Annie Lee was his special pet. Ida lived at Cottonwood Home from the fall of 1926 until 1942.

Father could speak, besides German and English, some French and Bohemian. He liked Spanish and studied that language although he had hardly any use for it. Then Herman learned some Spanish and enjoyed listening to Spanish programs.

When Herman quit making brooms, he made his broomhouse into a hay barn. The cows ate hay through a manger from a side shed. As years went by, he gave up milking a cow and raised more cattle. Bit by bit more sheds were prepared for cattle and more land was made into

pasture. [The broomhouse was still standing in 1990.]

This is the auto age. We have air — conditioned cars for seeing the world. At one time a person might get scalped by an Indian when going on a trip. Today a person better watch out that he doesn't get scalped by some careless driver on the highway.

The flow of our beautiful spring has weakened, and the pump has been located farther up the branch. A cistern is used for catching drinking water. The refrigerator has made the spring house unneeded. The indoor washing machine has made outdoor washing unneeded.

Chicken raising was discontinued. The grove was fenced in for a calf pasture. Since no hogs were raised at the farm anymore, the hog shed and smokehouse were torn down.

It was during the Depression that Annie and Herman bought the home place from Mother. They rented out the farmland, but Herman kept some cattle on the pasture.

Since he had time for a hobby, Herman tried weaving and derived much pleasure from that. He wove such things as scarves, pillow covers, and purses and exhibited some of his work at the Dallas fair, where he won prizes.

Herman's special talent seems to have been music. Even as a boy only a few years old, he could sing well. Mother once gave Herman an accordion of one octave. It was liked because it was easy to play, but when one of the tones got bad, he gave it away. Later he had one which had two octaves; this he gave to Nita's girls, and he got two other accordions. I bought one of them, and he kept his piano accordion. In his later years he bought an organ. This seemed to have been his favorite instrument. [In 1991 Karl F. Bartels wrote, "Some of my best memories of Uncle Herman were of him whistling 'Carry Me Back to Old Virginee' while he was working. That was his favorite song, and he would whistle it by the hour. I am sure he varied this with similar songs."]

The young people who lived in our neighborhood in the first years of this century left one by one. I think Herman was about the last to live there who had never moved. The longest he was away from home was four months, when he had an operation in Galveston. Linda and Larry and the Pat Murphys lived there at the time. Also, I lived there in Moody House, so we all could drop in often to see him. Sonja came from Tyler and Nita from Houston to visit him, and even Carl and Loula Mae came from Georgia.

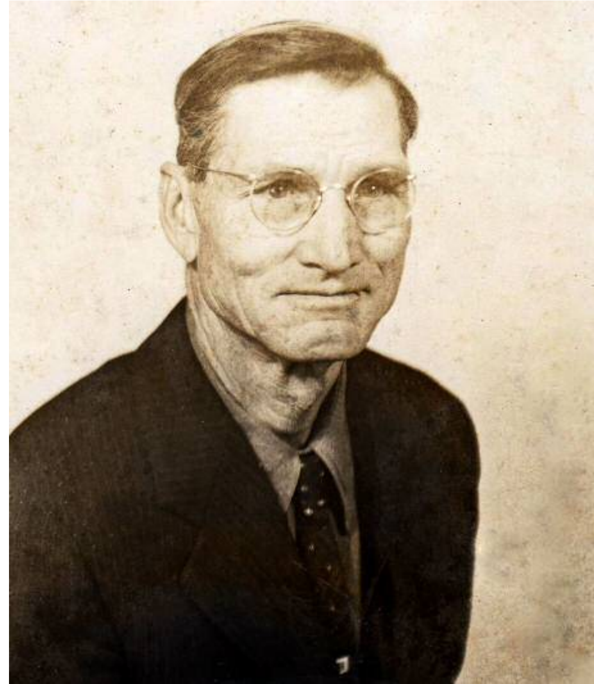
In his last years Herman had poor eyesight, so it was a blessing that he loved music. He spent many a pleasant hour playing on his organ and his accordion.

It was also a blessing that Herman had Felix and Annie to look after him and make life pleasant for him. He liked meals served punctually, and he was particular about what he ate. Annie tried to have everything according to his wishes. When daylight savings time was started, Herman was displeased. Each time the time was changed, he had trouble deciding on the proper time to eat.

In his last years, Herman chose the "Grandpa room" to stay in. He had his record player and Spanish records, a radio, his organ, and the accordion. Sometimes he watched the Lawrence Welk show, which was his favorite television program for a long time.

Herman did not travel to far-off places. He read about them. He enjoyed nature and many little things that many people would overlook.

Herman Romberg



16. FREDERICA LOUISE ROMBERG THORNHILL

Frederica Louise was born July 5, 1887, at O'Quinn in Fayette County. She was two years old when the family moved to Black Jack Springs, to Aunt Ida Romberg's place. After one year there, our family moved into Aunt Bernhardine Franke's roomy home. She and her boys lived upstairs, and my parents with their family of then five children lived downstairs. We two families always got along well.

Frederica remembered that the Franke boys made brooms upstairs. These brooms were made to sell. She also remembered that Frankes had a shower bathroom at the end of the back porch, which was a convenience that not many people had.

Since Herman was not very well as a child, Frederica could go to school in his stead, and she started to school at about the age of five. Father was the teacher. He taught all the grades. To get to school, Frederica had to walk through the tall grass of the meadows. The black tarantulas used these paths also. Since Frederica was very afraid of these big spiders, she would run fast and stop now and then to catch her breath and rest. One time she stepped on a big tarantula and mashed it flat. Although it was dead, that did not keep her from screaming, and she being nearly home, mother came to walk home with her.

Frederica was lively and talkative, and she had some good girl friends. Paula Roeve, who lived close by, was her best friend. One time Frederica and Paula, who were supposed to be chopping weeds, went bumblebee fighting. These bees were plentiful in the meadow grass, and they were not liked except to fight as a sport. This time I, the innocent bystander, got stung. Since I was not to tell about their idling, I got plenty of petting from Frederica and Paula.

The Germans say, "The person who knows what work is like and does not know how to get around it, is crazy." One time when mother called out to us children, Frederica said, "Don't answer; maybe she will forget —"

In Fayette County we had enough dew for long Spanish moss to grow on the trees. There was some use for it as mattress stuffing, and as Fred Gibson once remarked, "If the cattle eat this moss, it will help to keep their ribs sprung apart." The weather in Fayette was milder than in Bell County, but Frederica remembered that we did have a big snow one time.

We moved to Holland that exceptionally cold winter of 1898-1899. The Holland school, which differed much from our small school at Black Jack Springs, had ten grades, and some grades also had a lower and a higher class; therefore, it was necessary for all teachers to teach more than one class. Two of the studies were Latin and German. Since most of the students did not finish high school, it seems foolish to me that these subjects were taught.

One of the teachers, perhaps not liking Frederica's long name, would sometimes call her "Ryeka," which Frederica did not like at all. Holland had its quota of bad boys. Professor Maddox, although a kind-hearted man, always kept a set of switches on hand. When teachers sent their misbehaving boys to him, he would see to it that they got proper upbringing.

When I was eight and Frederica about thirteen, she and I were given a train trip to Fayette County, and we visited kinfolks there — Uncle John and Aunt Jolina, Aunt Ida and Hedwig, also the folks at Uncle Bernhard's, Aunt Erna and Uncle Herman Bauch, and of course Paula Roeve.

One time some of the young people went on a train excursion to Galveston. They may have left at night and gotten to Galveston early in the morning. Probably none owned bathing suits; so these had to be rented; and probably most of the sightseers spent most of the day at the water's edge

and got a boiled crawfish tan. Then came the trip home. After the tiring day, one of the young ladies, wearing her blue-silk party dress, sat ungracefully and bedraggled.

Every day was work day except Sunday, and everybody was likely to be willing to observe the day of rest. How often there was a church service to attend in the Hackberry school building, I do not know. It was considered well to have singings on Sunday to practice religious songs. One song that was popular was, "When the Roll is Called up Yonder." Rest periods allowed a little flirting to be carried on.

One time Father took a wagon trip to Blanco County to look after his ranch and to visit the kinfolks who lived at Cypress Mill. Although only sixty miles away, one night had to be spent camping by the roadside. Frederica and several of my brothers were along. Louis entertained himself by playing his piccolo, which was of doubtful enjoyment, to the others. The boys killed an armadillo. It was the first they had ever seen, and they wanted to keep the hull. Papa took a nap, wondered where the bad smell came from, and found out later. That night he placed the hull on a bed of big red ants. The next morning the hull had been picked clean.

Frederica had many good friends at Holland. Some of our neighbors' names were Thornhill, Harrel, Kelly, Dugger, Vernon, and Gray. All had large families.

Of course, we had parties. Some young folks one time decided to have a surprise party at our house. Ray Thornhill and Eli Weaver wanted to be early, but not wanting to be the first to arrive, they slipped around the house to see what was going on. My Aunt Anna opened a door unexpectedly and the young fellows, not wanting to be seen, flew. In their hurry, they did not see the shafts of a buggy. Each of the boys tumbled over the shafts — they tumbled twice. My father said he never saw anybody running so fast.

Frederica had good talent for music. When Annie or Ida would learn a piece of music, Frederica soon would play it, too. One time Annie called out, "Mama, make Frederica quit playing my piece."

Frederica was seventeen when she spent several months with Aunt Louise, and she took piano lessons from Cousin Louise. Frederica made good progress. She had many other talents, also, but she was not interested in having a career. Frederica's girl friends were all 1ightheartedly planning on getting married. What else was there for a girl to do but teach, provided she was lucky enough to have the education for that?

Thornhills lived only half a mile from us. Ray was attracted by slender and energetic Frederica. She was pleased with the attentions of well-built and handsome Ray. My parents were surprised to hear of the young couple's marriage plans and had their misgivings, but Frederica had courage and Ray was optimistic. The young couple got married September 1, 1904.

Ray bought a small house and had it moved to the creek a short distance south of where Thornhills lived. The house, although almost new, cost only seventy-five dollars. It had a living room, a kitchen, and a porch. For shade there were two large trees. I doubt that Frederica and Ray ever lived in a house that they enjoyed more than this little love nest.

Grandfather always came in the summer to spend three months. He visited Frederica and later remarked that she had bloomed like a rose. She bought a nice bedroom set with his wedding gift of fifty dollars. When Otto arrived August 2, 1905, Frederica named him for this kind and understanding grandfather.

A public road divided Father's land from Thornhill's farm. The cultivatable land of that farm was divided by the North Darrs and the White Hollow Creeks. Both had white rocks in their

banks and beds. To get to the Thornhill home, one had to cross the pasture and a large bridge over the White Hollow. The pasture had but few bushes and trees. There was a large cluster of evergreen yuccas at the bridge and some around the house. Behind the house was a peach orchard. A good water well supplied the home and lots with water.

The Thornhill ancestors went from England to Ireland, and from there they immigrated in 1735 to Virginia. Mr. Thornhill, whose given name was James, was called Pap by his children. Mrs. Thornhill was modest, quiet, and lady-like. She was a good and patient mother to her large family. Most of the boys left home at an early age. Several of the boys became successful merchants in Dallas. Ida, Lucy, and Rose married. Mary clerked for Sanger Brothers in Dallas for many years. Ray, the youngest boy, farmed the home place.

Once a year, Uncle Winfield would come to visit the Thornhills. He was a most likeable old gentleman. He and Mr. Thornhill enjoyed talking about the old days they had experienced as boys together.

Mr. Thornhill had not been brought up on work. He preferred supervising the work of others. One time he, cane-in-hand, walked to the field to see how the work was progressing. He sat down on a small mound to rest. Unfortunately, this mound was a nest of big red ants.

Frederica and Ray had not been married long before Thornhills had their old two-story house moved across the big bridge and located near the public road a half-mile away. They then built a new house where the old one had been. The new house was L-shaped and had a front and back porch, and Ray and Frederica moved into the old house near the road. It was in this house that Gertrude was born April 23, 1907. Frederica had a baby buggy and would often come to see us with her two children, Otto and Gertrude. Gertrude was a wiggly little girl with fine blond hair. Ray called it cotton fuzz.

In about 1906, a one-room church was built at Hackberry. Frederica was the organist for a while, but she had to quit on account of her duties as mother. Barney Parish, a prominent young man with a fine voice, suggested that Frederica teach Miss Willie to play the organ accompaniment. Miss Willie later married Mr. Monroe Moore, who later bought the Thornhill farm.

When Mrs. Thornhill had passed away, Frederica and Ray moved into the Thornhill home so they could look after the old gentleman. Mr. Thornhill got along well with Ray and liked Frederica, whom he called Freddy, and he was fond of the children. He was especially fond of Otto and liked to take him to town with him. It happened that Otto got lost. Dr. Crosswaite asked the boy what his name was, and the little fellow replied, "Otto Romberg." Our doctor knew at once where the boy belonged.

Otto and Gertrude had only a few toys, but the children were bright and were interested in many things about the farm. One day, they called out, "Mama, Mama, come here, come see!" Frederica didn't want to take the time to see what they had to look at, but when Otto said, "Ain’t she a going, though!" Frederica thought it might be a snake, so she hurried to the children, and they pointed to the thresher which was in a distant field. It made noise and threw straw out of its long pipe. What a wonder!

Once when Otto was going to eat a sweet pepper, Frederica exclaimed, "Watch out, Otto. That pepper is hot."Otto, in his slow unperturbed way, drawled, "No, this one is cold."

Thornhills had a faithful cat. Every few months she would have a family of kittens in the smokehouse. One time when there was another such family, Frederica decided to send the cat

and her kittens to Summers Mill with Mr. Thornhill, who was going to First Monday, the trade day at Belton, where men liked to go to trade such as horses and mules. Frederica felt sure that the cat could make a living for the kittens, for there would be mice and rats. Several months later, Frederica chanced to look into the smokehouse. There was Mama Cat, who had returned home to have another litter of kittens.

Dr. Crosswaite said that Frederica had more energy than strength. Fortunately, Ray was good about helping Frederica with work, and one job he could do was churn. The cream needed a certain temperature to make butter. Ray would alternate the pouring of cold water and warm water into the churn in hopes of making the butter come. He would say, "I have more water than patience."

Mr. Thornhill was a man who did not take easily to new dishes. One day he asked Otto, "What are you eating, Otto?"

Otto replied, "Koch Kaese. "

The old man said, "Eat all you want! I don't want any of it."

Frederica once needed to have an operation. It was performed at home by Dr. Crosswaite and Dr. Goddard. Dr. Crosswaite came time and again because Frederica was very sick. When she had recovered Ray sold a mule for one hundred dollars and paid his debt with it. The doctor charged one dollar a call.

Once when Mr. Thornhill had trouble seeing through his glasses, he went to Mitchel's Drug Store in hopes of buying a better fitting pair. Mr. Mitchel took but one look at the glasses and went to the back of his store to give them a good cleaning. He then handed them to Mr. Thornhill, who was delighted and asked, "How much are these glasses?"

In a few years, Ray bought a farm on the Cathie Creek a mile north of Holland, and Mr. Thornhill came there, too. The house stood near the country road by a big bridge on the road to town. Margaret was born at this home September 13, 1911. She was tiny when she was born, but she became plump and pretty. She has an intriguing dimple high on her cheek near one eye. Annie called Margaret "the sweetest little thing I ever saw."

Mr. Thornhill was not good at disciplining the children. He would say,"Tell your mother you will not do it."

One time Otto, who had been urged by his mother with the aid of a switch to go to school, or was it to the field, said proudly,"She could hardly make me go."

The Cathie farm was small and not very productive. It would not produce enough over expenses to pay for the land, so Ray got rid of the farm and bought the Vilas farm from Papa. It was ten miles east of Holland. It was in wooded country near the small Vilas community with a store and school house. The land was hardpan, not well suited for farming. In the woods were many big live oak trees. There were two houses on this farm. By moving one, they made the two buildings into one four-room house. The old man Thornhill built a small one-room house for himself. He always liked staying with Ray and Frederica.

In the yard were about five big live oaks. A cluster of four were in the front yard, so there was plenty of good shade. In the woods were many snakes, mostly harmless. Gertrude once stepped on one, and Frederica one time touched a cold and slick snake when she reached into the chicken nest.

It was while Frederica and Ray lived at Vilas that the old man Thornhill passed away. For a keepsake, Frederica chose Mr. Thornhill's sturdy walking cane which the sometimes gruff but kind-

hearted Grandpa had used for many years.

Mother and Frederica always got along wonderfully well. Mother and Frederica would talk to each other by telephone every night. Father was amused by their long conversations and would count the times that Mother would say, "Ah-ha." He would make out as if he were getting a dollar for every time she said, "Ah-ha," and might say, “I made twenty dollars tonight."

Most people had nothing better than kerosene lamps to read by, and they would not stay up late. They would get up early. Frederica would bake biscuits for breakfast. She one time said she would comb her hair and make it up at night so she would not have to fool with that in the morning. Mr. Thornhill liked hot biscuits, and Frederica made them three times a day as long as he lived with them.

The family had many good friends at Vilas such as the Preacher Robbins and the Trueharts. Madie Truehart was Gertrude’s good friend. There were also some undesirable people around Vilas. One year all of Frederica’s turkeys were stolen.

Frederica was very saving. She would have white dresses for her girls because it was so easy to enlarge or alter them with white lace or white goods which would match in color. In spite of all efforts to get ahead, the income from the farm was not enough for the family's expenses (doctor bills not to be forgotten) and something for paying off the land. Ray asked Father to take the land back, as they decided to go back to renting. So in the fall of 1918, Frederica and Ray moved to the Swenson farm, north of the Thornhill farm. This was fairly good land, but the house was small. At the front at both ends of the porch were two small bedrooms. The house stood low to the ground, and there were many scorpions. One time Frederica found a row of scorpions huddled in a crack close to where Otto slept. Boiling water quickly killed them all.

Otto and Gertrude attended the Holland school for one year. The PTA gave a program once a month. One time a young miss from Waco was asked to entertain with esthetic dancing. For this she was suitably skimpily dressed. Two old ladies, horrified by the high kicks, expressed their disapproval rather audibly. "My God, oh, my God!" they disapproved.

The year 1919 was a very wet one. There was much field work — all kinds of work. Hired help, if obtainable, was mostly trifling, if not dishonest, and they would want high pay. In the winter of 1919-1920 Spanish flu raged. Frederica and her whole family had it. A neighbor boy would come to feed Ray’s stock. The mud in the lot was so wet that the sides around the fence became green. One day when the boy came to the lot with his feed, his boot got stuck in the mud. To keep from falling, he had to step into the mud with his bare foot.

When Gertrude took the flu and had high fever, the doctor was called early in the morning. He, however, did not have the chance to come before night. He had to come by horseback. Gertrude had accidentally bitten off the end of the thermometer and swallowed the mercury and glass, but the doctor said there would be no bad effects.

One night Frederica had bad abdominal pains and sent for the doctor. To her surprise, she found out she was with child, but it was dead. She had a miscarriage. It had probably been caused by the Spanish flu. The next morning, I had the desire to visit Frederica, and I found her in bed. Do I believe in mental telepathy? I do.

