



Charles Sammelmann, the youngest of Frances Sammelmann's family. The picture was probably taken when he was best man at the wedding of one of his brothers in the mid 1890's.



Dora Hoffman, third of Frances Sammelmann's children. She lived on a farm near Cottleville, and later in St. Charles.

FOND MEMORIES ABOUT GRANDMA JOSEPHINE

Grandparents who bring out their "brag books" are not news. But grandchildren, mature, adult, with grandchildren of their own who bring out brag books of memories of their grandparents – that is more like news, especially for the St. Peters Historical Society. And, David Auchly and Catherine Schulte Reinhardt, both grandchildren of the Marcus Schulte, Seniors, have done just that – opened their brag books of memories, and we have listened with wide-eyed interest.

While they talk about how remarkable a woman Grandma Josephine was, the lady herself, in typical French fashion, would have commented that behind every remarkable woman there is even a more remarkable man. And hers was Marcus Schulte, Sr., and she would be right, of course.

The story of the two immigrant families, one the French Merciers, the other the German Schulte, and how they met and made history in the little town of St. Peters more than a hundred years ago is too fantastic to be fiction. It just has to be and is, in fact, fact.

It was told in bits and pieces to David and Catherine by Grandma Josephine as they were growing up. We shall imagine now that Grandma is telling the story, all in one piece this time. Here is Grandma Josephine's story:

"It must have been a grand wedding in the great and beautiful Rheims Cathedral when Mama Josephine Johanna Franke became the wife of Papa John Mercier. She was an only child and he the only one of seven sons who chose not to become a doctor.

"They came to America on a honeymoon and stayed, eventually landing in Cincinnati. Before making plans to return to Europe, however, four little girls were born and I was one. Papa made all the arrangements for the return to Europe and we set forth. But our train was wrecked in the Allegheny Mountains. We lost our luggage, passports and other papers. And we arrived in New York in the midst of a blizzard, after our boat had left.

"Then Papa became deathly ill and died in the strange city and was buried there. Mama took us back to Ohio, where she later met and married Monsieur Louis Mougnot. Then we all traveled to St. Louis and thence to St. Peters where we ran a little store, next to the Catholic Church property. (The site is now occupied by the Laumeter home).

"Step-papa Mougnot was quite an exciting man, a former professional soldier of the French Foreign Legion. His face was badly scarred from the many battles he had waged. He had a pistol and a sword. But he loved to hunt and that was his undoing.

"One cold day he went to the Prairie alone, stepped in a sinkhole and could not get out. He was rescued but only after it was too late to save his life. He died as a result. You can see his large grave stone today, in the old part of the All Saints Cemetery. On it is engraved, "Louis Mougnot, died 1862, age 64 years, native of France."

"By now, we were no longer little girls. Sisters Theresa and Margaret Mercier both married Roper boys and were living in O'Fallon. Ursula married a Kercher, and I fell in love with and married your grandpa, Marcus Schulte.

"And, what about Mama Mougnot? She was alone now, and so was your Grandpa, Franz Schulte. So they were married to each other and went to live in St. Charles. But Grandpa became homesick and they came back to St. Peters to live with us a year before his death, in 1886. You know that they gave away their home in St. Charles for a hospital. They did not need it anymore, and the people needed a hospital very much."

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And so a remarkable lady has told a remarkable tale. The Franz Schultes returned to live on the old home site, but to a new house which Marcus had built with bricks left over from the recently erected All Saints Church in 1882. It replaced a stone house built by the Spencers early in the century, from whom the farm had been purchased.

Being the youngest of the Schulte boys and the last to leave home or be married, it was a more or less natural thing that Marcus retain the ancestral farm.

How his other children were provided for by Father Franz must, of necessity, be another story and for the time being must wait. The following is David Auchly's tribute to his grandmother:

"Josephine Mercier Schulte, who boasted true French blood, was every bit French, in the truest sense of the word. She had the romantic spirit, knowing exactly how to please her husband. She was a very good cook, loved sports (she could shoot as well as any man) and loved to fish. She could speak French as well as English.

"She was very religious and, paradoxically, very superstitious. She had a good sense of humor which she retained almost to the time of her death. Even in her last years, she could take off and dance if someone would strike up a toe-tapping tune. She was a wonderful wife, mother and grandmother, having left behind her many happy memories and anecdotes."



Josephine Catherine Mercier Schulte



Marcus Schulte, SR.

And here's David's tribute to Grandfather Schulte:

"Marcus Schulte carried on the philanthropic practices of his father, Franz. He gave to the Sisters of St. Mary tubs full of freshly butchered pork every year and wagon loads of fruit, grapes and potatoes.

"He was a meticulous farmer, planting corn in the straightest rows, ever. He was modern in his practices, having gone mechanical early in the era of mechanization.

"He was also generous to a fault to his church. The stone for the present All Saints School came from his rock quarry, and we are not sure but think for at least one other building in the Parish complex. Of course, no charge was made."

Catherine Schulte Reinhardt, who knew them best, having all her life lived in their midst in the Schulte home, concurs. She adds that "Grandma was always vivacious, loved to dance the schottische and the polka and always talked about how she liked to dance with Cornell Smith. Her hair was still dark when she died."

Catherine is the daughter of Marcus, Jr., one of only two children, the other being Oscar, who only recently passed away.

It is strangely true that our heroine and her husband were born the same year, 1844, and died the same year, 1932. The parents were in a train wreck, the parents of the other were in a sailing vessel wreck near the island of Santo Domingo, in 1837.



GERTRUDE SCHULTE
AUCHLY

One of the two children of Marcus, Sr., and Josephine Mercier Schulte; her brother being Marcus, Jr.

The following is offered in honor of Grandma Josephine Mercier Schulte:

In life's parade, a shining star,
Way out in front, the first, by far,
With husband Mark, firm by the hand,
Her own the song; there is no band

She turns and calls, "No need to run,
But lively, please, join in the fun!"
And, those of us with slower tread,
Begin to dance like her, ahead.

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