

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Why are some people interested about the happenings of the past; while others could care less about where or who they came from. The answer - it's in the genes.

For me it started when I was encouraged by Mater and Pater to write to the relatives in Germany during my high school days. My paternal grandparents, my dad and his brother had been writing to their kinfolk in first Bohemia (The Czech Republic) and then Germany ever since the grandparents immigrated in 1882. Two generations and four trips later, written communication across the sea continues. A vast amount of data about the Jantsch's ancestry has been successfully gathered and this success led me to an even greater interest in the subject of History and therefore the reason for the following pages.



Credits

- A. Loretta Jantsch for her inspiration and the passing on of historical information.
- B. Cliff Herman for assisting in writings of the Canning Factory.
- C. Authors Of The Centennial Book - especially Beulah “Jensen” Fischer.
- D. Past Editors of the Medford Newspapers.
- E. Past Editors of the Colby Newspapers.
- F. Past Editors of the Dorchester Newspapers.
- G. To Any Individual Who May Have Contributed To These Writings In Some Way.

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DEDICATION

These writings are dedicated to the oldest Dorchester born person still living within the boundaries of this small hamlet. Her participation and assistance was invaluable to the writer during the research and gathering of information phases. Many a time, a question would arise and this woman was the sole source to whom one could go to resolve the issue at hand. It just so happens that this woman happens to be my mother; a woman of 97 who is called Mater by her six children. This dedication must also include her husband, my father (Pater) as the two of them shared 60 years together in life and surely they must share this page together.



Loretta and William Jantsch

Introduction

These writings are intended to represent the times of the past. The past that all of us think about at one time or another; although we were not there our thoughts transgress that portal. We wonder about our ancestors and what kind of life did they live; were they better off than most of the other people who shared that time in the small hamlet of Dorchester and the surrounding area. All of us say to ourselves; why didn't we ask more questions of our parents and grandparents about the happenings of their early lives.

What happened when they got sick? Who was there to take care of their medical needs? Could they receive medical attention if there was no money to pay the doctor? What type of medicine was available in the late 1800s?

Whether or not these writings answer all the questions that arise; it is hoped that after reviewing the interior of these bindings that one indeed will have a better understanding of life 130 years ago. Deciding exactly what content should be given priority and therefore print time was the real challenge when these writings were just a figment of ones imagination. Then it hit me; write factually about the people and doings of yesteryear that would be of interest to the more elderly reader as many of those individuals still remember the times of yesterday as told to them by their parents and grandparents. They still remember the names of neighbors past that were mentioned frequently during family get-togethers.

So it was decided; the writings would reflect mainly on those who lived here during the early years and who owned and operated the different businesses on the streets of Dorchester. The businesses would be categorized by type of business and by date (who owned what, when). It was also decided that major events such as fires of commercial buildings would be worthwhile to talk about as there were many fires of horrific dimension in the early days. One of the reasons for this was the absence of any fire fighting capability except the old bucket brigade.

The newspaper became the tool which was utilized to first identify an article of interest. Many newspaper editors would automatically assume that the reader would be able to interpret his words as he was speaking to the people of the day. He would for example; state that so and so purchased the bakery next to the Fessler Building. Well if Fessler had only one commercial building and it was readily identifiable; then not so bad. Well that is not exactly what happened; I made an assumption that the Fessler Shoe Store which was located East of Dr. Foley's Office, was the building they always referred to whenever they mentioned the Fessler Building. Then one day; I discovered quite by accident that the Fesslers (Charles and Sophie) also had another commercial building which started out as a saloon and then later was converted to a

general mercantile store building. I knew immediately what had to be done; go back and wherever I made a decision regarding who owned what and where; had to be reviewed and changed if necessary. Needless to say; I was not happy about the extra work and the time lost but I think in the long run, the extra time spent proved to be worthwhile as I proceeded from that time on in a more cautious way.

Some of the difficulties incurred during the research phase are listed for no other reason than to let the reader experience how some of the decisions were made. Little clues would be used to identify locations of businesses. One example of that; did Ed Winchester (the first banker) have a physical location for a bank or did he operate out of his home? If he had a bank building; where was it? Then while reviewing the fire of 1886; I read a description of the fire and one sentence said; If the fire had not been stopped at the Central House (where Pinter's Packing Plant now stands); then surely the Van Dusen Building, the Winchester Building and the Miltimore Bros. Store could not of been saved and the mill across the street would have been lost as well. I knew where the Van Dusen and Miltimore buildings were located and since the article placed the Winchester Building in between those two; I decided to search all the records of the lots between those structures and there I found it. Ella Winchester owned the lot between the two buildings mentioned and that is where the first bank building was located. This was later verified by another bit of evidence that was uncovered. Six to nine months elapsed from when I first started looking for the bank location until I actually found it.