Did Ray decide he had had enough of trying to get ahead by farming? He may well have gotten tired of renting land, of the caprices of weather, and of the uncertainty of farm income. But the main reason for the change in their lives was that Frederica had developed tuberculosis. She took the only treatment available at that time, a nine-months rest cure at the state sanitorium in West

Texas.

Ray sold his mules and tools. Gertrude and Margaret lived with Mother. Otto went to Houston to live with Uncle Louis and Aunt Helene Mackensen and go to school there. He remained there during the school months until he finished high school three years later. Tante Helene and Uncle Louis liked Otto because he was always cheerful. When Otto was there, boys of the neighborhood collected on the large lawn where sheep would keep the grass cropped off. Otto had a beautiful collie dog named Ted to which he was much attached, and where Otto was, the dog had to be, too. Unfortunately, the dog got lost when the family was moving. He got loose from a piece of furniture where he was tied and must have returned home. May the good dog have found a good new master.

When Frederica was released from the sanitarium, the family settled at Miles, chosen because Ray had a brother there. Ray could not find suitable work at Miles, if work at all. There happened to be a "racket store" at Miles that got Frederica to thinking that running such a store might be a good way of making a living. Ray talked to the owner of the variety store and was advised to write to the Butler Brothers Wholesale House. They informed Ray that there was an opening at Tahoka. Ray started out for Tahoka, but on the way there, he talked to a salesman who advised Ray to try Lamesa. It was a new town surrounded by good land, so Ray went to Lamesa. He found a vacant building and rented it. Then he telephoned to Frederica asking her to move to Lamesa by truck.

Frederica got a trucker to move the furniture, which included the piano. Frederica rode with the driver, the girls in the back of the truck. They got as far as Big Spring and had to spend the night there. The next day they got stuck in a low place in the sandy road. That is where they spent the second night. A sandstorm blew. A wagon sheet had to do for protection. Coyotes howled.

The next morning, Frederica, who had seen a light in the night, knew that there must be a house somewhere on the other side of the hill; so she started out to find it and found the house. The lady who lived there said her husband had gone to town, so Frederica had no way to get to Lamesa. The lady gave them a fine breakfast of hot oatmeal and biscuits. Frederica phoned to Lamesa, the highway department sent help, and Lamesa was finally reached.

The building that Ray had found had been a garage and had two double doors at the back and also two double doors at the front. A division was built so the family might live at the back of the store. Three hundred precious dollars had to be spent to have shelves built.

Now supplies for the racket store had to be bought. Six hundred dollars worth had to do. The stock consisted mainly of things needed for the kitchen. A salesman told them how to price their wares. The precious merchandise was spread out to cover the shelves and make it look like they had more stock than they really had. One important piece was a roaster centering a display of pots and pans. Before the store even opened a neighboring business man wanted to buy it.

Frederica saved the display by promising to save it for him. Gertrude decorated the first show window, which was a wooden platform backed by a curtain. She arranged a display of toilet articles. One special item was a barette with green and blue stones that Gertrude thought was just beautiful. She stood behind the curtain when the picture show down the street let out to hear what the people had to say.

Frederica was the bookkeeper, but she was also a good saleslady. Ray never lacked a joke to tell. The variety store, the only one at the time, turned out to be a success, and more supplies could be bought.

Ray had money in the bank at Miles. The bank went broke, so the family feared that the check

with which they had paid for their supplies was no good. It just got by, but they had to wait a long time for the hundred dollars which they still had had in the bank.

One night someone broke a hole in the store and got in to rob the store. It was probably a young man after money. Fortunately, Ray had hidden it at the bottom of a box full of socks and had shoved this box under the counter, and the next morning the money was still there. After that Ray found a better place for his money, for it was often after banking hours that the store closed.

The people at Lamesa were very friendly. Everybody knew everybody. The Thornhills had many friends. Life as a merchant is not uninteresting. People from all walks of life came to the store. One day a Mexican wanted candles. Since the Thornhills hardly knew any Spanish, there was quite a hunt before the proper article was found.

One day a drummer (a salesman) came and introduced himself as Mr. Horseradish. Ray thought the gentleman was joking and said, "I'm Mr. Onion." The drummer kept calling Ray Mr. Onion. When the drummer had left, Ray asked, "Do you think that man's name is really Horseradish?"

One person who came to the store was a boy who wanted a harp that cost fifteen cents. The harps for sale were only twelve cents. This boy did not want them, as he wanted one that cost fifteen cents. So Ray walked to the back of the store and got one that he said cost fifteen cents, and the boy left satisfied.

The Thornhills had a big surprise one day when they found out the store building they had occupied had been rented to someone else. There was nothing to do but go through all the trouble of hunting for a different place for their store and move. But what luck — this time Thornhills had luck! After they had gotten settled in their new location there was a big fire, and had Thornhills been in their old location, their stock in it might have been a complete loss.

One night the electricity went off. Ray and Frederica left for church in the dark carrying a gas lamp. When they got to the church, the congregation was just singing, "Send the Light."

Since the store made a satisfactory income, the family could plan to build a house. When the carpenter asked Frederica what kind of house she wanted, she told him to build anything, just so it would not be expensive. The plan that the carpenter drew up met approval, and the house was built. It had only three rooms, a bath, and a large "sleeping" porch, but the family enjoyed living in it.

The people of Lamesa had come from all directions and differed. One day, Frederica saw the washing somebody who was considered respectable had put out. There were towels from many places — taken from motels and hotels.

Since the land around Lamesa had gone up, it was thought well to buy some on speculation, so Ray bought some unimproved land for a farm. When the first try to find water was made, no water was found. At the second try, water was found, but it was salty. In consequence, Ray let the land go back to the seller. What happened later? Oil was found on the land — much oil.

Since the store had been profitable, Frederica thought it would be well to start another store, so a store was started at Seagraves, and somebody was employed to run it. Everything seemed to be going well except Frederica noticed that the employed man was looking after his own interests too well, so after two years the store was given up. Some time later, Seagraves had a big oil boom, and a well-managed store could have been very profitable.

Another try at making additional money was made. Ray bought a lot right across the street of the courthouse at Seminole. This looked like a good investment until the courthouse was moved. Ray let the lot go back to the seller. Sometime later came an oil boom, and the lot might have been

leased out for oil.

Lamesa is on the great staked plains. There were no trees except planted ones. Winds blew every day. In the spring of the year, there would be sandstorms which made sand creep through every crack. People would say everybody had to eat a peck of sand in a lifetime. Lamesa, which means tableland, is above the cap rock. From the cap rock there is a sudden drop. The country below the cap rock is mainly level again. Frederica wished to live below the cap rock, where the weather would not be so windy and the land not so sandy as at Lamesa.

Since there seemed to be more money in the dry goods business than in running a nickel store, Thornhills looked around for a chance to buy a store located farther east, and they bought one even before they had the chance to sell out at Lamesa. They also bought a crops-and-cattle farm which was several miles out of Loraine. This was their next home.

More important than money were the children — Otto, Gertrude, and Margaret. Otto attended A. & M. College. After graduating, he managed an ice plant at Detroit. There he met Catherine McGuire.

Gertrude attended C. I. A. at Denton, Texas. She graduated with a degree in journalism and got a job as a reporter on the Fort Worth Star Telegram. After a year she got a job with American Airlines. That led to a job as news editor on an aviation magazine in New York City. The magazine went broke during the Depression. Jobs were very hard to get. Answering an ad for a secretary, she decided to make her letter funny. Fortunately, Mr. Lowenstein liked it and she got the job. She wrote letters in German, English, and Spanish.

Gertrude and Erich Krause met at a Sunday afternoon tea dance. Erich had arrived in New York ten days after the Wall Street crash, not the best time to start life in a new country. Jobs were so scarce that a person took whatever job he could get and held on to it, no matter how tough it was. He was allowed only two hours off when he and Gertrude married. The honeymoon came two years later — a camping trip.

Margaret attended C. I. A. one year. She was suited to be a homemaker. She became engaged to Kelly Treadaway, whose father had a ranch in Texas.

One time when Gertrude and Erich had been married only a few months, the three couples met at Detroit. Frederica and Annie accompanied Margaret and Kelly. Quite a lot of sweet-hearting was done. When Gertrude and Erich left on the train, they were given a shower of rice, and they could not convince the fellow passengers that they were not newly-weds.

Otto and Catherine married, and after a few years at Detroit, he and Catherine moved to Gainesville, Georgia. There he joined my brothers Carl and Conrad in the ice and refrigeration business. During the first two or three years, he managed branch ice plants in small Georgia towns. The rest of the many years until his retirement he was responsible for the ice manufacturing plant in Gainesville. Babs and Mac were born during their early years in Gainesville.

Gertrude and Erich started a small store in New York City. This grew into two separate stores. But they saw that New York was not a good place to raise their two children, Arnold and Richard, so they moved to Texas. The Krauses tried their luck in San Antonio and then in New Braunfels. Nothing seemed to succeed well until they started a store in New Braunfels. But things were not to be easy for them in the beginning. One bad loss they had was when a water main broke and sent a stream of water into their store and did much damage.

Margaret and Kelly married and had a daughter, Caroline Kaye.

The Loraine farm had a house on a hill. It was surrounded by trees. A prominent and important

windmill provided water for the house and for the stock at the barns. The house had six rooms and a bath. Across the front of the house was a porch. Since Kelly liked cattle, Ray made him a partner in his farming business.

Margaret and Kelly preferred to live in Colorado City. It was easy to send Kaye to school there. Then, too, they could get a government loan for building a house, so a house was built. However, the government was so particular about things that Kelly said, "Never again!"

With the help of Ray and Frederica, Margaret and Kelly started a dry goods store in Colorado City. It did well but when Kelly joined the Navy during the war, it was closed. Margaret later worked for many years as a saleslady in a ladies' ready-to-wear store in Colorado City.

The road from the farm to town would sometimes get impassable, so after some years on the farm, Frederica decided to move to town. They bought a lot with a big and beautiful mesquite tree for their back yard, and they built a well-planned house. From the front door, one entered the living room. Besides the usual sofa and seats, there was Frederica's treasured piano and a dining table for special occasions. Behind the living room was the convenient kitchen which could also be entered from the garage and the back porch. Besides adequate cabinets, there was a roomy pantry which Frederica especially liked. Behind the pantry and the back entrance was the utility room. A table in the middle of the kitchen was used for a family dining table. Near the kitchen was the roomy master bedroom. This room was large enough to be used as a family living room. It had a private bath and a walk-in closet. A small hall led to a second bathroom and the guest room. At the northeast corner of the house was the porch, nice to sit on in the afternoons. This home was soon beautified by a lawn, flowers, and trees.

When the Loraine store was sold, there was more time for leisure. Both Ray and Frederica liked playing dominoes, and both were good players. Ray liked walking to downtown once a day to get the mail and to talk to people. Frederica liked doing fancy work and made many beautiful pieces. For some years, she would play the organ in church on Sundays.

When Ray passed away September 15, 1966, Frederica thought it best to sell her house and to live with her daughters. The house was priced at what it had cost, and the first person who came to look at it bought it. The fine big mesquite tree in the back yard? The new owners had it chopped down, as they wanted to raise a good garden. Frederica doubted very much that success would be had with a garden and felt sorry the hardy mesquite was no longer there.

A room was added to Margaret's home for Frederica to live in. Kelly owned the crop-and-catt1e farm, and until his death in May 1973 he drove the eight miles over there daily. Why will people farm? They like to be out in the open and see things grow. There will be fewer people but more pets — the gentle milk cows, the wobbly-legged newborn calves, chickens to be fed, ducks talking to each other and wiggling their tails. How many more things to love!

Frederica spent much of her time in New Braunfels. After her many busy years, Frederica was not content with taking things easy. She enjoyed going to the fashion market in Dallas with Gertrude. And she liked putting the prices on dresses and selling jewelry.

To run a ladies' ready-to-wear store, you have to "know your stuff." You have to foresee, if possible, what will be in demand. And another thing, you have to price things right.

Frederica had her own room at Gertrude's, and she liked to deck it with pictures of her grandchildren.

Was Frederica pessimistic after many years of work, of saving and worries such as go with rearing a family? No, she was still cheerful, talkative, and interesting. She had understanding for

other people's problems, and she liked for every person, whether he bought something or not, to leave the store satisfied.

Frederica died on January 9, 1979, at the age of 91½. She is buried at Colorado City, Texas, by the side of her husband, Ray. Margaret joined Kelly in the cemetery there after her death on May 8, 1990.

Frederica and Louis

17. CARL BERNHARD ROMBERG

Carl, blue-eyed and blond, was born in 1890. It was on June the 19th, a holiday celebrated by Negroes to commemorate the day on which the Negro slaves of the South were given their freedom. Of my brothers and sisters, it is Carl who made the deepest impression in my childhood. Carl was lively and energetic and was cheerful of disposition. He had a bright mind. No one could ignore Carl.

Carl and I got along very well. I was 2½ years younger than he and was quiet and timid. Carl did not get along so well with Frederica, who was three years older than he. She was lively and energetic, too. Carl could get delightfully angry when you teased him.

Although Annie was the second mother to us all, Carl seemed to be her special pet.

Carlie, as he was often called, was a fat baby, and when he was about a year old, he suffered from the heat. The doctor told mother to set him down beside a pan of water and let him spatter water to his heart's content.

Carl was a self-reliant little fellow. Once, when he was a toddler, he decided to visit at Uncle John's home. Wearing nothing but a big hat, he started off — an adventuresome little man, who expected to get a warm welcome.

Another thing Carl did when he was just a little bitsy fellow, was to crawl under Uncle John's house. It had an open space between the floor and the ground. As the ground slanted the open space grew lower and lower at the back end of the house. The chickens liked laying eggs under this house, so Aunt Ida Romberg liked to ask one of the children to crawl under it to get the eggs. When Carl crawled under this house, he got to where the open space grew less and less, and he would bump his head and cry. When it was noticed what kind of predicament the boy had gotten himself into, Frederica was to crawl after him to get him, but Frederica was afraid she would get stuck and refused to go. Annie was sent to get her brother out, but she was larger. When the boy was told to back up, he did not understand and crawled onward instead. There was already talk of tearing up the floor when Annie got hold on one little footsie, and she pulled Carl free.

Carlie, when several years old, thought he was all entrails inside and that his toes were extensions of these entrails.

When mother baked bread, she liked to give a bit of dough to one of us children for a little bread of our own. This pleased us, and Carl expressed his wish to become a baker, and "Baecker" became a nickname that stuck to him for some years.

When Carl was five, Herman was not well. Carl could attend school free of charge in Herman's place, so Carl was started to school early.

I think the strong characters have a hypnotic influence on the weak willed. I, a modest and timid introvert, was likely to be the other fellow's fool. Carl could induce me to do things I didn't want to do. One evening Carl showed me how matches would pop if you struck them with some hard article. He wanted me to climb into the kitchen to get some matches. As we children were not allowed to handle matches, I didn't want to do this, but Carl insisted and kindly helped me up into the open window. I hurried to the stove and got a handful of matches. Mother must have heard the stealthy tiptoeing; I hurried to the window, but Carl was not there to kindly help me down. In one hand I had the matches. I got the spanking and Carl, who was waiting for me at the barn and peeping through a crack, got off free.

Carl was a "Leckermann." He was fond of good tasting food. One time Carl swiped sugar out

of the sugar sack, so I thought I could do that, too. The trouble with that was that Mother saw the spilled sugar, and who did she suspect?

Once when I got spanked, Carl said, "Ecke! Ecke!" which meant, "Goodie, goodie!" Later when Carl got spanked, I said "Ecke! Ecke!" Mother must have thought that an ugly thing to do, and she stopped me. What unimportant things a child will remember!

Germans seemed to expect better behavior of a girl than a boy. One evening when I was romping outdoors with the boys, Mother told me to come into the house. I didn't see why I shouldn't romp like the others. Mother said, "You are a girl."

I was about 4 or 5 years old when Felix was sick with flu. Papa rode to La Grange to call the doctor. I wasn't well either and although it wasn't Sunday, I was to wear my Sunday dress. It was white lawn bedecked with pink flowers. Now Carl liked to tease. He told me about the mean doctor and his bitter medicine. By the time the doctor came, I was so scared that I did not want to go to the doctor at all and had to be pulled.

When we moved to Holland, we younger children spoke English poorly, if at all. Carl was eight at the time. In one of his first efforts to speak English he said, "Look at die kleine Kalb." (Look at the little calf.) His sentence was more German than English. At another time he said, "Ellie, you can yump." (jump)

Herman said, "The dog of goody fine."

One day when we were at Thornhills, Mr. Thornhill said, "Isn't she pretty?" (meaning me) I thought he meant, "Isn't she Poodie?" (my nickname) and replied, "Ja, Poodie."

One time Carl saw a "rusty" lizard on a tree, and he was brave enough to scare the lizard farther up the tree. This was fun. The farther the lizard went, the farther Carl followed. All at once the lizard turned and started downward. The unexpected turn of events made Carl utter a frightened cry.

At Black Jack Springs the boys usually went barefooted winter and summer, whether at home or in school; so when Carl was to start to school at Holland, Mother did not know whether he should wear socks or long stockings. His pants were short. The school boys made fun of Carl saying, "Little Dutchie with socks half-ways up to his knees."

There was more prejudice as far as nationality is concerned. The Holland children did not seem to care to have Germans in their school, and there were but a few German children who attended it. Could not Germans go to the German town of Bartlett? Holland had its "Stinkfinger Gang." The boys threatened to beat Carl up and might have done so after he left the school grounds if Frederica had not stayed close by to prevent that. When I started to school the older girls asked me to sing German songs, and I would comply. Frederica told me not to sing for them, as they were secretly making fun of me. When I was in the sixth grade, there was a German boy in my class. The English Americans would tease and heckle him. He took their teasing quietly and was a good student, but he did not finish school at Holland.

Carl and our neighbor boys, Mark, Boyd, and Frank Harrell, were good friends. They lived only a mile from our house. One day some of us were at the Harrells when the boys were shooting at a target with a B.B. gun. Each time a boy had shot, he would run to the target to see how near he had come to the center. One time when Frank had shot, he had not gotten enough out of the way before the next eager boy shot. Frank fell down on the ground and screamed. The others ran to see where he had gotten hit. After the poor boy had been helped up from the dust, it was found that he had only been hit on his little finger — but it hurt!

One time fun-loving Carl built a "Big wheel, Nigger heel automobile." It was constructed of old pieces of farm implements. This contraption was run down the sloping yard all the way to the bridge. One could guide the "auto" with a stick or two and urge it on or brake it with the foot. Often it would get out of control on the last stretch and run too fast. Getting back up hill one would have to push and puff. The neighbor boys would enjoy these rides. One time when I was drinking at the trough, I heard something and turned around just in time to get a hard bump on my nose, which left a scar that can still be seen.

Carl walked barefooted a long time. His feet were big and broad. Mother thought the poor boy had unfortunately large feet, but when he started wearing shoes all the time, the feet seemed to shrink and were not too big for the big man he became.

One of the first years when we were at Holland there was a smallpox scare, and all of us children got vaccinated. Courageous Carl wanted to be first, so Dr. Maines started scraping his arm with a knife. Carl looked on and then — you guessed it — he fainted.

None of us children liked pets as well as soft-hearted Carl did, but most of the pets, a squirrel, a rabbit, and what all, did not live long. However, a set of three owls made good and amusing pets, had good appetites, and thrived. When we later set them free, they stayed in our grove a long time. Since we did not have screens, one ot them liked to come into the house at night and perhaps would scare a visitor. Mother one time gave the owl a good scare swinging a broom or towel or something, and the owl took the strong hint and stayed away.

One time our cistern water tasted bad. Carl was told to clean it out. What was wrong? There was a dead owl swimming on the water.

Carl took violin lessons from Miss Murphy for a short while. He liked music and showed good talent.

We had some calves on the farm. Carl wanted me to ride on a big calf. I did not want to do that at all, but he insisted on it, and as usual I gave in. There was no difficulty about getting off the calf. My head came down on the hard ground, and that ended my calf riding.

If somebody wanted a special kind of a party, we might give an ice cream supper. This ice cream was made with rich fresh milk, fresh eggs well beaten, sugar, and flavoring, usually vanilla or lemon. As this ice cream contained no cooked custard, it was likely to get thin when it melted. Mother one time sent some ice cream to Mrs. Edwards, and she told Carl to hurry so it would not be melted before he got there. Carl got hot running up the hill, and then he ate some of the cold ice cream. It made him sick. After that Papa was not much in favor of making ice cream.

Carl did not seem to have serious thoughts about the need of money and where it came from. He enjoyed playing in the field and would influence others to idleness. One day Ida lost her patience and pulled out a cotton stalk and made use of it. Carl later admitted it was what he had needed and that it did him good.

Carl was once given the opportunity to raise some onions, and Mother bought them from him. "A boy needs something to do and needs a little money," was her opinion.

Once a year Uncle Louis Mackensen was head of the poultry division at the Houston Fat Stock Show. About twice Carl was asked to stay with Aunt Anna while Uncle Louis would be away. Sweet potatoes were cheap and plentiful at Houston, and Carl was glad he could eat all he wanted while he stayed with Aunt Anna.

Carl liked going fishing. At the creeks near home there was little more to catch than small

perch and crawfish, but we sometimes went fishing at Summers Mill, six miles northwest of us. There was a big dam across the Salado Creek to catch the water needed for running the mill, and there were, honest to goodness, some nice-sized fish in the lake above the dam.

I remember especially one time when we went fishing at Summers Mill. We put our supplies on the wagon, such as cane for the horses, quilts, cooking vessels, and things to eat. I think Frederica, who lived close by, was along and maybe little Otto. When we arrived at Summer's Mill, we asked for permission to camp in a pasture. Soon the horses were unhitched and made comfortable, and off we went to see the cool water and thriving plants such as elephant ears along the river.

But, oh, my! There were goats in this pasture. They could climb on the wagon and help themselves to the watermelons. At supper time hogs, that had perhaps smelled things cooking, came to get a share, and they had to be roughly chased away. Have you ever tried driving a hog? When it got dark, we spread our bedding on the ground and went to bed. Unfortunately, the hogs returned, sniffing, grunting, and rooting for table scraps, and they rolled one and the other sleeper over. There was nothing to do but sleep on top of the cane on the wagon. This made no soft bed. There was much changing of positions.

Carl also liked to fish at the Little River, where he sometimes fished with the Eckhart Bauchs. The Bauchs were kinfolks who lived six miles east of Holland. Uncle Eckhart, a cousin of my father, and Aunt Frieda had five children — Adolf, Louise, Eckhart, Ida, and Frieda. Then too, Uncle Eckhart had had two boys by his first wife. Fritz left home first, then Willi. Later the Bauch family moved to Lott, Texas, because they had much sickness where they lived near Holland.

Herman in his diary wrote as follows: "(July 30) Today Carl and I wanted to go fishing at the Little River with Bauchs. At Bauchs we seined for fishing bait (minnows) and then ate melons." (Melons seem to have been something everybody had in July and August.) "At one o'clock we went and put out trot lines. When night came Uncle Eckhart and Adi (Adolf) came. We caught one fish that night — just a small one, and at midnight we caught a soft-shelled turtle.

"July 31 (Sunday) This morning we still had nothing. Uncle Eckhart drove home. We others still fished till dinner. Then we stopped and went home with nothing, which we regretted."

Carl also liked hunting and sometimes would bring home a rabbit to cook. The neighbor boys said, "They are almost as good as chicken." Carl would save hides and send them off to sell. The company seemed always to find some excuse for not paying much for the hides. They were opossum and polecat hides, and I know one time Carl caught a mink. One time when out hunting, the dog barked at the roots of a tree. Carl noticed that there must be some animal hidden there, and he thought it was an opossum. Unfortunately, it was a skunk which objected strongly to being molested. Years later a big mountain lion was shot a mile north of our place. Wouldn'tthat have been something for Carl! This lion may have strayed away from the Big Bend country or Mexico.

Papa admired Carl's spunk. At threshing time Carl liked to guide the threshing engine, to which the threshing machine would be attached. He would examine a bridge for its strength and would measure its width. He would know if he was close to the edge at one side, there would be enough room at the other side without looking there.

Carl was a strong and active boy and sometimes "did not know how to keep himself in his skin," as the Germans say. It was partly out of that reason that my parents sent him to Texas

Agricultural & Mechanical College (A. & M.). Carl one time thought he would like to be a doctor, but Mother discouraged him, saying it would be hard work. Maybe Carl's experience with the thresher made him decide on taking engineering. It was indeed a good thing that Carl got a good education. Would he have been so successful with just a high school education?

When Carl came home from A. & M. hungry for Mama's cooking, he might go to the smokehouse where the sausage hung and cut off a piece to roast over the coals of the wood stove or at the fireplace. He would eat this with a piece of Mama's dark home-baked bread. Carl also liked corn bread eaten with home-churned butter and dark brown peach butter.

It was the summer of 1909 that Carl built the spring house. He had attended A. & M. one year and felt capable of doing anything, it seemed. Unfortunately, some of the bricks were of low quality, for parts of some of the bricks have crumbled away. The springhouse made a very useful place to keep cool milk and other food.

In the summer of 1910, when we built the newer part of the new house, Carl was the one who built the fireplace. The back side behind the bottom opening should have slanted forward so it would throw the heat out better, but how should Carl know? We enjoyed that fireplace many years. It was a nice place to warm the feet or just sit and watch the flames. Many times in the winter Mother had us bring some cobs and when they were partly burned, she set the skillet in these coals for baking. She baked many a big loaf of cornbread in the skillet.

Carl always had special privileges such as sleeping late. Herman in his diary one time mentioned that Carl slept until dinner time. I conclude he had been up late the night before. Carl did not seem to have any difficulty with sleeping. Many times he slept late. No noise seemed to bother him — clatter in the kitchen, cackling of chickens, even the call, "Carl, time to get up," might not disturb him.

Good-looking Carl never lacked admirers. Once it was Sophie, a relative older than Carl. He carved her name beside his on a high limb of Romula, our favorite hackberry tree for climbing. A heart-shaped frame was carved around the two names. Years later when Papa chopped down the tree, he was amused when he saw this piece of art and sawed the limb so this piece of wood containing the two names could be stood up and displayed.

One time Father had a grist mill. I think it was run only on Saturdays. Running that grist mill was something Carl liked, but Papa later traded it off for some land at Vilas, and he had to pay something additional, of course.

Carl matured fast and had confidence in himself. Although Carl was not fond of steady field work or small jobs around the house, he could work very hard when it was something he liked, and one thing he liked was working at the thresher. He was a real help to Papa at that. One time when the threshing was going on north of town, something broke on the thresher. Carl walked to town that night and got it fixed. Then he walked back to the thresher, and it got repaired in time to continue threshing in the morning. Carl may have been awake most of the night. The next morning Carl lay down to peaceful slumber while the engine went puff-ah, puff-ah, puff-ah, puff and the thresher rattled. One day Father came to Mother cheerfully and said, "I gave the thresher to Carl."

"You should not have done that," Mother was quick to say. There were not enough threshers to give the other children one, too.

Carl attended A. & M. four years. He earned some money by stoking the boilers in the morning to heat buildings. One of Carl's best friends was Ralph Rosa, and he liked to visit Mr.

Rosa in later years and talk about their escapades at A. & M. Mother attended Carl's graduation and enjoyed seeing the boys drill —I n fact, Mother enjoyed everything.

A. & M. believed in helping their graduates obtain positions. Carl soon started setting up ice plants. Among the places where he set up ice plants were Austwell and Sinton. At that time there was a gas field at White Point near Taft, and there seemed to be much gas at Sintan. It was thought, there was probably oil, but Carl had no money to invest in oil land. One day after a big rain, Carl climbed up a water tower at Sintan, and as far as he could see the level land was covered with water.

One place where Carl set up an ice plant was Franklin, Texas. That is where he met Loula Mae Sharp. They liked each other from the first time they met.

Loula Mae was the only child of the Sharps, who were well to do. She had dark hair and sparkling brown eyes. She had received five years of higher education and took, among other things, music and art. There was nothing cheap or shallow about Loula Mae. She had a sweet smile showing well-shaped teeth, a soft voice, and a cheerful laugh. Carl liked her cute plumpness.

Since Carl called on Loula Mae rather often, Mr. Sharp did not know whether he favored this affair and said something to Mrs. Sharp about it. She was quick to say,"You leave them alone." She liked Carl and later said, "He is just like our own."

There came a time of teasing and uncertainties and making up. One time Carl asked Loula Mae whether the long black curls she was wearing were her own hair. She replied, "Of course, Crazy." He then pulled on one of the curls. She didn't like that. Later on she did admit the curls had been false, and she said, "Carl, I just had to lie to you."

Since Carl wanted Loula Mae to meet his family, he thought it would be nice if Loula Mae would come to my wedding, but first I was to visit Loula Mae, and I did. The first time Loula Mae visited us at Holland a tame screech owl which had been Carl's pet came calling and sat down in an open window. Loula Mae did not know what kind of animal this was, and she was much afraid.

Loula Mae sang for my wedding. Then after the visit, Loula Mae sent Conrad a tie for his birthday. Conrad was delighted with the pretty tie until he was told he would have to write Loula Mae a nice thank you note.

Later Mrs. Sharp came to visit us at Holland. We all had high respect for this truly refined lady. Grandfather would bow to her, which pleased her very much. Mr. and Mrs. Sharp lived in a big two-story colonial style home with big porch columns, but Mr. Sharp had a business disaster. The home had to be sold, and Mr. and Mrs. Sharp moved to San Antonio.

It was while Sharps lived in San Antonio that Carl and Loula Mae decided to marry. The home wedding was quickly planned. Carl had to have his suit altered and hurried to be on time. He was not properly met at the door but got inadvertently mixed with the wedding guests, among whom were Sister Annie, Erich Perlitz, and Walter Romberg. There came the suspense of waiting for the preacher, who arrived late. After the wedding, the couple hurried to the train, but they missed it

and had to spend the night in San Antonio.

Carl and Loula Mae had no easy start. They lived in Oklahoma for a year and then in hot Laredo. They more or less happened to get over to Gainesville, Georgia. A Mr. Caldwell over there liked Carl — the able, honest-looking, and hard working young man — and made him his partner. That was a stroke of good luck for both of them.

When Carl wanted to get something done, he got it done and didn't mind getting his hands dirty. One time when some plumbing pipes got stopped up, Carl went to work and got them unstopped. This had very serious results. He contracted typhoid and was seriously ill.

Carl became much interested in Gainesville and its progress. He was prominent in civic and church affairs for many years. Loula Mae had the education and rearing for associating with prominent people. She knew how to dress properly and tastefully and was kind in manner. She made many friends.

Carl and Loula Mae

Carl and Loula Mae have helped their nephews and nieces. When Sonja graduated from college, she was given a trip by guided tour to the Canadian Rockies and California. One summer Bernhard stayed with Carl and Loula Mae and worked at the ice plant. Several years later Karlie was given the same opportunity. Uncle Carl commented on what an obedient and willing worker Bernhard was. Loula Mae praised Karlie, saying he was soft voiced and always cheerful. At that time Karl and I had to be saving, and these kind offers did the boys much good. The children never forgot the Christmas presents they received from Uncle Carl and Aunt Loula Mae, nor did the children forget their visits with us.

Mr. and Mrs. Sharp, during their later years, made their home in Georgia, and I know that not only Loula Mae but also Carl looked after them well.

I love to think of my visit with Loula Mae and Carl in the beautiful home which they had built for themselves some years ago. From the entrance one entered a big central living room. At one end was the music area with two pianos, and to the left was the dining room with its pretty furniture and china.

There was a bird bath in the back yard. Carl put out water and food for the birds. There was also another member of the family I think worthy of mention. Somebody one time would get into their kitchen and would open the refrigerator door at night and leave it open, and some things would be missing. This seemed spooky, so they one night put out the lights and watched for the thief. After a little while the thief entered the kitchen and went to the refrigerator door. Standing on his hind legs, he reached up and opened the door. He was the big spoiled yellow cat who was a privileged pet for about thirteen years.

Loula Mae and Carl both liked music. In the early years of marriage when money was not plentiful, Loula Mae would attend concerts and operas, but Carl would save his money for something cheaper such as a picture show. Later Loula Mae said that they would either both go to the opera or she would not go, so Carl attended the operas with Loula Mae.

Carl and Louis both favored President Truman, especially Louis. One time when Carl was in a hotel, word went around that there was a celebrity in the hotel, and someone came to ask Carl if he was President Truman.

Carl and Loula Mae made many trips from Gainesville to Texas. They twice made trips through some of the western states. One time they went on a tour to Alaska, which was enjoyed very much. One time they went to Mexico. Carl says the longest trip he ever took was to Rio de Janeiro.

Carl was the president of a savings bank for many years. When he retired he and Loula Mae were given a reception in their honor. The following article printed in a newsletter of Young Harris College tells of the occasion:

Carl Bernhard Romberg Portrait Unveiled

On Tuesday afternoon, June 25, 5:30 o'clock the Board of Directors and Staff of the Home Federal Savings and Loan Association of Gainesville, Georgia, invited close friends of Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Romberg to a reception on the unveiling of the portrait of Mr. C. B. Romberg, president of the association. Greeting guests at the entrance were Mr. and Mrs. James Mathis and Mr. and Mrs. Romberg.

Mr. James A. Dunlap welcomed the guests. Following a prayer by the Rev. Parks Segars, minister of the First United Methodist Church, Carl Romberg III unveiled the portrait. Carl has been a valuable member of the Young Harris Board of Trustees for many years. As chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee, his contributions have been many." Loula Mae was there to share the honors. With her exceptional understanding for other people, she could carry on a conversation with anyone.

Carl in his busy life had troubles and disappointments, but perseverance led to success.

Carl and Loula Mae were not blessed with children of their own, but through the years they became special favorites of all their nieces and nephews. Fortunately, Carl and Loula Mae enjoyed harmonious companionship for many years.

Loula Mae died in 1974. Carl suffered from Parkinson's Disease in his last years and died on June 18, 1977, one day short of his 87th birthday. He is buried at Alta Vista Cemetery at Gainesville, Georgia.

Carl lived at Gainesville for 58 years. He was the last living charter member of the Gainesville Rotary Club and served as president in 1959-60. He founded City Ice Company and City Plumbing. He was a longtime director of The Citizens Bank. He was chairman of the Gainesville Housing Authority for a number of years and served as trustee of both Young Harris College and Brenau College. He was at one time the chairman of the board of trustees of the First United Methodist Church and president of the Chamber of Commerce.

An editorial in the newspaper said, "The Romberg name in North Georgia is synonymous with progress and worthwhile endeavors. He is linked to many of the institutions that hold any community together ... His involvement in the community is obvious. During the half century Mr. Romberg lived in Hall County, he was associated with most everything of significance that happened to our community."

Carl B. & Loula Mae Romberg

Carl B. Romberg and Loula Mae with Carl B. Romberg II and Carl B. Romberg III

Carl Romberg dead at 86; funeral services Monday

Funeral services will be held Monday for Carl B. Romberg, Gainesville, founder of City Ice Company and a community leader for more than 50 years.

Mr. Romberg, 86, died Saturday at his residence, 900 Rudolph Street, after an extended illness.

Services will be held at 11 a.m. Monday at Ward's Chapel with Dr. James N. Thompson officiating. Interment will be in Alta Vista Cemetery.

The body is at Ward's Funeral Home and will be placed in the chapel at 10:30 a.m. Monday. The family will receive friends at the funeral home Sunday from 7 to 9 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, those desiring to do so may make memorial contributions to the building fund of the First United Methodist Church.

Mr. Romberg, a native of Black Jack, Tex., moved to Gainesville 58 years ago from Oklahoma. He was a graduate of Texas A and M College, now University.

He was the last living charter member of the Gainesville Rotary Club. Mr. Romberg served as president of the organization in 1959-60.

Besides founding City Ice Company, he was first president of Home Federal Savings and Loan Company and held that position for a number of years. He was director emeritus and a longtime active director of The Citizens Bank.

Mr. Romberg was chairman of the Gainesville Housing Authority for a number of years and served as trustee of both Young Harris College and Brenau College. He was a recipient of the Brenau Sullivan Award.

He was a former chairman of the board of trustees of the First United Methodist Church and past president of the Chamber of Commerce.

His wife, the former Loula Mae Sharp, died in 1974.

Survivors are three brothers. Felix Romberg, Holland, Tex.; Louis Romberg, Temple, Tex.; Conrad Romberg, Gainesville; three sisters, Mrs Ida Igoe, Long Brach, Calif.; Mrs. Frederica Thornhill, New Braunfels, Tex.; and Mrs. Erna Bartels, Houston, Tex.; 17 nieces and nephews.

In our opinion

Carl B. Romberg

The Romberg name in North Georgia is synonymous with progress and worthwhile endeavors.

It is linked to many of the institutions that hold any community together.

Carl B. Romberg, in his passing Saturday, leaves his mark in many places. He founded a business, City Ice Company, that has been both prosperous and respected and itself a cornerstone of the community. His contributions to education were recognized by his service

as a trustee of Young Harris College and Brenau College and as a recipient of the Sullivan Award.

Mr. Romberg was a leader for many years in both The Citizens Bank and Home Federal Savings and Loan Association. His service in the church, the Chamber of Commerce, the housing authority and Rotary Club is well known.

His involvement in the community is obvious. During the half century Mr. Romberg lived in Hall County, he was associated with most everything of significance that happened to our community.

Holland, Texas

Carl Romberg Dies In Georgia

Carl B. Romberg, 88, died at his home in Georgia June 18 after an extended illness.

He had received his education it the old-Holland school and at Texas A&M College. For the past 58 years he had lived in Gainesville, Georgia, where he lad a business and served his community as Chairman of the housing Authority, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the First United Methodist Church, President of a mutual, savings and loan association, President of the Chamber of Commerce, President of the Rotary Club and Trustee of two colleges.