There were other times of frustration and the one I remember the most occurred when I started doing the research on sawmills. According to the Centennial Book and early writings, the first sawmill was erected by Sands and Buell in early 1874. However, no record exists in Neilsville that Sands or Buell owned any land in the area where the sawmill was stated to be. Therefore, I proceeded with the research assuming I would locate the legal land description at a later date. I was able to identify where some sawmills were located; while others I could not. Then I realized that something was amiss. To my horror, only the records when the railroad sold property were recorded in Neilsville; while leased properties were nowhere to be found. To this date, I have not been able to locate any of the railroad lease records. The investigation so far has led me to Maryland, Virginia, three different State Departments in Madison; two libraries in Eau Claire, the Wisconsin State Historical Society, all to no avail. Perhaps something will come up later.

In order to keep the cost down, I had decided to record these writings on a CD but I received a number of requests from senior citizens (who don't use a computer) to do a book and they said, don't make the print too small. I am honoring those requests.

I also realize that not all of the writings inside these covers will be viewed as interesting or even as being worthy of space on the page but once it was decided to

place a special emphasize on commercial undertakings of the past, there was no choice but to literally print every bit of data available that related to the commercial trade of the community or of the people who operated those establishments. This included additions to buildings or buildings being moved from one location to another as well as defining legal descriptions for parcels of land where buildings or businesses were located. Additionally, there was a major attempt made to explain how certain processes were actually done in the 1890s. One thing that had always caused me minor irritation when reading of the past was when I would ask myself; wonder how they did that back then!

Since many of the words used here were derived from the old newspapers, I wanted to clarify why some of the word and sentence phrasing may appear to be somewhat amateurish or at least something less than what would be expected of an experienced journalist or editor. This can be explained readily by the fact that the times were pre-1900 and the editors in almost every case reviewed were immigrants who had some knowledge of the English Language but were by no means linguistic experts. In fact some of the words used were hybrids (a mixture of German and English) and sentence structure was the same. The computer spell checker automatically corrected most of the improper word spellings but I am sure some got through. But make no mistake, these early editors were brilliant men. Imagine coming to a new country and setting up a business where the only method of communicating the happenings of the day, to thousands of people, was the newspaper and you were responsible for the words on the page. In addition, as one will see, this writer likes to use the semi colon; even though the sentence structure calls for a comma. I think It has a nice look to it plus it is my opinion that it helps to attract the attention of the reader to that space on the page. Lastly, the author has limitations as to proper methods of word placement, word definitions and word punctuation, so it is anticipated in advance that the reader will overlook these minor flaws.

Also, I wanted to mention that while some chapters contain a substantial number of legal land descriptions and while I considered not including this data in the book; I quickly changed and reversed my thought process. Since a honest effort was made to collect this historical data; it was decided the reader should decide whether the data is worthwhile reading or not. Even though some of the data is difficult to read and interpret; there will be no hard feelings directly toward those who wish to bypass these sections. A second look at the total picture guided me to include some additional information regarding these land descriptions which has made them somewhat more informative, easier to interpret and hopefully easier to digest.

However, there were two chapters which contained approximately fifty pages of legal descriptions and these I have decided will not become a part of these writings. Not just because they are legal descriptions and difficult to interpret; but because they were incomplete and would surely leave the reader scratching his or her head. So

that the reader will know which areas of the community I am referring to; I enclose brief descriptions of those areas.

A. Section Eleven - From the intersection of Fourth Street and CTH "A" (where Bob & Adeline Stoiber reside) and extending one half mile West and one half mile North.

B. Section Twelve - Land bordered on the West by Fourth Street; on the South by CTH "A"; on the East by Liberty Street and extending one half mile to the North.

C. Section Thirteen - Land bordered on the North by CTH "A" except for the area which has been platted into Lots and Blocks which are included in these writings; on the West by Fourth Street; on the East by Parkside Drive; and extending one half mile to the South.

D. Section Fourteen - From the intersection of Fourth Street and CTH "A" (where Art Geiger residence stands) and extending one half mile West and one half mile South.

Chapter 36 is titled "Newspaper Tidbits" and references newsworthy articles of years past. The original intent was to leave a space between each article but I quickly discovered that much of the page would be left blank as a large number of the articles were relatively short in length (one or two lines long). Therefore, I decided to group together a number of the articles. Once again, an apparent solution caused yet another problem. That being, the articles were now more difficult to read, so to rectify that situation; a * (star) was placed at the beginning of each new article where groupings occur. Hopefully, this format will not cause the reader difficulty when scanning the pages.

What started out as something to fill the time of the writer during the cold winter months; turned out to be something so much more. What started out five years ago turned out to be a passion to know even more about those tough, God fearing people, who first settled this land. I thank the newspaper editors of 100 years ago for keeping a copy of each newspaper printed. Without them, there could be no book!

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