He was a brother of Felix Romberg of Holland and Louis Romberg of Temple.

18. ERNA ROMBERG BARTELS

Six Years in Fayette County

I was born on December 13, 1892, in Fayette County, Texas, just about 400 years after Columbus discovered America. Although I weighed only six pounds, I was healthy and thrived. I was named for my great-aunt, Erna Bauch, and Aunt Bernhardine Franke. Aunt Erna must have been real pleased, for she remembered me with gifts on my birthdays and at Christmas times. The German community where we lived was called Black Jack Springs, which was ten miles from La Grange, also a German settlement. My father was a school teacher and surveyor.

Mother told me that when I was half a year old, I one time noticed that a chair would rattle when I would shake it. It tickled me, and I shook it and giggled repeatedly. This amused Uncle Bernhard Mackensen, who was visiting us.

I was still a young child when my sister, Annie, carried me on her shoulder while romping. I may have giggled and kicked, for down I came head first to the floor. One time when I was on the stone steps at Aunt Bernhardine's, I fell and bumped my nose. The beautiful doll Aunt Erna had given me broke, but later I had more dolls. One time when I hurt myself I cried because I was afraid the sawdust would fall out.

I do not know how I looked when I was a small child, as no real photograph was taken of me before I was nine years old. Cameras were not common, and remember, it was twelve long miles to Schulenburg. Well, this gives me an excuse to think that I was a cute little girl. I also had dimples.

I am a cheerful person — maybe partly by rearing. Mother did not believe in pouting. One time I was very angry, but I do not recall why. Mother threatened to spank me if I didn't hush, so that ended my pouting spell.

I do not know what my earliest recollection is, but I do know that I was but four and one half years of age when my family took a trip to Lockhart, part of which I can still call to mind. We had to spend the night camping out on the way over there and also on the way back. On our trip, we rode on a farm wagon. When the sand got deep, part of the family walked to make the pulling easier on the horses. We stopped where some people along the road had made molasses. Since we had no chance to buy food for the horses, they chewed on the old dry cane.

Walking was stylish in those days. Sometimes a peddler would come with a pack on his back to sell his wares. There were no radios, not even phonographs, at that time. In our home was a piano and a violin.

My father was the leader of a string band. There were no picture shows to go to. On Sunday afternoons my relatives would meet to chat and play games. The young folks often fought bumble bees, of which there were many in the corn fields. As it was a German community, it was customary to serve coffee and cake on Sunday afternoons.

German was the language spoken in the home. One day I heard my mother speaking English to a peddler and was very much surprised.

"Mother, what are you doing?" I asked in German. "You are not talking!" To this she replied, "Hush, child! I am talking." Another illustration of the isolation of this area was my great astonishment when I saw Negroes for the first time.

I am glad I was already six when my family moved away from Fayette County, as I can remember things about the pleasant life there, the kinfolks and friends. I remember gentle and kind Aunt Bernhardine, who moved away to El Campo, and I also remember some of the people who came to visit.

School Years

In 1898 my grandfather, Otto Mackensen, gave Mother a farm near Holland, Texas, in Bell County. This was the farm to which he had moved his family in the fall of 1860, so mother had spent part of her childhood there. My family moved to that farm, and there everything was different. The neighbors all talked English. The first winter was a very cold one. The farm lookedrun down and the house was small, but the family was not discouraged. After several years of hard work we had an attractive home. We added to the house. The lawn was kept free of weeds. The many trees about the home and along the two creeks that crossed the land added much to the beauty of this place. One of the best things about the home was the spring of clear, cool water.

When we moved to Holland all of the family were at home except Annie, who may have been staying in San Antonio to attend high school, and Conrad, who had not yet arrived. Louis was a baby of four months. My parents slept in the living room, Felix and Louis in the trundle bed, Ida, Frederica and I in the back room, and the big boys in the attic upstairs. The house was added to, and later the old part was made into barns and replaced by three rooms and a porch, which gave our house nine rooms and several halls.

I was six when Mother taught me to read German. I learned the A B C’s and how to pronounce syllables. Then I learned whole words; and finally, with Mother’s help, I could read sentences. When I was seven, Mother taught me to read English. The words were shorter than German words and easier to learn. The first lesson was, "See my cow. See my cow. See my cow. A pig. A rat. A cat."

When I was eight, Carl and I attended Annie’s corncrib school, which she taught in her vacation time. We sat around a table in the corncrib. School lasted perhaps half a day. Several neighbor children attended this school also. I remember they had a story book with pretty colored pictures. These were the first colored pictures I had seen in a primer. Mrs. Leffler quilted a quilt for mother to pay for her boys’ tuition.

People were better church goers than now. No one ever plowed on Sunday. There were often singings on Sunday afternoons — no ball games. Several families in the community had organs. There were often snap parties, too, for there were many young folks in the community. Annie, Ida, Herman, and Frederica were now of the party age. At the snap parties a game was played in which two people would hold hands. One person in the group would snap his fingers at someone (thus choosing him), and that person would chase around the couple and try to catch the one who had snapped. If that person got caught, he would drop out and the catcher was the new snapper.

In 1901 Felix was very, very sick. After weeks of careful nursing, he regained health. In the same year, I had malaria. When I was well again, Mother let Frederica and me visit relatives in Fayette County. She thought a change of air would help me regain my strength.

In Holland, pay school started about September 1st for children whose parents paid a fee for about three months’ instruction. Free school began about December 1st, depending on the completion of the cotton-picking season. Many children, including me, picked cotton during pay school. There was no compulsory education then. I was nearly nine when I started to school in Holland. It was at the beginning of free school around December 1st. I had hardly started school when there came a smallpox scare which made people afraid to send their children. My teacher, Miss Beulah Gallman, had to teach the first and the second grade. The next year, my third grade teacher also had a large class. A few of the boys were large and unmanageable. The teacher would overlook some of their meanness; but the younger children, whom she could manage, had to

behave. School books had to be bought by the parents. We did not have more than one reader to the grade. Our drinking water came from a shallow well in the yard. There were water buckets and about three dippers, and everyone drank out of the same dippers. How much better the schools are today! I was not a very popular child in school, for I was quiet and timid.

My parents were very afraid to let us be exposed to the measles. When I was in the fourth grade, we children were kept at home during the epidemic of measles. I went to school only about four months that year. The next year we children took the measles, and we were kept at home until we had well recovered; consequently I was in the fifth grade only about five months. Of course, we studied some at home. Nearly every one of the pupils was given a passing grade.

When the weather was good the pupils were not allowed to linger in their school rooms but were to play out of doors. Then, when the bell rang, the children would line up outdoors; and, at the tap of their teacher's bell, they would march to their rooms and sit down. There was one boy who liked to sit down beside a girl, which would make her angry, but before she would have time to push him away from her desk, he would be gone. This also happened to me once, but I had made a plan. After dinner I was at the front of the line. As soon as I reached my desk, I got out my book and pretended to be studying. I let "Mr. Smart Alec" get nearly down in my seat. Then, with country-girl strength, I gave him such a push that it sent him flying.

I was weak in English throughout my school years. I one time decided the dictionary was no good, but found out I was a poor speller.

My first cousin, Ella Mackensen, was only six months older than I, so we would be compared. When I was about fifteen, Mother took a trip to San Antonio with my brothers, Herman and Carl, and me. Ella was taking piano lessons; so Mother taught me to play a piece so that I would not appear to be untalented.

We also visited in the home of Aunt Friederike Romberg Perlitz.

Her daughter, Lina Perlitz, thought it was a calamity that her mother had a house full of women — at times five unmarried daughters and three orphan granddaughters. Several times Lina said, "Ella, you shall marry." Lina's effort to influence Ella may have appealed to Mother, for Mother was so determined to get me "under the hood" (once worn by married women) that it made me stubborn. I made no fancy work for a hope chest. Mother said, "Bist wohl eine trockene Jungfrau!" (You probably are a dried out maiden.) At another time Mother said, "Du bist wohl ein Blaustrumpf.“ (Might you be a blue-stocking?) It was Mother's opinion that blue-stockings make poor housekeepers, and she knew examples of that. I'll admit that at that time it was better for a girl to marry and raise a family than to stay single and try to earn a living and later have no children to live with.

My sister Frederica married young. Not every girl has such courage and optimism as Frederica had. It would have been better for me if she had been my companion at home longer. For almost fifteen years she lived close by either at Holland or at Vilas, each about a mile away. Mother and Frederica always got along well. I can't remember them ever quarreling.,

When I was in the ninth grade, I took piano lessons. At that time it was stylish for girls of "better" families to take music, so —

Three Years at Home

I was sixteen when Mother asked me to quit school. I said I wanted to go to school yet. Mother wanted me to learn to keep house — maybe I could go to school some more later. I slipped away and squeezed out a few tears; although I was much disappointed, I said no more about wanting to go to school. There went all my school friends; seldom saw any of them after that.

It was a good thing I helped with the work. Herman and my three younger brothers were all at home. Mother had to help Frederica when Otto, Gertrude, and Margaret were born. Milking became my regular job.

Besides this, I did such work as cleaning house, washing dishes, and the garden. In the fall I had to pick cotton.

Carl started going to A. & M. College. Mother said boys need to learn an occupation so they can earn money — a girl can marry. At one time I was to take a course by correspondence. It cost $7.50 and some mailing expenses. I fooled along on that course a long time but didn't learn much. Fortunately, it didn't cost much. I was to do plenty of reading. The saved-up German "Kränzchen" magazines were recommended to me. They had ideas that couldn't appeal to an American girl: A girl was to be timid, docile, and submissive. She was not to be stupid, but she was to be unaware of her charms. Being vain was the worst of the worst. The husband, the bread-earner and protector of the country, should be a privileged person. It was beneath a man's dignity to do any work in the kitchen.

One time Mother wrote a letter to Aunt Erna. I asked if I might read it. Mother consented, but hesitantly, because one phrase about me read, "Unser rosiges Töchterchen." (Our rosy-cheeked young daughter) She had really not wanted me to read this, as it might make me vain.

I really had too few congenial girl friends, but I did go to dances with Herman about once a month, and often we attended the German church at Bartlett. We also attended some Sunday afternoon gatherings. It is a good thing Herman had me to go with. At one time I was May queen at the round hall.

Trip to Europe

Carl was attending college — also Ella and several other girl cousins. I was not satisfied with marking time. It was Mother's opinion that when a girl leaves home and earns money, she gets independent and loses her interest in getting married. Now it happened that Annie wanted to go to Germany, and she (Annie) said if I would help with the work at home, she would take me to Europe with her. So it happened that I sailed with her to Bremen, Germany, in June 1912.

It was, of course, an exceptional trip for me. I remembered only seven fairly long trips I had taken in my life, not counting the move to Holland:

1. Trip from Black Jack Springs to Lockhart when I was 4½ .
2. From Holland to Black Jack when I was 8.
3. To Houston & San Antonio with Mother and Conrad when I was 10.
4. Trip to Cypress Mills in1907.
5. To San Antonio with Mother, Herman and Carl in 1908.
6. To Lockhart in 1908.
7. To Houston with Annie in 1911.

Did I look forward to this journey to Europe? I took what had been planned for me without any special enthusiasm. I was nineteen. I think Mother thought her pretty young daughter would surely find a man. Guess whom I met on the steamer coming home!

Annie and I were gone six months. [Erna's detailed account of the six months spent Europe are in Chapter 13. ANNA (ANNIE) AUGUSTE ROMBERG.]

When Karl R. Bartels wanted to leave for America for the second time, he had a bad carbuncle on his shoulder and postponed his trip.

It was through this carbuncle that he met me. It was about the third day we were on the steamer that Karl and I got introduced, and we were "infatuated" at once. Handsome Karl with a mustache and *pince-nez* glasses sat at the captain's table. Karl was well read and could talk well on many subjects, but he never monopolized the conversations.

Annie was alarmed about our courtship. She did not like German men, if men at all. She wanted me to do some reading instead of loafing around all day. She slowed things up, but the affair continued.

Germans shake hands more than Americans. Karl seemed to take every opportunity to shake hands with me. Idle passengers who were interested in lovers probably made comments. One time I heard a man say, "Sie hat ihm die Augen verdreht." (She has turned his eyes.)

I decided to put a stop to the unnecessary hand shaking. One night when we had been chatting with friends in the coffee room, I wanted to retire. Karl offered to see me safely down the stairs. When we got to the corridor, he put out his large hand to say good night. I pretended not to see it, said good-night, entered the dark corridor, and walked away — but I looked back. There stood Karl slumped against the wall with such a pitifully unhappy look that I decided I would needlessly have to shake hands with him again the next day.

The next morning when I came on deck, there stood Karl as if waiting for me. He held out his hand where I could not fail to see it, and once more the idling passengers drew their conclusions.

Karl and I did not become engaged. He went to Los Angeles, California, to look for a position as bookkeeper, and I went back to my milking and housework, but this time with pleasure. Had I not met a man who was above the worldly? I again went to the dances at the hall, but I found out that after an absence of half a year, I was not so popular any more. That was all right with me. I had

found the man I wanted to marry, and I didn’t want to encourage any other.

The German boys and girls were nice, clean young people. They were brought up to work and save. There was no "going steady" unless one was engaged or nearly so.

In California Karl went on many sight-seeing trips with an elderly couple and their grown son. This couple had been on the steamer. Karl always got along well with elderly people.

Karl in Texas

Karl wanted to come to Texas to try -arming. If I had been away from home more, I might have said, "No, don’t come to hot Texas and farm. There’s much work to it and the income from farm work is poor." But I encouraged him and he came.

Of course, I thought Karl and I would be as much infatuated in each other as we were on the steamer, but when I met Karl at the station, he seemed like a stranger. I expected Karl to hug and kiss me, but he was cautious. He wanted to see what my folks were like.

There were many people in our home that summer — my parents, four , a hired hand, Annie, Grandfather, and I — at least ten people and sometimes more. We hung a curtain to "close off" the library for the special guest. Karl slept in the library one night. Then he climbed the "Hühnerstiege" (what we called the chicken ladder) and saw where the boys had their room. Karl took his bedding there and slept in the library no more.

The second day in Texas, Karl had a few moments with me alone. Four words. I said, "Yes." Karl gave me a kiss, and that was our courtship and engagement wrapped up as one.

The exciting time of getting acquainted was six months past. Now the seriousness of making a living was a thing to consider.

Karl worked at the thresher, so there wasn’t much chance of us seeing each other alone. Before Karl and I had time to well consider the matter, Annie asked if Karl and I were engaged. I had had no intention to talk about my engagement so soon; but being asked about it, I said, "Yes." Annie wanted Karl to talk to Papa. He did, and soon everybody in my family knew about it.

There was "sharp-eyeing" done those days. My folks watched the young stranger with suspicions, but the "sharp-eyeing" was done by both parties.

I will describe the Cottonwood Home of the Rombergs. Several miles out of town, reached by a dirt road and rattly bridge, there appeared a farmstead with crooked posts and slack, rusty wires. After passing about five old gray, rickety barns or sheds, one came to a two-story white mansion. There was sham to this big blimp. The upstairs was like a hollow crust; the walls were unfinished. The closets had no doors, just hangings. Were there curtains at some windows? There was no bath room — not a cubicle for taking a bath. In idle moments one could study the structure of the building. Mud dobbers and wasps could fly in and out of the windows as they pleased, also mosquitoes if there were any.

There was no rush and hurry to this farm life. Karl one time put down his watch to see how long it would take Herman to dress himself. There were just a few pieces to put on. The inside of the shoes had to be scraped and shaken out and then lined with paper. One half hour, no less, it took Herman to dress.

Once Karl found mud in one of his coat sleeves and concluded one of the boys had played a dirty trick on him. He had not found out that there were wasps that built nests of mud. Karl later said my Papa had a favorite phrase, "It is good enough for Texas."

Karl liked Cottonwood Home with its big trees. He liked especially the spring with its fresh water. He liked drinking cool milk and eating spring-cooled clabber which would clabber just right.

It would not have streaks of whey but would show the shape of the spoon when you dipped into it. Although we later had a refrigerator, Karl never forgot the clabber which needed a certain temperature and the right bacteria to make it turn out perfectly.

No Wedding Yet

To Karl, everything was interesting, but I had lived on this place 14 years. To me life here would be the same old round. As examples of married bliss, there were my parents who had been married 36 years, and there were Ray and Frederica. She was not very strong. Ray was going over his bills and considering how they could be paid.

I have since read that it is not at all rare for couples to break up after months of separation like, for example, a serviceman and his quickly-won darling. People change in looks and interests. The imagination and wishful thinking are likely to paint pictures of excessive beauty and character which reality will not come up to. Some of the excitement of the secret engagement had passed for me. The infatuation had kind of worn off. Things weren't the same as they had been.

If Karl liked farming, how long would it take for him to find out? Papa might rent some land to him. Maybe Papa would build a home for us. Maybe not. Maybe we would want to live elsewhere. Maybe — we made no move to get married. One day Annie said to me that if Karl and I wanted to marry, we could live with my parents. "I don't want to do that," I replied without a moment's hesitation. I said we wanted to be engaged a year before getting married. This seemed sane and sensible to me.

Some weeks later Annie asked if I would like to attend the College of Industrial Arts (C.I.A.). "I always wanted to go to college," I replied. Annie suggested that I stay with Cousin Lina Perlitz, who was teaching at C.I.A., and I could take the Homemakers' Course. I approved of the idea. Later Mother asked me, "You want to go to college?"

I said, "Yes."

"Next time do say it sooner," Mother said, displeased.

After having been out of school three years, I went to school — a poor lost country sheep! I wore the required uniform and of course a corset and a corset cover. My pair of high-topped, button shoes had been bought in Belton. At certain times the uniform was not required. I liked wearing a middy blouse and skirt. Also, I liked a blue corduroy dress that had been remodeled for me, until I overheard a girl say, "Isn't she tacky?"Of course, Karl came to see me at C.I.A. He was only twenty-five, but he seemed to be ten years older. He wore glasses and had a mustache. His suits, made in Europe, looked old-fashioned. He even wore a derby. Besides this he was as prosaic as an Irish potato. He was, however, a handsome man, well-educated and well-read.

Karl stayed on the farm and worked as a hired hand for $15 a month and room and board. Karl and Papa sometimes played chess. Papa was exceptionally good; so Karl could expect to be the loser, but he could play well enough to make the game interesting. Ida once took a picture of Papa and Karl playing chess in the dining room. Karl wore a jacket and Papa wore a red sweater which Mother had tried to dye brown. This shows that red was not considered a proper color for an elderly man, and it also shows that it was not pleasantly warm in the living room.

Papa and Karl always got along well. It was not only because Papa was easy to get along with, but also because Karl was well informed, and both liked to read and could discuss the occurrences of the day.

The course I took at C.I.A. was an experiment. The girls who took it, about 16, were nearly all girls who, like me, had not learned enough to do freshman work. I wanted to quit and go back home, but Lina talked me into staying. The best the course did for me was to make housekeeping more interesting to me, and besides, after being away from the farm for a while, it gave a feeling of novelty to living on the home farm.

Annie did not teach that year but stayed on the farm part of the time. Brother Felix was a freshman at A. & M. Brothers Herman, Louis, and Conrad were at home. Annie spent a while in Lockhart helping in sister Ida's studio.

Summer of 1914

Karl wanted to farm, and my parents offered to build a home for Karl and me to live in. I think it was partly to get Karl and me to marry and settle down. They had nine children. Annie was already 34, but Frederica was the only one married, and her three children were the only grandchi1dren. The house was to be on what was called the Sheep Hill, on which a shed for sheep stood years ago. It was on the other side of the branch but close to my parents' home. A four-room house would have been enough, but Erich Perlitz's drawings were approved.

The lumber was ordered from an East Texas lumber mill. The cost of the house was about $800. The building was done by Erich and the boys — Felix, Louis, Conrad, and a visitor or two.

We had unusually many visitors in my parents' big home that summer. Sometimes we were 25 people. Cora von Stuve and her children spent several weeks, and Emma and Ernst (first cousins on the Mackensen side) were there a while, too. Frederica, who was not strong at the time, spent six weeks with her children. Hedwig Romberg, a first cousin, spent several weeks. Mother often said, "Man hat sich mal wieder satt gekriegt." (We got appetites satisfied once more.) It surprised Grandfather that mother could put such good meals on the table, for she did not spend much on special food such as canned goods and shipped-in fruit and vegetables.

Erich Perlitz was a very nice cousin. He was sensible and practical and always polite. Although he was not strong, he never complained. He was our carpenter when our houses were built, and he came once to build the round house and the garage. It was Erich who built the needed bathroom when Annie managed the home years later.

The wedding took place in the evening of August 18. Hedwig Romberg and Loula Mae Sharp,

fiancee of brother Carl, each sang a song. Punch and cake were served after the short ceremony in the Cottonwood Home in front of a bank of flowers.

When Karl and I got on the train, we were given a shower of rice, which surprised and tickled me. Karl and I went to Galveston and then visited at Houston, Fayette County, and Lockhart. After about a week, we returned to Holland tired. We had had a trip but not a proper honeymoon.

Karl was a human, but he was a clean young man. I had been his first real sweetheart, and he never gave me any reason for jealousy.

Karl and I were an odd match. Karl had a much better education than I. He was five years older.

He was the one who had money. I had 35 cents when I married. Karl and I were a world apart. I was a dummy, but Karl did not expect me to have much education. I was a girl, wasn’t I? Is it any surprise that Karl was the one who made most of the important decisions? I think that my parents thought that now that I was married, I was to standup for my rights, for marriage should be a 50-50 proposition. There was to be a complete reversal of my character, which didn’t take place. Mother one time said, "The way a couple starts out in married life, things are likely to remain. I think that is so. The one who is boss at the start is likely to remain the boss."

First Years of Farming

The first year Karl farmed, he plowed his land when it was still too wet. Mother, years later, said something about it; and Herman recently, 56 years later, still remembered it. Why didn't they tell Karl? My folks weren't so hesitant about criticizing him later on.

That first year Karl farmed "on the halves" and cleared $175. He called it his apprenticeship. He then bought mules and tools and cleared about $250 the second year. We had two teams for farming and little by little obtained some cattle. Karl did not like hog meat. We raised only the hogs we needed and finally raised none at all.

We soon had two very dry years, 1917 and 1918. Our spring gave out, and water had to be hauled. The year 1919 was exceptionally wet. Much rain was also not desirable. The protection we had for our stock was skimpy. The lots sometimes had such deep mud that taking steps was slow. In the horse lot one time, Karl got kicked on the chest. He saw the accident coming and threw himself back; still the blow knocked him out. He had a lump in his chest for some time afterward.

The year 1925 was very dry, and Karl lost money that year. He knew, for he was keeping books. During the 13 years we farmed at Holland we made less than one-fifth bale of cotton per acre.

We did not make money with farming alone. When Karl and I had been married one year, he bought my brother Carl's thresher and threshed grain for himself and other farmers. When winter came and he had time, he crawled into the thresher. He took note of how the thresher worked and oiled the machinery well. Grandfather, who had advised Karl to buy the thresher, said, "Es ist ihm hoch anzurechnen das er sich so gut in alles herein gefunden hat." (One can praise Karl highly for having adjusted himself to everything so quickly.)

Another thing with which Karl and I made money was bees. He studied books and went about it right. Given proper care, bees will multiply fast. Of course, Karl got stung, but he did not pay much attention to that. There is something disagreeable about every occupation. When cotton poisoning was done at Taft, it ended Karl's bee keeping business.

Roseline and Sonja were born while we lived in the "Sheephill" home, but after we had lived there 4 1/2 years, my parents moved to Atascosa County (where Ida had bought a farm), and Karl and I moved into the larger house. This was better located, nearer to the barns and spring, and besides, it had some improvements such as running water which the other house lacked. I now had more house, more yard, more chickens, more cows, more of everything. The first year we lived there, we had an oversupply of rain and much field work. Karl threshed off and on for ten weeks. Then the new baby, Bernhard, came in August. As if all this had not been enough, all of our family more or less had malaria. It was a very profitable year, but the one in which I worked hardest.

Erna and Rosaline

While we lived in the larger house, we were seldom there by ourselves. Conrad, Louis, and Felix stayed with us now and then.

Herman was with us most of the time. Otto Mackensen, my first cousin from San Antonio, stayed with us about six months. When my parents

returned after about two years, they moved back into the big house. We two families lived together seven years. Karl F. was born in1921.

Karl and I had not yet been married ten years when Nita, our fifth, arrived. Roseline was the oldest, eight years old. She was mentally bright and enjoyed going to school. It was in April 1924 that she took measles and did not recover. There was a skip of 4½ years between Nita and our next child, Linda, who was born in Hatch, New Mexico, in 1928. Helene came two years later at Taft, Texas.

In 1916 we bought a small farm and also our first auto — we did not call it a car — a model T Ford. Karl read the instruction manual, and when his auto came, the garage man had him drive around the block a few times. Then Karl paid for his auto and drove to Belton. There was something wrong with the car. It would drive no less than 20 miles an hour, but quick-witted Karl managed. Karl had that car about 10 years. One time he bought a car that had been damaged by fire, and he used some of the parts to repair the old car. When the car needed oiling, he did that himself. Karl liked to travel, and we took many trips.

For some years Karl was the secretary of the Hermann Sons group that met in the round hall; so he got well acquainted with many Germans. Besides some dances held at night, there would be some daytime entertainment with dancing. One time after some such affair the grass caught fire, and the hall burned down. It was not replaced.

When World War I came, there was much propaganda against Germany. Tales of disloyalty and spy stories went around. Anybody with ill-will against a German could help the tales along. It was astonishing how such fabrications grew. When the war ended, the German money, the "mark," became valueless. The money Karl had inherited had been invested in Germany and was mostly lost.

On January 1, 1925, the Angersteins (Karl's youngest sister and family) arrived from Germany and lived for about six months in the smaller house on the farm. Our association with Angersteins meant a great deal to us, especially Karl.

Land Hunting

Karl, who had grown up in thickly-settled Germany, appreciated land. Money tends to go down in value, but not land, he said. He went on many land hunts. We first bought fifty-four acres. When it was paid for, Karl said it was not enough land to build on, so we sold the land to Frank Balusek in 1921 and bought 100 acres from Goodnights a mile south of us. When it was paid for, Karl didn't want to live there either.

For several years Karl took trips with land agents. I told him not to buy a piece of land he didn't want to live on. In our land hunts we went to Cotulla, Pearsall, Alice, Rosenberg, Edna and other places. Usually the value of the land was much overrated. One time we read that a doctor at Skidmore had a five-room house to sell. Fruit trees and a lily pool were mentioned in the advertisement. We went and found that the house had been a three-room house but had been made into five rooms by dividing two of them. The lily pool was a mud puddle.

When Karl and I were on one of our land hunts, Mother milked in my stead (although we had Negroes on the place who could have done the work). A cow made a quick turn, and Mother got thrown down. One of her bones was broken at the hip. Mother definitely should have been taken to the hospital at Temple, but she didn't want to go. She later said she had not been in the proper condition to decide about herself.

Karl R. Bartels, age 57

In 1923 when the Taft Ranch land was sold, Karl accompanied Mr. Molina and a land agent to Taft, Texas. There were two pieces of land for sale and both looked good. Karl let Molina choose first. Molina picked the land nearest to town. If we had bought that land, we might have moved there, but Karl bought the place 6½ miles from town.

Karl said that we had better not move there that year, and he went to rent the land out for one year. That seemed sensible, so Karl went to Taft and rented the land out. He rented it to Mr. Boykin, not for one year but for four. He could make a better deal that way, he said. Did we ever move to that farm? Never.

It was in the fall of 1925 that Ida and little Ann came home to Holland. Ida then lived with my parents, and Karl and I moved back to the smaller house. Among other things, it needed running water and to be made warmer for winter living. We thought it best to move to a farm of our own. We had the 160-acre farm at Taft. In 1927 Karl had traded our Holland farm for one at Lamesa. While we were in the smaller house, Fritz, Karl's nephew, stayed with us nearly a year. He went to school with Sonja. They walked together three miles, as the crow flies, to the Holland school.

In the fall of 1927 Karl drove to Hatch, New Mexico, with friends. It was in the irrigation district below Elephant Butte Dam. The thriving green fields were surrounded by beautiful mountains. There were shady trees along the irrigation ditches. No wonder this country appealed to him more than the level tree-less land he owned at Taft and Lamesa, so we decided to move. I felt sure we could have a good living where fruits and vegetables could be irrigated.

New Mexico, Taylor and Lockhart

We left Holland December 4, 1927. A young man drove the car with me and my four children in it. Karl drove the truck which contained our furniture. We had to spend the night in a motel one night. The next day it was 20 degrees F., but Karl wanted to go on. I think I held Nita on my lap. The other three children, who rode on the back seat, had to stay under some quilts to keep warm. I took frost bite in my feet. Nita said, "Nita will Feuer sitzen." (Nita wants to sit by fire.) We spent about two nights at Las Cruces, and Karl looked at some land there. Then we went to Hatch and spent a night with friends, the Bartons. We soon bought an irrigation farm. Besides the four-room house, there was a barn and lots. From the land owner we also bought a team of horses, a cow, some chickens, and some furniture. After the much land hunting, we were finally located on our own land. We had an irrigation farm. Part of it had alfalfa (and sand burrs) on it. The adobe house had four rooms, one of which was a storage room. The wife the previous owner had sold flowers, and we did have a beautiful yard when spring finally came.

Karl had to return to Texas to get a truck load of implements, and it happened that we had to celebrate Christmas without him.

Almost from the first, Karl was dissatisfied with his farm. He had some favorite expressions: "Donnerwetter und sonst der gleichen." (Thunder weather and more of such.) "Gut! Gut! Alles wird schon schief gehen." (Good! Good! Things will not fail to go wrong.) The Hatch country being new to us, mistakes were bound to be made.

The altitude was high, about 7000 feet. Spring came late. We had dust storms so dusty that "a gopher could dig a hole in the sky." In the summer the weather was very hot, sometimes about 115 degrees F.

The pump water which we drank was very hard. We carried it from the lot because the water was not as hard there where more pumping was done.

The year in New Mexico was an interesting year. People were friendly. Some of our best friends were the Romigs and the Franzoys. Mr. and Mrs. Franzoy had come from Austria. They had ten children. All worked hard, built good homes, and liked the country.

Karl did not feel well the year we spent in New Mexico. He had a spell of malaria when Linda arrived. What a foolish thing to go to a country one does not know and buy right away! In late fall, we had the chance to sell our place; so we sold it, the teams, tools and some furniture besides. We loaded our needed possessions on our truck and drove back to Texas with the truck and the car.

Both of our farms had been rented out, but we intended to move to Lamesa and build on our unimproved land there. It was cold and uninviting at Lamesa. Fortunately, we could get no house in which to live and moved on to Taylor where the Angersteins lived. We spent two months in a house two miles from town. Then we moved into Taylor and spent four months. Karl was not very well and found no work at Taylor. Albert Ohlendorf in Lockhart had a small vacant house we could move into. When school was out, we moved there, and Karl did work on the f arm.

As I had feared, Karl had a relapse of malaria. Karl went to Scott and White Hospital at Temple. Karl's spleen, in its fight against malaria, had become enlarged. One doctor asked if Karl would mind letting student doctors feel of his spleen. Karl didn't mind so word went around, "He's a spleen." One young intern said, "I hear you are a spleen." One nurse once called out, "Look, look, come look! Isn't it magnificent!" Karl wondered what the nurse was raving about. It was his broad, straight back.

Taft, Texas

The summer of 1929 Karl went to Taft and told our renter, Mr. Boykin, he could not rent him the 160-acre farm again because we had to work it ourselves. We were late about moving to Taft, as we were hoping Mr. Molina would find a house for us to live in. Finally he said we could move into a small house he had in his backyard. We soon moved, but by that time Mr. Molina's daughter had decided to move into the little house; so there we were without a house. Karl, however, found a vacant house at Gregory that we could rent, and we moved in.

Mr. Boykin, who had thought we would not move to Taft after all, had rented out our farm and had sold some mules and tools in the deal. What was there to do? Our renter bought our 160-acre farm, and we bought 100 acres of brush land located west of Taft. It had just been put on the market. It was to be sold in small blocks at $125 an acre, but we could buy the whole farm unimproved at $100 an acre. A location close to a junkyard, railroad and the gin could not be considered very desirable, but we had a place on which to live within walking distance of school, and we needed to make a living — so we bought the farm.

Erich Perlitz came and helped build the four-room box house and the first part of the tin shed. Karl used some of the lumber of the old stock pens that were on the farm, and the house was built well, as gulf storms could be expected. I remember Erich saying to Karl that a roof is about the first thing that gets damaged by a storm and that two more nails should be put into each board. That house weathered several bad hurricanes, and although the tin sheds got ruined, the home is still there. I say to myself, "Thank you, Erich, for building the house so strong." We moved in Dec. 7, 1929.

People who have never started out farming on an unimproved place are likely to underestimate the job. It took a day to clear (with help) a place among the cactus and chaparral for the location of the house.

Since it rained often, it took a month to build the house and barn. It was a long time before we got the water piped to our house. The farmstead had to be planned and measured. Fences had to be built. We bought two cows and prepared a garden spot. The first year at Taft the only field crop we planted was seven acres of feed for our stock.

It took a whole year to get the rest of our land prepared for cultivation. Mexicans were hired to clear the land of brush and haul away junk. In all, they hauled away 175 truck loads; then we hauled off some, too. The main plowing was done with an extra big plow. This cost us $15 per acre. The roots had to be picked up and hauled away. The land had to be disked and leveled. Rows had to be marked and plowed. After every plowing, more roots had to be picked up. We left 15 acres in brush for pastures. It was not only a nice thing for our mules, cows and chickens, but it was also a bit of interesting nature — the shrubbery, grass, cactus, flowers and the many little wild creatures which made their home there — even rattlesnakes.

It turned out that it was a good thing we did not have crops in the field that first year at Taft, for we had so much rain that most of the neighbors lost their crops (consisting mainly of cotton at that time).

At times, we had so much rain that our land became flooded. All our land was under water except the road in front of the house and maybe the south tip near Mexican town. The children were in and out of the house so much that our floor was wet from front door to back door. The bridge became an enjoyable raft. Our only chicken rode around standing on a big piece of timber, and a snail saved its life by crawling up the chicken's leg.

Then came the Depression, which affected everybody. After several years at Taft, we had to take back the 160-acre farm that we had sold to Mr. Boykin, and that made us sell the farm at Hatch at a loss of $6000. (We had had to take back the Hatch farm, too.) In 1932 cotton sold for four cents per pound.

Times were hard during the depression, but the farm provided many of our necessities. I sold milk tor 10 cents a quart and eggs -or 15 cents a dozen to the Mexicans in "Mexican town" nearby. Besides having fresh garden vegetables, figs, and dairy products (including Koch Kaese, a cooked cheese), I used tender dandelion greens growing wild around the house tor salad. After burning needles off the wild cactus, I would make a salad out ot the tender young leaves and dry their prickly pears in the sun tor the children to take to school in their lunches as a fruit. I milked our cows and baked dark bread. We usually had honey, and I always tried to have a good garden. At one time I had eight fig trees.

We did well on the Taft farm. We all worked. Karl was his own carpenter, blacksmith, plumber, and bookkeeper. He invested the money he saved to make more money. Karl said, "Die Arbeit alleine tut's nicht." (Work alone will not make you prosperous.) We added an indoor bathroom about 1934, got electricity about 1935, and replaced the mules with an Allis-Chalmers tractor about 1936.

When oil was found at Taft, we had the chance to lease out our land for minerals, but we never got oil. For a while we got some gas money.

One member of the family was our cat, Rooshie. She was a hungry, deserted kitten when Linda caught her one night. For about nine years, she caught mice and rats for us and had many litters of kittens. One time, when the girls were away in college, Rooshie seemed unduly hungry, and later, when I was at the barn, I was surprised to see three shy little kittens come out from under the barn. They may have been six weeks old already. A while later I found out about the tragedy. Rooshie had perhaps eaten too much of the rat poison that was being put out at the nearby grain plant. Poor Rooshie! Instinct must have told her she should leave her kittens in order to keep from giving sickness to her dear ones, and she went away to die.

I have already written a story about our 30 years at Taft, but I want to mention here that Karl took a nice trip to Germany in the fall of 1937. All of his brothers and sisters were still living at that time.

It was when we had a little spare money that we bought the Bodeman place in Borden County. We paid a few dollars more to get the mineral rights. Some years later, I told Karl we needed some sandy land to go with the less desirable dark soil of the Bodeman place; so Karl offered to buy the farm of Clemens von Roeder, and a deal was made.

Several times Karl accompanied Clemens von Roeder on trips to the Rio Grande valley, and one time when Karl came home he said, "I've bought a ten-acre orchard." When the 1951 freeze ruined the trees, it was not a hard decision to let Clemens have the ten acres back, as he had guaranteed Karl's satisfaction.

Bernhard and Lois lived on the Borden County place 25 miles from Snyder. It was partly to get them located closer to town that we made a trade with Clemens and acquired the land near Snyder. Bernhard moved to the newly-bought farm and was able to buy it several years later.

Since I stayed at home most of the time when I was raising my children, it was well that I had some hobbies. One time I ordered an accordion, and Sears sent a better accordion than I had ordered. I enjoyed that accordion until it wore out, and I now have a new one.

Another of my hobbies was planning houses. How much time I have blown in planning the perfect home! Even now I like to keep a pet house plan. When I have trouble falling asleep, it is my sleeping pill.

I have written poems since my girlhood, also some stories. When I lived at Taft, I happened to be asked to join two writers' clubs. I attended them and also the Writers Conferences seven times. In my girlhood, Mother spoke of blue-stockings with condescension, but when I won prizes with my poems, she was pleased with my poetry-writing ability.

In the fall of 1960 I started painting with oils, and I have enjoyed painting ever since.

I am glad I married an educated man. We knew what education had done for him, and when it came to educating our children, he did not skimp. The children did not have to make a living by farming. Only Bernhard, who worked as an engineer for some years, turned to farming.

When Sonja graduated from T.S.C.W. (formerly C.I.A.) in 1939, Karl and I left Linda and Helene at the Angersteins and attended the graduation. The little girls had hardly been away from home. Linda was distressed because she could not find any outhouse at Aunt Auguste's — only a few bushes in the back yard garden. (Auguste had an indoor toilet that Linda didn't know about.)

My other children graduated from the University of Texas in Austin.

Besides the good education Karl gave his children, he gave each a money gift when they married. Sonja and Wesley married at Houston. We did not attend the wedding but visited her at Hearne soon afterwards. Bernhard and Lois married in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, during war time and wintertime. Brother Carl Romberg was the only one of our kinfolks to attend the wedding. Nita and Ted married at Kerrville. It was well attended by kinfolks. Karl and Helene both married on April 10, 1954. Linda had to come from New Mexico to attend.

Linda and Larry married in Houston. New clothes had to be bought for the occasion. The price tags still dangled from the fur hats of some of my granddaughters. Karl, wanting to make the impression of being a pleasant gentleman, walked up to a dolled-up lady with a veil over her eyes and said, "I'm the father of the bride." His oldest daughter,

Sonja, was surprised indeed. She replied, "I'm the sister of the bride." Karl had had surgery on one of his eyes, and sight was not as good as it had once been.

At one time Karl said to me that people will sooner or later get what they deserve in rewards or punishment. We had a hard time getting started, but we later had good land and children of whom we could be proud. Karl was well known at Taft, and he was respected.

Karl worked hard, but he did have a weak heart. He was only 72 when he left us, but considering his many experiences and the much reading he did, was it not a full life he lived? Had he lived longer, would he not have experienced many things that would have vexed him? And not the least of these might have been the destruction caused by hurricane Carla.

After Karl passed away, I left the farm and started visiting my children. When the Breakers Hotel in Corpus Christi welcomed senior citizens, it seemed the best place for me to settle down. I didn't like it there right away, but I soon learned to like it. I had the chance to take lessons in oil painting within walking distance and went to see what was going on. What a wonderful hobby I got on to! I continued painting while living at Moody House in Galveston.

The decision to go to Europe came suddenly. Helene and Chester were going. Helene phoned, and I said, "Yes." The decision to go a second time also was a quickly made one. I had a chance on both of these trips to get acquainted with some of Karl's nephews and nieces. I got especially well acquainted with Margarete and Gustav Vaque and liked them both very much. I'm very glad that

I did get to know so many of Karl’s people and the country where he grew up.

None of my children live close together now. It is a good thing we send a Round Robin letter around. Another thing, my family enjoys having a family reunion once a year, and it is surprising how well we have attended our reunions.

Mistakes were made, many mistakes, but isn’t it what is finally attained that counts? I pride myself with having a family of well-educated and respectable children, and bright and promising grandchildren and great-grandchi1dren. In spite of some troubles such as one may expect, life has been good to me.

ERNA BERHARDINE ROMBERG BARTELS
List of Dates

Born December 13, 1892
Started to school Dec. 1901
Stopped school May 1909
Trip to Europe June – Dec. 8, 1912
Attended C.I.A. Sept. 1913 – May 1914
Married August 18, 1914
Roseline born November 15, 1915, in Holland, TX
Sonja born January 26, 1918, in Holland, TX
Bernhard born August 26, 1919, in Holland, TX
Karl born March 2, 1921, in Holland, TX
Bought 160-acre farm at Taft in 1923
Nita born February 24, 1924, in Holland, TX
Roseline died May 1, 1924
Angersteins came to Texas Jan. 1, 1925
Moved to Hatch, NM, Dec. 4, 1927
Linda born September 28, 1928, in Hatch, NM
Lived at Taylor and Lockhart 1928, 1929
Moved to Taft Oct. 11, 1929
Helene born November 9, 1930, in Taft, TX
Karl went to Germany in fall of 1937
Karl passed away May 13, 1960
Trip to Mexico Aug. 4, 1960
At Breaker's Hotel fall 1960 – summer 1961
Trip to England, France, Switzerland, Italy, and Germany 1961
Entered Moody House Aug. 1, 1962
Trip to England and European continent in 1964
Two trips to Mexico 1969
Came to live in Bellaire July 31, 1969
Visited all my children in 1970

19. FELIX BERTHOLD ROMBERG

Felix was born on January 12, 1896. Felix means happy, so he was well named.

I've been told that when Felix was a baby, Mother one time rode to La Grange with a group of her children to attend the Ringling Brothers Circus. She left the baby Felix in good care, but when Felix found out his mother was gone, he cried and cried and cried. It shows how seldom Mother went that far away from home. As soon as Mother stepped into the house, Felix was satisfied.

We had a trundle bed for many years, and I can still remember sleeping with Felix. For a short period of time, a stray dog would come into the house after dark and sleep on the trundle bed. I tried to convince Mother that this was so, but she thought I was dreaming that. One night Mother did see the dog and chased him out, and I don't think he ever came back.

Felix was only a tiny child when cousin Emma said little Felix was saying, "nemine," an abbreviation of the German exclamation, "Herr-je-mi-ne!" [Herr Jesu (Domine) meaning God in Heaven] It was a big word for such a little fellow to say.

About all that Felix remembers of Black Jack Springs was that we had a cotton seed bin to play in. He still remembers our last Christmas at Black Jack, which was celebrated at Uncle John's. Felix was not quite three years old when we moved.

Felix remembers our dog Snippy, who would like to lie on the middle landing of our stair steps at Holland. Perhaps Snippy liked it there because he could benefit from a breeze there. A hen laid her eggs on the front porch, so Felix remembers. She would proudly cackle over her accomplishment.

We were eight people living in the small grey house when we all were vaccinated against smallpox. Some days later Mother was dressing four-year-old Felix, who didn't seem quite well. When she noticed the place where he had been vaccinated looked puffy, she at once sent for the doctor. He came often. One night when Felix was worse, Father walked to Thornhills and asked Ray to please go for the doctor and to tell the doctor to please hurry. The doctor came, but he was not in much of a hurry. He thought Felix had lockjaw and told Ray if Felix did recover, he would never have a normal mind. My parents thought it well to consult another doctor, so Dr. Crosswaite was sent for. He was a young doctor who had just "hung out his shingle." He was a clean and nice-looking young man. When he walked to the sickbed and looked down at the ailing boy, Mother at once had confidence in him, and we had Dr. Crosswaite from then on.

One day the doctor said the crisis would come that night. The next morning it was raining. When Dr. Crosswaite got ready to ride (horseback) to the farm, he said to his wife that he knew the boy had died, but he would have to go out to the farm anyway.

When Dr. Crosswaite came into the sickroom, Mother said, "He is a little better this morning.'' The doctor stared at Mother with a look of disbelief, but sure enough, the boy was doing better.

All during the tense long days and nights Mother somehow kept going, but when the boy was on his way to recovery, Mother's strength seemed at its end, and she slept and slept. Felix had grown so weak during his illness that when Dr. Crosswaite wanted to give him a nickel, Felix didn't have the strength to hold it. When he was over his illness, he was so light that Mother could carry him around easily. She took him to the grain field, and he enjoyed stroking the beautiful grain. The dreadful disease left no permanent effect.

Felix was eight when he started to school at Holland in October of 1904. He could already

read English (and German, too), so he started in the second grade. Emaline Reed was his teacher. Holland had ten grades. Felix always made good grades, and when he graduated he was valedictorian of his class and gave a speech.

Felix, about 14

Felix one time took violin lessons, but the teacher expected so much of him that he got discouraged, and the violin lessons ended.

One time Uncle Bernhard Mackensen gave us his old copies of the National Geographic Magazines. When Felix had read an article on Alaska and saw the beautiful pictures, he was filled with enthusiasm for Alaska and planned to go there sometime to live.

After graduating from high school, Felix entered A. & M. College, where he studied one year. The reason he did not go back was that there had been a big hazing scandal, of which Felix was a principal witness. It seemed prudent to make a change. One of his teachers was from Iowa State, which at that time was a top agricultural institution situated in a top agricultural region. He wanted to go there, but it happened that Erich Perlitz visited us and spoke highly of Valparaiso University in Indiana, where he had studied for his one year of higher education. So Mother decided that Felix should go there. After a year he decided Iowa State suited his interests better.

After Felix had been to Iowa State he wanted to go back for summer work in Iowa. Louis went with him, and they immediately got a job shocking wheat at $3 per day. When school started Louis was working at the experiment station and dairy farm and wanted to keep working, but later he enrolled in agriculture.

Felix could have had a degree at Iowa State University but had chosen Farm Management as his specialty. This required an extra year as it was a five-year course. It was determined by the draft that Felix was to serve in the military. First he wanted to serve in the Sanitary Corps, but finally he enlisted in the Hospital Corps of the Navy. Consequently he did not get his degree.

Mother once had the opinion that we would not have any more big wars because the world was getting too civilized, but war came and seemed very real indeed. For since then we have had two world wars and the wars in Korea and in Vietnam. When it looked as if we might get into the first World War, one of our neighbor ladies light-heartedly exclaimed, "Let it come; it will make men of our boys."

It was April 23 of 1918 when Felix entered the navy and spent six months getting training in nursing at the Great Lakes Naval Base. From there Felix got sent to a naval hospital in New Orleans, where he spent about a year nursing sick sailors. It was at the time the Spanish flu was raging, and among his patients were some who died. Felix ate many oranges and never took the flu. At the Great Lakes Naval Base as many as eighty-eight young men died in a day.

Mosquitoes were bad in the parks of New Orleans, so when Felix had "shore leave," he

nearly always went to the picture show. He also bought and read magazines that dealt with motion picture art and people. This got him interested in writing stories for motion pictures.

After about a year in New Orleans, Felix was discharged at Dallas in October, 1919, and he came home and spent a while with Karl and me at Holland.

For a while Felix wrote movie plays. He took a course in the writing of movie plays, and the school was to help him sell his plays. He wrote and he wrote, but there was something wrong with every play he sent off. Then one time when he attended a movie, it was much like one he had written, which made it plain his ideas had been stolen. That ended Felix's ambition to be an author.

For a while Felix sold a hand cleaner for a druggist from Minnesota. The San Antonio weather got too hot for the druggist, so he went to Kansas City. Felix went to Kansas City, too, but once there started working on a Ford assembly line. The pay was good, but the work was monotonous. So at the end of the year he quit there and took a sales job for a photographer who took pictures of college students. He followed with the proofs to take orders. This ended at Christmas in Columbus, Ohio. There he saw many Detroit help-wanted ads, so he went to Detroit.

Felix was handsome and well informed and could talk on almost any subject. In his younger days he definitely planned to get married, but there were so many things that he became interested in that getting married was put off.

One time young Felix was staying with people who had a pretty daughter. Felix was polite and friendly, of course, but he did not care to marry the girl. The people, however, "took too much for granted." When it was planned that Felix and the miss were to entertain a pair of honeymooners, Felix found a different place at which to stay. It was closer to his work. With this as an excuse for moving, he departed and left no forwarding address.

Felix had become inspired by new technologies and by men like Henry Ford and Thomas A. Edison. He became interested in inventions. His first test model of a threshing machine did not work. Then he became interested in milking machines and milk production, where he had some experience and good ideas, but he could not get any backing. Next he became interested in a train without rails, which led to a study of railroads. Years later, when he had money to invest, railroad stocks were very cheap compared to their assets. He invested in four railroads, and these turned out to be very profitable investments.

Felix spent 10 years, 1923-1933, working in Detroit, Michigan. He worked for the W. E. Wood Construction Co., the Sacred Heart, and the Butler Construction Company, where he was a carpenter and also a foreman. He worked in the warehouse of the Kroger Baking Company, and the last place where Felix worked in Detroit was in the Fisher building.

When Father became ill in 1933, Annie asked Felix to come home so he could nurse Father, but Father was not sick long before he died.

Then Felix worked for Louis on a pecan-cracking machine. He later wrote: "Louis was

correct in evaluating the importance of pecan shelling to the pecan industry. But we started our work wrong. In working on a new product, technology, or machine, the first thing to do is to find out what is being used, how it works, why it is preferred, and what else has been tried. At that time a company in St. Louis was using secret equipment, and Louis, who had started on a mechanical idea, thought we should keep our work secret until we had a patent applied for. So after two machines had been built and put into operation, we discovered that these machines did not use the best method of cracking pecans. We did sell a patent for a method of separating smaller pieces of nut meats from shells, but it brought little money."

Considering the great financial success Felix enjoyed in later years, it is almost hard to believe that in 1944, at the age of 48, he had only approximately $1,100 in savings. Felix borrowed some money and started his seed corn business at Holland. He made no profit the first year. It was in 1954 that he built his processing plant. In 1955 he bought part of a warehouse, and two years later the rest of the warehouse was purchased. The business grew as the quality of his seed became known for its excellence. Felix later wrote: "In the seed corn business all producers of Texas Hybrid seed corn had the same hybrid crosses. I had less money but top quality seed and superior merchandising. I had a unique attractive bag design. I had superior kernel sizing, and I kept a good record of each dealer's sales the previous year. The hybrid crosses and the kernel sizes that each dealer had sold the year before was used as a guide for the amount and kind of seed delivered to that dealer the following year. At the end of the planting season in an area I made a point of picking up all unsold seed and put it into cold storage at Taylor to keep up its germination."

Felix sold his seed business in 1970 when he was 74 years old. While in the business, Felix was twice the president of the Texas Certified Seed Corn Association, and one year he was the president of Texas Seed Producers Association, an organization interested in all kinds of seeds.

Since Felix has retired, he has gone back to the work he liked — machine designing. He already had experience in drawing and in the patenting of machinery. In 1990 he wrote: "I became interested in another technology, fence tools and gates. I bought stock in U.S. Steel Corp. to learn more about the steel industry and read a big book an how different steel products were made. Luckily there was a welding shop at nearby Academy which could make anything from my drawings. By that time I was also familiar with patent laws. So I invented enough new related products for a new business, but I became too old to do it myself. At this time steel and wire business in general has lost money. Imported wire and steel has cut into the American market while the cost of pollution control and union labor and the replacement of steel by plastics and aluminum have reduced the market for steel. My gates also use less steel. My present inventions are based on new concepts but no new technology."

For twenty years Felix has worked to develop better fencing equipment — gates, automatic gates, fencing tools, etc. Some of these models have been in use at the Holland farm for ten to fifteen years, but he has not been able to market the equipment. He has received perhaps forty or fifty patents in his life.

Through the years Felix invested wisely in stocks and bonds, gradually building up a large portfolio of investments. In recent years he has made generous gifts of stock to his seventeen nieces and nephews.

Felix is still cheerful. He can talk on many subjects and is an interesting and pleasant person.

[Felix died on September 12, 1991, at Abilene, Texas, at the age of exactly ninety-five years and eight months. He is buried in the Romberg family plot in the cemetery at Holland, Texas.]

Temple Daily Telegram
Temple, Texas
Sunday, January 23, 1977

Values Recalled On Old Homeplace

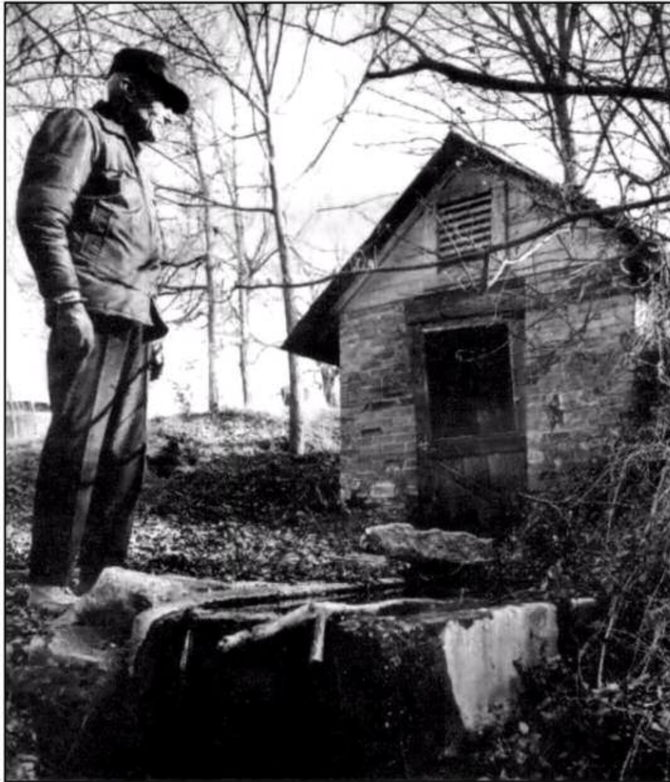
By Dan Bodine
Photos By Rick Boales

HOLLAND - As you approach the old Romberg farm east of Holland on the narrow, winding drive leading from the main road, the rustic, two-story farmhouse rests impressively on a hilltop surrounded by trees.

In good weather, sunlight is splayed through the limbs of the trees, dappling the house with shade.

As you drive up to the old imposing structure, you'll pass over a small stream and by a quaint little building that looks as though it might have been a boat house at one time, with its proximity to the water. The door on the little building hangs from torn hinges now though, signaling the days of its use have long since passed.

There is a low wire-strand fence which surrounds the house, and running in front of and trailing off into the fields are rows of higher barbed-wire fences.



Water Still Runs Through Spring House on Romberg Farm.

With the exception of several barns, a tin shed and the rows of fences, the cropless land in front of the old place stretches almost uninterrupted into the horizon this time of year, plowed furrows dotted occasionally with a clump of trees or by another farm house.

On the west side, to the rear of the home, is a rent house 200-300 yards away, built years ago to add to the farm's income.

The only livestock on the acreage are some heads of beef cattle, milling around the barn area.

Keeping It Alive

The old Romberg place is one of the oldest farms in Central Texas, and it has been in the hands of one family for more than a century. One stubborn man is keeping it alive.

"I'm living here by myself now," said 81-year-old Felix Romberg, a bachelor all his life. "A housekeeper comes by once a week to check on things. But that's it."

As you walk into the home, the simplicity strikes you. To the left of the hallway opens a large living room, with three or four old chairs snuggled around a wood-burning stove on one side and a wooden desk fitted neatly into a corner on the other.

Pictures, of course, adorn the walls, especially in the hallway. And in a back bedroom – a guest room – hangs a picture of Romberg's German grandfather, an imposing fixture in the small room, showing a long-bearded man "who came to Texas (from Germany) in 1847 as a man with all of his children born except one, my father," Romberg said.

Romberg relies on the old wood-burner to shelter him from the harshness of winters. "I've got central heating in here but it's expensive," he said.

Also, "during last week's ice storm for three days I was without electricity."

Tread Bad Weather

As long as there's a supply of firewood for the stove Romberg says he can tread the bad weather without any difficulties. "I had heat here (when the power was off), and I'm able to cook here on it also," he said.

The old house was built in two stages, the first part (the south side) in 1901 and the north side in 1908. The combined building replaced an earlier house, which was removed and is still being used as a barn. But even that was not the first house on the farm.

"My maternal grandfather moved here in 1860," Romberg said. "He built a 14'x14' log house and added two lean-ons."

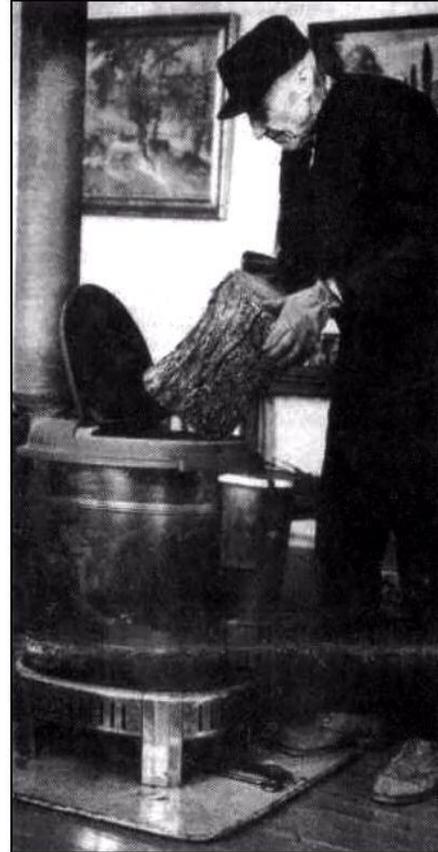
For a quarter of a century Romberg was in the hybrid corn seed business. The years included two terms as president of the Texas Certified Seed Corn Association and one year as president of the Texas Certified Producers Association.

He sold his seed corn business in 1970 and says he now rents his acreage to other farmers.

The long-time Holland resident is a tall man, well over six feet, and he walks with unusually brisk and erect bearing for his age.

"For two hours a day I try to do energetic, physical exercise," Romberg said. "I feel better if I do energetic work and get tired. When you get to be 81, your body quickly declines if you don't exercise it."

View of Cistern from Window



Old Wood-Burning Stove

Farm Chronology

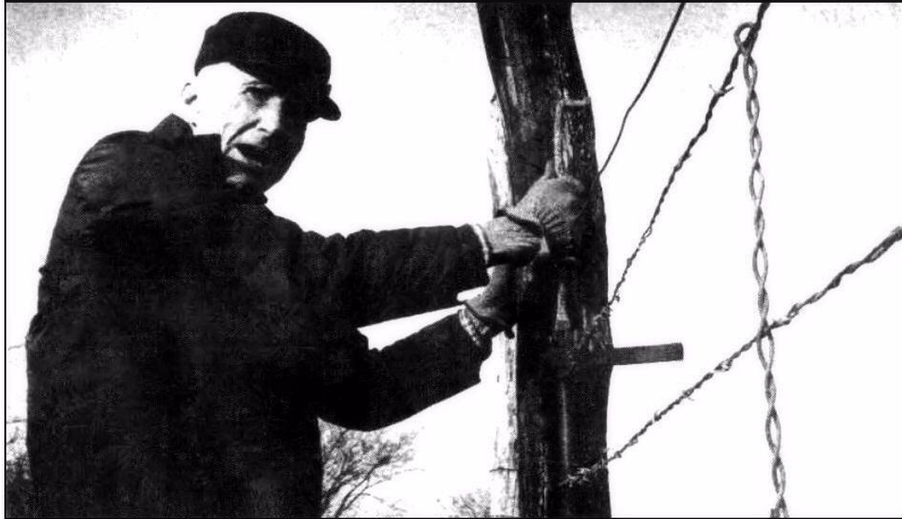
He was walking slowly toward the house, talking about his work on the farm and the chronology of the big farmhouse, when he stopped and pointed out the barn that once served as the family's home.

"Our family moved here in1899," he said. "That second barn was the house we moved into."

Romberg was born in Fayette County, where his father was once a county surveyor. A strange twist of events brought him to Holland and to the farm his maternal grandfather started.

After the Civil War his mother's father returned to the farm in Holland and found "there were lots of people moving here from the (Deep) South," Romberg said.

His ancestral landowner, who had decided to open a general merchandise store in Belton, divided the property into two 240-acre tracts, added a farm house to the second tract and sold them both to incoming settlers.



Octogenarian Romberg Keeps Fences Repaired on Century-Old Farm House.

'Mule, Plow, Hoe, Ax'

"About 80 acres was considered about all a family could farm in those days," Romberg said, explaining the split. "Everything was done with singular, slow-moving tools and equipment. You used a mule and plow and hand tools, such as a hoe and an ax."

The tract that now includes the Romberg farm was returned to his grandfather in Belton in 1896, after an economic depression and a hail storm that completely devastated the crops forced the buyer to relinquish it.

"My grandfather divided the (240-acre) estate in 1898 and gave this 160-acre farm to my mother," Romberg said

The present house, both phases, was constructed by Romberg's father, and his father's nephew.

Romberg relates those times – those times without today's modern conveniences, those times where people worked and took care of themselves without the crutch of welfare and at the same time contributed to society – with today's people and foresees increasingly troubled times for the country.

"Those people who live solely on welfare, who cheat the country, are a lot like cancer," he said. "They multiply, breeding others like them. That's how cancer destroys a body. The cells just multiply quickly and pretty soon, consume everything."

Looking backward toward the early decades of the 20th century, Romberg commented on the changes. "The people used to support themselves more."

He said families living on farms would be complete economic entities – getting clabber and butter and sweet milk from cows, beef from cattle, pork from hogs, eggs and other meat from chickens, vegetables from gardens and fruit from orchards.

"We even ground our own corn and wheat to make bread," Romberg said. "Then it took very little money to buy groceries."

Young men demanding large salaries without first gaining very much experience is another change on which he dwelt.

"When my maternal grandfather came to Texas, he didn't want to buy a farm right away

until he had worked at farming for a while," he said. "He hired out at $7 a month in 1855."
"I've worked for 20 cents an hour myself," Romberg added.
Since his retirement, the noted one-time farmer busies himself around the old house, repairing fences, cutting wood and making various repairs to the nearby rent house.
"If you've got a home," Romberg said. "You've got something to repair all the time."
Romberg also spends much time reading. And recently he has found another pastime: inventing and patenting tension gates.
"When I was in the seed corn business, I was always opening a lot of gates," he said, explaining his interest.
The Romberg family included five brothers and five sisters. One of the brothers, Louis D. of Temple, is retired from the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a research horticulturist and is president of the Bell County Pecan Growers Association.
They have a sister in a Bartlett nursing home, Annie, who is 96, and "is everyone's favorite," according to a spokesman for the home. Like her brother on the Holland farm, she never married, and is a retired college teacher.
Romberg walked slowly down the hill from the big house and explained that the stream crossing under the driveway is fed from a nearby spring just above the little building noticed on the way in.

Treasured Family Letter Has Been Retyped by Romberg.

Water For Horses

At one time, years ago, the running water was used to water the horses and mules during the day.
He said one reason why he believes the story of the old homeplace should be told is to give people a better perspective of the past, using the events and the people that are mazed throughout the old farm's past as examples to better judge another time and another people.
"In history, you study chronology of events." Romberg said. "And that's important. You learn to recognize things in a sequence of time. But it's also important to learn the circumstances behind the events. The circumstances. The things that influenced, somehow, the things that happened. That, to me, is equally important."

Felix Romberg, 75-year-old Home Place

It was one of those rare winter days when the sun first dominated the sky after two weeks of almost inclement and mostly freezing weather.

Romberg, standing before the quaint brick building beside the stream, was streaked with the shadows of the tree limbs. He explained the old building once was used to keep the family's milk cool.

The water in the stream, which flows under the structure, stays at a constant 65 degrees summer and winter. Large cans of milk, fresh from the milkings at the barns, were lined on a trough in the building and used when needed

"We put milk down into the spring to keep it cool," he said. "It's not used anymore, of course."

And then he started walking briskly up the hill toward the house. "But before refrigeration," he continued, "that (the spring house) was one of our truly modern conveniences."

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Decker Praises Brothers

‘Romberg Seed — The Ultimate!’

Bell County Extension Agent, Don Decker knows the two Romberg brothers, Felix and Louis, as "two brothers who have made major, major contributions to, agriculture."

"Felix was a pioneer in the hybrid corn seed business," he said. "He had the reputation of having the highest quality seed in the state. That 'Romberg' name meant something. When people could buy 'Romberg seed,' ...Well, that was it – the ultimate!"

He explained that Texas A&M College developed the new Texas hybrid corn in the early '90s and released it to producers like Romberg.

"He had corn producers throughout the county who would grow seed corn for him," Decker said.

To produce the hybrid seeds required planting the rows with eight female rows and then two male rows. "These were cross-pollinated," Decker said.

Although there were other producers in the state, Romberg was highly successful because "he was extremely careful in isolation."

The hybrid seeds of the female corn stalks were harvested, dried, stored and sold to

farmers for planting.

Louis, Felix's brother who retired from the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a research horticulturist, is "the man who developed all the improved pecan varieties that have Indian names," Decker explained.

He listed the Comanche, The Sioux and the Choctaw pecans as examples.

The retired horticulturist is living in Temple and is president of the Bell County Pecan Growers Association.

"What Louis has done to the pecan industry can't even be measured," Decker said.

20. LOUIS DENTE ROMBERG

When Louis was born on August 24, 1898, Aunt Berline came to take care of him. We younger children were sent to Aunt Ida's to spend the day. After the baby came, we were told that the stork had taken the baby to Aunt Berline and that she brought it over to Mother because she already had four boys. I believed this and for some years thought Louis was something of an outsider in our home.

Louis was very fond of cats. One time Louis decided to hitch two cats to a shoe box. He had a rather uncooperative team which either dozed or dashed away in different directions.

I cannot think of much to say of Louis's childhood. He was not as lively as Carl and not as talkative as Felix. Louis was modest and quiet. Although a good-looking blond boy, he was unspoiled. He was industrious and obedient — certainly perfectly honest and without pretenses. In grade school Louis went from third grade to fifth grade in one year. He was in the fourth grade only three months, during the fall pay-tuition period.

Louis and Felix liked to wrestle on our large lawn. One was about as strong as the other. We had not heard of allergies. I wonder if Louis was allergic to Bermuda grass, for he was often troubled with "colds." At times there would be red bugs (wee red spiders) on the grass. Felix made a red bug salve, his own idea and mixture, which was to relieve itching, but it was so sharp that it had to be removed.

Louis got his higher education with intermissions. When he had graduated from the Holland High School, Annie thought it would be nice for him to attend a boys' school at Austin. He did go, but he left before the year was up because it seemed too expensive.

Louis attended A. & M. 1½ years, but then the war came, and he worked on the farm at Hindes, Texas, part of a year before attending A. & M. again. After an intermission, he attended Iowa State College. Then came another intermission, after which he attended A. & M. two more years and summer school. He graduated in agriculture. For a while Louis belonged to the student Army Training School, and he did some nursing of people with Spanish flu. He himself did not take it.

After Louis finished at A. & M. he was very interested in starting his own pecan orchard. At that time the price of farm land including river-bottom land was at an all time high and little was for sale. Then in September of 1921 there was that record flood on the Little River. Cotton, corn, fences, levees, and any livestock or equipment in the bottom were lost. Afterwards there was a 115-acre farm at Crush (now known as Val Verde) in Milam County which was offered for sale or trade. Louis was interested because it had many pecan sprouts in the field which could be converted to paper shell pecans. So Papa traded an upland farm at Vilas for the farm at Crush and deducted the amount of Louis's "equity" in the parental estate. Louis gave a long-term note for the rest.

Louis was at this farm, about 10 miles east of Holland, when he heard that the government wanted to employ two more men to work for the pecan division of the Texas Department of Agriculture at Austin. They had been employing only one man. Louis started for Holland. He had walked this stretch many times before, but this time it was raining. The road was muddy,

and he had to wear heavy boots over his shoes. His raincoat was heavy. Night came. Louis felt like giving up, but his interest in pecans and his determination won out. Louis left his raincoat and his boots at the home of friends (Kruegers) and reached the depot on time. The next day he passed the examination with the highest grades and was employed.

Louis met Hilda Anderson when she was teaching math in Austin. She and he ate at the same boarding house, and she made the remark to someone that Louis was the only man there who looked like somebody.

Hilda, of Swedish descent, grew up near Georgetown. She and her sister became orphans when Hilda was four years old. Hilda was to be reared by some relative but was taken to the home of people also called Anderson who were to keep her for a few days. Hilda liked this family, who had children of her age, and when she was to be taken away, she clung to Mrs. Anderson and cried. Although money was not plentiful and the Andersons had children of their own to raise, they made room in their home and their hearts for this little girl. Hilda's sister, Olga, was cared for by some other people. When Olga was six, she died of diphtheria.

Hilda was fond of her foster parents and the foster brothers and sisters. She was especially fond of Agnes, who was near her own age.

For some years Hilda stayed with a pastor and his wife to pay for her higher education by working for them. She graduated from the University of Texas with a B.A. degree in 1927.

Louis knew Hilda for two years before he proposed. He was then thirty-four. After the decision had been made, he was in a hurry to marry her.

Louis took Hilda to Holland unannounced to introduce her to his folks. It was a cold day. No special cleaning up had been done. When Louis and Hilda stepped into the house, Annie burst out, "Louis, you couldn't have hit it worse." What a way to greet guests! Mother was not at home, so nothing was said about the engagement.

The wedding soon followed. Louis phoned to Holland to ask if he and Hilda could marry there at home. Of course, they could. The time was set and the preacher sent for. When Louis and Hilda were already on their way to Holland, Louis remembered that he did not have the required health certificates, so he and Hilda had to turn around and get them. The wedding took place with the couple standing in front of the painting of Caroline Mackensen.

Louis and Hilda were a happily married couple. They first rented a house in Austin to live in. Both Eric and Conrad were born in Austin. When the government pecan department was moved to Brownwood, Louis and Hilda moved there. They first lived in a rented house. After the war army houses were sold, and Louis and Hilda bought one, had it moved to a large lot, and had it made into a dwelling house. They got disgusted with the carpenters and said, "We'll never build again." Louis and Hilda both worked to get a nice yard and a garden started. Hilda was active in a garden club.

In about 1940 Hilda took rheumatic fever, which she had had one time before. This left her heart weak. Eric and Conrad were both still school boys when they lost their good mother in 1950.

Hilda's foster sister, Ester Anderson, wrote the following poem about Hilda:

Always wishing, always seeking
Something new to learn and master
Silent of the things that stir you

You will ever travel faster
Faster on the road to promise
Will your eager feet be striving
For the things of worth, of beauty
Will your hungry heart be straying.

Louis was too modest to brag about what he accomplished during his 36½ years of work for the government. He received various rewards and honors for his hard and tedious work crossing pecans. Limbs had to be grafted and pollens crossed. Accurate records had to be kept on which type had been crossed with another type. This sometimes made it necessary to hang tags on the crossed buds. One time a visitor exclaimed, "Look, Louis has hung price tags on the tree."

The tassels on the pecan trees do not make nuts. They only have the pollen. So it was amusing to Louis when one man exclaimed, "Oh, we have lost our pecan crop. All of the tassels have fallen off!"

Developing new and better pecans takes a long time. To make a cross the bud of the female flower must be enclosed in a plastic bag to prevent normal wind-blown pollination. The crossed nut is planted and the young tree therefrom is grafted on a tree limb. After about three years that graft will bear nuts which are carefully evaluated. If promising, budwood is taken from that limb and budded on one or more young trees, perhaps also on young trees elsewhere. As these trees start bearing, knowledge is obtained on whether the tree is vigorous and healthy and produces good crops of good nuts. Many crosses had to be abandoned.

A Dr. Smith, who had a Ph. D. degree, was in charge of the pecan experiment station until he retired. He would sit in his office, answer mail, write reports, and be available to visitors while Louis did all the work involved in the breeding work. Later Louis became head of the pecan experiment station. With patience and diligence he, among other things, developed many new varieties of pecans, of which nine were recognized as new varieties when he retired. He received special honors from the U.S. Government for his pecan work. Louis was always industrious, but he received no rewards for such little distasteful things as mopping his office.

In spite of the fact that Louis for some years had to be father and mother to his children and bread earner, too, he brought up his boys very well. Eric graduated in mathematics from the University of Texas. For some years he worked in California and in Seattle, Washington. He is tall and blonde and handsome. He is of cheerful and pleasing disposition, and his smile is big and friendly. He is married to Sharon, nee Rau.

Conrad also attended the University of Texas, and he is now working in Dallas as an engineer. His first wife was Marian Linley, and from this marriage was born Louis's only grandchild, Allison Ann, on October 12, 1970. Conrad is now married to Leslie Holmes, called Jelcy.

We were glad when Louis found another congenial companion. Louis and Gertrud enjoyed having a pleasant home, and both liked to travel. Gertrud grew up in Blankenese, Germany, in a roomy home on a beautiful hillside by the river Elbe. Her grandfather was a wealthy man in the shipping business, and Gertrud grew up in his house. The family's wealth was lost after the first World War when Gertrud was twenty. Her mother came to America with her children, where they had a hard time making a start in Chicago. Gertrud had three children by her first

marriage. They are Fred, Trudy, and, Hilde.

Louis once spent a day at the ranch of President and Mrs. Johnson. Louis knew the manager of Johnson's ranch and went to visit him. They together went to see the Johnsons, who wanted some advice on where to plant pecans. Louis received a cordial welcome and rode over the ranch with the Johnsons. Later he drank coffee with Lady Bird and Luci, one of the daughters. When Louis was ready to leave, Mrs. Johnson gave him a picture of herself and President Johnson, and she wrote on it: "To Dr. Romberg with best wishes and warm thanks." It was signed Lady Bird and Lyndon B. Johnson.

Louis had one serious accident. It occurred after he was retired and living in Temple. He was trimming on a tree in his own orchard when his step-ladder fell over, and he broke some bones. He managed to get into his car and drive himself to the hospital in Temple.

The following article which appeared in the July 1959 pamphlet of the Texas Pecan Growers' Association, tells something of Louis and his work:

"Louis D. Romberg was born in Fayette County, Texas, on August 24, 1898, but was reared at the forks of North and Middle Darrs creeks near Holland in Bell County. At an early age he was initiated into the order of pecan harvesting, eating and tree climbing.

"Romberg entered A. & M. College of Texas as an engineering student after completing high school. Following one year at Iowa State College, in which he studied agriculture and served in the 1918 Student Army Training Corps, he returned to Texas A. & M. from which institution he received a B.S. Degree in Agriculture in 1921.

"Romberg worked from 1923 to 1931 with the exception of a short absence as an assistant to the late J. H. Burkett in the Division of Edible Nuts of the Texas Department of Agriculture.

"In 1931 Romberg was appointed to a position with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Pecan Research Laboratory at Austin, Texas. This laboratory was relocated at Brownwood, Texas, in 1938 where it was merged with the U.S. Pecan Field Station. Mr. Romberg is now in charge in the station at Brownwood.

"He was married to the late Miss Hilda Anderson in 1932 from which home were born two sons, Eric and Conrad.

"Louis Romberg's work and experience covers many phases of pecan culture. He has recently released two new pecan varieties known as Choctaw and Wichita that have resulted from many years of patient pecan breeding. He has a number of other very promising selections that are currently being evaluated. It is difficult to fully evaluate the fine contribution that this man is making to the pecan industry."

Louis is listed in Marquis' Who's Who in America. Information given to this publisher:

Louis Romberg was an employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service (and its preceding organization) for 36 years. He retired from employment on April 30, 1968, at which time he was in charge of the U.S. Pecan Field Station, Brownwood, Texas.

Some of the honors and awards he received are as follows:

President of Texas Pecan Growers Association for the year, 1959-60.

Received the Distinguished Technical Contribution Award from the Texas Pecan Growers' Association in 1961.

Elected a Fellow of the American Society for the Advancement of Science in September, 1962.

Received the Superior Service Award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, May 19, 1964, which was presented to him by Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman, at a ceremony in Washington.

In July, 1965, received a "Scroll of Recognition as an Outstanding Alumnus of Texas A. & M. University", presented by the Dean of Agriculture.

In July, 1968, received the Agricultural Achievement Award of the Kiwanis Club of Brownwood, Texas, "in recognition of his distinguished service to the life and welfare of this community through exceptional achievement in agriculture."

As to noteworthy work, his work in pecan breeding resulted in the naming and introduction of nine new pecan varieties in the years through 1970, which are: Apache, Barton, Cheyenne, Choctaw, Comanche, Mohawk, Shawnee, Sioux, and Wichita. Others will likely be named later, since considerable time is required to evaluate selections.

Louis died of cancer on September 25, 1989, at the age of 91. He is buried at the cemetery at Holland, Texas.

By the time of Louis's death, a total of twenty-five new varieties he developed had been recognized and named, which far surpasses what any other horticulturist has done. Almost all of them have names of Indian tribes.

ROMBERG RECEIVES SUPERIOR SERVICE AWARD

Mr. L. D. Romberg, who heads up the U.S. Pecan Field Station at Brownwood, Texas, is shown receiving the U.S.D.A. Superior Service Award from Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman. This ceremony took place in Washington in May. Romberg was honored for his outstanding work in pecan breeding. Working at the Brownwood Station: he has made over 10,000 controlled crosses of standard pecan varieties since 1937. The resulting breeding lines have been evaluated and since I953 seven pecan varieties have been named and released by the U.S.D.A. They are Barton, Comanche, Choctaw, Wichita, Apache, Mohawk, and Sioux. These varieties are dominating new pecan plantings in Texas and other pecan producing states. Romberg is credited with developing a technique of speeding up pecan breeding work so that a pecan cross can be fruited and evaluated in six to twelve years. He actually grafts three-month hybrid seedlings into older bearing site pecan trees. This results in fruiting from these hybrids in two to three years. The U.S.D.A. stated that Romberg has accomplished results in 20 years that would have required 60 years with conventional methods. He has accomplished more in pecan breeding than any other man and is regarded as the foremost authority on pecan varieties. Romberg was previously honored by receiving the Outstanding Technical Contribution Award from the Texas Pecan Growers Association. This award has only been presented twice in the history of this 42-year-old organization. [May 19, 1964]

Industry loses pioneer
Well-known USDA horticulturist
Louis Romberg dies at age 91

Retired USDA Research Horticulturist and well-known pecan pioneer Louis D. Romberg died Sept 25 at age 91. Funeral services took place on Sept 28 in Temple, Texas, with burial in nearby Holland.

Best known for his pecan breeding efforts, Romberg was in charge of the USDA Pecan Field Station in Brownwood during the time when many of the classic Indian cultivars were released.

USDA's Tommy Thompson and Fountain Young wrote in the dedication of their book Pecan Cuitivars – Past and Present that Romberg "has devoted his life to pecan cultivar development and his basic breeding efforts form the foundation of modern USDA breeding efforts.

Many orchards thrive and produce today because of the efforts of this unselfish, systematic, and tireless worker who proved that pecan breeding is a science that greatly contributes to the well-being and nutrition of mankind."

Among the many honors bestowed on Louie Romberg were the Technical Contribution Award from the Texas Pecan Growers Association and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Superior Service Award. Romberg was a member of the Texas Pecan Growers Association for more than 50 years and was president of the organization in 1959-60. The association recognized him with the technical award for "his devoted service to the pecan industry and the development of new and promising pecan varieties" and "for the benefits of his labor which will be reaped by future generations of both pecan growers and consumers." He received the USDA award in 1965 in recognition of making more than 10,000 controlled crosses of standard pecan varieties over a period of about twenty years. Romberg developed a technique by which pecan breeding work is speeded as a pecan cross is fruited and evaluated in six to twelve years. USDA credited him with accomplishing in twenty years what would have taken sixty years using conventional methods.

A 1921 graduate of Texas A&M University with a degree in agriculture, he was also recognized as an outstanding alumnus of the university in 1965. From 1923 to 1931, he worked as an assistant to J. H. Burkett in the Division of Edible Nuts of the Texas Department of Agriculture.

He went to work for USDA in 1931.

Romberg was born in Fayette County, Texas, on Aug. 24, 1898.

Southwest Notes

By George Ray McEachern

Louis D. Romberg passed away on Sept. 25, 1989, leaving the pecan industry with the greatest contribution that any individual has ever made: genetic material for today and tomorrow.

All too often we fail to appreciate the great importance of genetic material. ‘Stuart’, ‘Western’, ‘Desirable’ and ‘Cape Fear’ are the only major non-Romberg varieties which are being planted as commercial varieties in large numbers. All four of these varieties will eventually be replaced with the USDA breed of Indian varieties selected by Romberg.

No matter how we select an ideal site and develop and manage an orchard of the future, so much of the potential of the trees depends on the genetic material of the varieties. Genetics controls production, precocity, pollination, tree structure, wood strength, kernel color, nut size, oleic acid content, shuck opening, harvest date, rest period, cold hardiness, storage quality, taste, appearance, disease resistance, insect resistance, drought tolerance, zinc efficiency, tree size, foliage efficiency and many other physical and production characteristics of the pecan. Consequently, all pecan growers realize we will never find or develop the perfect variety.

Stuart has been number one in the Southeast because of its scab resistance and long-term regular production. Western has been the best in the Southwest because of its regular production in a hot, dry climate. Desirable has been great because of its regular production of good quality kernels. Unfortunately, it is not resistant to the new strong lines of pecan scab. Cape Fear is looking good throughout the industry.

All four of these major varieties fall short of the Romberg varieties in one major area: fruit quality. Nature and selection by pecan growers simply have failed to produce a pecan which has both production and quality.

‘Wichita’ and‘Choctaw’ come as close to perfection as any varieties we have grown. Unfortunately, we cannot grow the Wichita in the Southeast because of pecan scab. In the case of Choctaw, only a very few growers on the best sites with the best of management have realized the genetic potential of the variety.

The ‘Cheyenne’ is a great variety. It has production, quality, scab resistance and precocity, yet we cannot manage the aphids. 'Kiowa' and 'Pawnee' are too young to determine their place in commercial production because it takes at least twenty years to adequately determine the long-term potential of a variety. Romberg’s personal favorites were Wichita, Cheyenne and Kiowa. Our hopes and anticipations are very high on the new ‘Oconee,’ ‘Houma’ and ‘Osage’ USDA varieties and those yet to be released.

As we look back on the USDA varieties which failed, we need to be positive. At the time each variety was selected and released, it appeared to offer the industry an economic potential. It is better to have tried and failed, than not to have tried at all.

Now that Mr. Romberg is no longer with us, the importance of his work becomes even greater than we ever expected. In the very beginning, all of his pecan breeding work was of his own initiative without USDA support. However, once he was able to develop the rapid breeding and selection process, the program was here to stay.

We are all very proud of the fact that the USDA recognized Romberg with its National Superior Service Award and the Texas Pecan Growers Association recognized him with its highest and most prestigious Distinguished Research Achievement Award. However, the greatest award Mr. Romberg will ever receive is the selection, planting, development and production of outstanding genetic material in the USDA Indian varieties. His work is done; it is now our job to manage these varieties up to their full genetic potential

George Ray McEachern is an Extension Horticulturist. Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

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21. CONRAD JULIUS ROMBERG

Conrad, the youngest child, was a sweet, bright, and pretty little boy. He was born September 25, 1902, when Mother was 45 years old and father 50. Aunt Anna Fuchs spent six weeks with us so that she would be there when Conrad would be born. (Mother never had a doctor on such an occasion.) Sister Annie and Ida were at home that summer and helped with housekeeping. We children were completely surprised, and the story that the stork brought the baby went over well.

Those days a woman was supposed to stay in bed ten days after a baby was born, and I'm sure Mother did not stir around much for ten days. No one asked, "Do you want to nurse or bottle-feed your baby?" You nursed your baby if possible, and that about a year. Solid foods were not given a baby in the first months of life. One had none of the convenient small jars of baby foods that one has today.

Sunday dresses for the new baby were long enough to cover the feet, and no shoes were needed, only stockings. The cotton sacks that fifty pounds of flour came in at that time made good diapers. At our home most of the wet diapers were immediately rinsed with water, wrung out, hung up to dry, and used again until wash day, when they would be boiled.

Mother had no baby bed except the trundle bed. A baby was later often placed on a pallet on the floor.

Conrad had a big long head. He thrived, and I doubt that he ever had colic.

There was little need of entertaining a child on the farm. We always had a dog or two and cats. In the wintertime there might be such a thing as stringing buttons, which little children liked to do. One time Mother gave Conrad a set of concrete building blocks. The many older siblings assisted in nurturing this little lad. In 1991 he wrote, "My greatest fortune was being brought up by a great family. This enables you to appreciate the good things in life that many never learn to know."

Of all the children, I think Conrad had it the easiest. The family was better situated financially, and times had grown better, too.

[At the age of 88, Conrad replied to this, "I don't know about Conrad having it the easiest. I did get 5 cents per hundred pounds picking cotton and recall ordering about $3 worth of Christmas for my eight brothers and sisters. I recall that Felix was going to town, so I rustled up a nickel and asked him to get me five pieces of stick candy with peanut butter center. One stick was missing when he got back. While I rode a horse to school a few times, usually I walked the two miles barefooted through field and pasture. Those ill-fitting shoes were only for very cold weather. Rabbit hunting wasn't so much fun when your feet were so cold that there was no feeling in them. One disadvantage of being the last of the big family was that I did not learn to know the kin that the family talked about so much, like the Black Jack relationships." In 1991, Ann Igoe recalled an event told to her by her mother. Conrad was hoeing a cotton field all by himself and called to Ida, "Come chop with me. I'm so lonesome!" So Ida went out to work a while with this last child to leave home.]

Conrad learned to read German at home and spoke both English and German well. Conrad graduated from high school with honors. In addition to his diploma, he received a certificate for perfect attendance that school year.

Conrad needed one more year of high school to enter A. & M. Fortunately, Aunt Marie

Mackensen wanted a companion for her son, Otto, so Conrad got to stay in San Antonio one school year.

When Conrad went to A. & M. he was in the band. One music piece he often played was from William Tell, and "William Tell" became one of Conrad's nick-names. Conrad wrote, "The majority of my college costs were paid for by hawking popcorn and hot roasted peanuts in front of the Spisa Dining Hall every evening dinner, rain or shine. Some bucks were made getting up early and delivering the morning bulletin throughout the dormitories and the residential row. Librarian for the Band was great with a salary of $20 per month. Going to college called for a day's train trip to Waco and changing for the run to College Station. At night that trip could be chilly in the winter time with no heat in the cars — only smoke from time to time."

Conrad received his B.A. in refrigeration engineering in 1924. In 1991 he wrote, "On July 1, 1924, I left the cotton field to take the train to Waynesboro, Pa., where I went to work as a trainee with Frick Company, in the refrigeration field. Three years later I was destined to take over the new Department of Carbon Dioxide Refrigeration for Marine Transportation, assisting salespeople, pricing, etc. Then I got a letter from brother Carl in Gainesville, Georgia. He had sold Gainesville Ice and Fuel Company, and he and Mr. H. W. Caldwell were buying up some Georgia ice plants. They needed someone to take over the engineering, etc. So I packed up and headed for Dixie. A year later we sold a new acquisition, the Opelika Ice Company in Alabama, where I had been headquartering. I then came to Gainesville to live in the home of Carl and Loula Mae for a while. On July 4, 1929, we opened a new ice plant in Gainesville. In our first and second years in business we had gross revenues each year of $25,000. Gradually the great depression slackened its hold on the economy. Through the following years, due to my background in refrigeration, I was able to design and construct ice production machinery, cold storage facilities and freezers economically. Sometimes this was accomplished by finding, moving and using good used equipment. Some of the equipment which was new in 1929 is making ice this very minute for the poultry industry."

Conrad is mild mannered and has a cheerful disposition. There was no such thing as Carl and Conrad quarreling. Conrad was a man that Carl could depend on. Both Carl and Loula Mae were very fond of him. Loula Mae said, "He is the nearest to a kid we have."

Here I must tell what had gone on before. When Carl and Loula Mae had come to Gainesville, they soon became acquainted with the George Ashfords. The Ashfords were a prominent family of Gainesville. One of Mr. Ashford's grandfathers, Allen Candler, had been a governor of Georgia. Mrs. Ashford sometimes played the accompaniment for Loula Mae's singing. Part of the time they were close neighbors. The Ashfords had two little girls, Elizabeth and Lillian. Loula Mae and Carl saw these girls grow up, and I can imagine Carl playing with them and teasing them. Elizabeth, the older of the two girls, was a brunette and had a sprinkling of freckles over her nose. She must have been very cute. Carl and Loula Mae helped with the educating of the girls. They also helped Mr. Ashford in business matters, for he had lost all he had accumulated in a business disaster.

By the time Conrad came to Gainesville, Elizabeth was a teenager. I don't think Conrad was in Gainesville long before match-making started. He was handsome, well educated, and of good character. Moreover, Conrad had a brother there who was a successful businessman, and he had a sister-in-law who was an accomplished pianist and a respected member of various clubs. In short, Conrad was a "good catch."

When the Rombergs and the Ashfords would go on an outing, the grown folks would accidentally-1ike have Conrad and Elizabeth ride home alone in a car, which suited bashful Conrad. "We saw it coming," Loula Mae said to me, and of course she was in favor of Conrad and Elizabeth becoming a pair.

Conrad was not marriage minded. He had his studies, his music, and his work. He had made no effort to escalate his friendship with Elisabeth. The difference in his and Elisabeth's ages (eleven years) may have made him doubt if he and Elisabeth were suited to each other.

One time when Conrad wanted to give Elisabeth a gift for a special occasion, he asked Loula Mae for her opinion on what would be suitable. When Loula Mae suggested a cedar chest, it may have astonished Conrad. He and Elizabeth had been no more than good friends, and Loula Mae's intimation that there was more in the air angered Conrad. Whether or not he wanted to get married was his business, was it not? Of course Conrad wanted to marry some day, but there was no hurry about that.

Despite Conrad's sensible attitude about marriage, he must have found out that in Elizabeth's world there was only one young man, and that was he.

One time Elizabeth got hurt in a car wreck, and he went to see Elisabeth and the others. Maybe he felt like saying more to Elizabeth than friendship demanded. The nurses noticed that Elizabeth's heartbeat increased each time Conrad came to see her.

Elizabeth was of dainty build. She was lady-like and had fine features. He may have observed that she was industrious and capable, and he must have seen other good qualities in her.

Elizabeth was only eighteen and Conrad twenty-nine when they married. My parents could not attend the wedding on March 15, 1932, it being so far away, but Conrad and Elizabeth came to Texas on their honeymoon and visited the folks at Holland.

With some women, having a baby is a small matter, but Elizabeth was much troubled with nausea. Nevertheless, she wanted a family, and four children. George, Caroline, Carl II, and Constance, arrived within twelve years. Sometimes after the main crop of cotton has been harvested, the cotton will mature some more bolls at the top of the cotton stalk. Since Constance was already twelve when John arrived, he may be called the top crop.

Conrad and Elizabeth first had a small home, but when they had several children, they added more rooms to their house, among other things, a basement for a rumpus room for the children. Conrad's masculine opinion was that the house was convenient and big and nice enough for their needs, but Elizabeth wished for a two-story house which would be suited for a man of importance such as Conrad had become. So a wooded lot was obtained on beautiful Lake Lanier several miles out of town. That section has now became a beautiful suburb of Gainesville.

It is often said that behind every successful man is a good woman. Elizabeth is a home lover. She keeps her house neat and orderly, and she is a good cook, being able to put a delicious and plentiful meal on the table without hurry or confusion. Her children always came first, and the children reflect the loving care they received from Elizabeth and their good "daddy" Conrad. By now there are sweet grandchildren who like to come to visit in the roomy home by the lake.

George Julius Romberg married Sandra Rembert Steedly in 1961, and they have one daughter, Jane Rembert. Caroline Elizabeth married Dr. Hal Silcox, Jr. in 1957. Their children are

Beth and Hal III. Carl Bernhard Romberg II married Betty Newnham in 1959. Their children are Lee Ann, Carl III, and Christopher. Constance married Jerry Thompson and has two girls, Susan and Cheryl.

Conrad is an avid gardener. Elizabeth and Caroline arrange the flowers he grows.

Conrad's list of accomplishments and responsibilities is long. He became manager of City Ice Company in 1927. In 1932 he became president. In 1954, he became president of City Plumbing and Heating Supply Company.

Concerning Conrad's community activities, his farm background caused him to be involved with building a community cannery which was used to great advantage during World War II. He was instrumental in running the Northeast Georgia Fair, which evolved into an association which built a large Livestock Auction Barn. He is still a director of this organization. In 1947 he was president of the Gainesville Rotary Club, and eventually he amassed a record of 45 years of weekly attendance at Rotary Clubs. He is now a Past Service Member. In 1948 Conrad was instrumental in organizing the Gainesville Community Chest. He served as campaign chairman and president for some years as he nursed the infant organization. In 1990 its budget was $1,000,000.

In 1945 Conrad was elected to the board of a contemplated Hospital Authority of Hall County and the city of Gainesville. In ensuing years he served as secretary for a number of years before serving as chairman for ten years. He was on the board a total of twenty-nine years. In 1961-62 he was president of the Georgia Association of Hospital Governing Boards.

In 1964 Conrad was president of the Gainesville-Hall County Chamber of Commerce. He served two turns on the school board of the city of Gainesville and was chairman of the building committee when two new schools were constructed. He was chairman of the board of trustees of the YMCA.

For twenty years Conrad served as a member of the board of the Methodist Camp Glisson in the Dahlonega area. He was instrumental in the moving of the First Methodist Church to a site close to Lake Lanier, serving as chairman of the building committee. Since then the membership has doubled, and it is the lead church in its district and was the site of annual district conferences in 1989 and 1990.