

## MEMORIES OF MY GRANDPARENTS, THEIR HOUSEHOLD, AND FARM

Traugott Michael and Theresia Schoppa Zoch were my paternal grandparents. My father, Walter Zoch, was the middle child among their five children.

The events that follow were seen through the eyes of a young teen in the 1940s and remembered over 50 years later.

I was in great awe of Grandpa because of his dark handlebar mustache and authoritative, though somewhat high, voice. When he dressed up he wore a black felt hat with a dome-shaped crown that was not creased. He was a farmer. He never drove a car.

Grandma wore her long, straight hair pulled back neatly and twisted into a bun in back of her head. She kept an immaculate house. She enjoyed her huge garden of roses, crape myrtle, and other ornamental plants in front of the house. The house and garden were enclosed in a picket fence.

Both grandparents spoke both German and English. I believe they could read and write both languages fluently. They were knowledgeable about current events and politics which they discussed frequently. Also, Grandma used sign language to converse with their adult daughter, my Aunt Clara, who was deaf and who lived on the farm with her parents at that time. Grandma and Clara were the only persons there then who used sign language, although Clara's hearing-impaired friends used sign language when they visited. Clara conversed with non-signing people by means of pencil and paper.

My parents' farm was about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles away, so we visited often. We had a sumptuous dinner at Grandma's every Christmas. Grandma and Clara seemed to enjoy cooking. Grandma gave each grandchild a Christmas present, and when we were small, she kept a box of toys which she brought out for us to play with at each visit.

Grandma and Clara sewed, crocheted, and quilted. Clara was exceptionally artistic in this needlework and taught me by examples and gestures how to crochet when I was 13. I never knew sign language.

My Uncle Anton, Grandpa and Grandma's adult son, ~~was~~ also lived with them and helped his father farm. He owned a car and was the only one in that household who drove.

Their farm, which produced cotton and other crops, was north of Oklaunion, Texas, adjacent to Pease River in an area that historically had been Comanche Indian territory. Grandpa and Anton found numerous Indian stone arrowheads of various sizes and shapes in their fields as they plowed using mules. Grandpa collected these arrowheads, and Clara arranged some in designs and mounted them in picture frames.

The family was visited by archeologist Mr. J. Henry Ray of Vernon, Texas, who had an extensive collection of Indian lore and artifacts, some of

which are in the Red River Valley Museum in Vernon. It is not known whether any of Grandpa's findings are in the museum.

On the farm in addition to cows, mules, chickens, and two large dogs, were a few exotic animals---some bantam chickens with feathers on their feet, and some very noisy guinea fowl that screeched "pa-track, pa-track" all day long.

Grandpa kept several hives of bees. I was told he was so skilled at collecting the honey that the bees hardly ever stung him.

As noted earlier, these things happened long ago. If there are inaccuracies in my description of them, they are unintentional. Childhood memories tend to be viewed in a softer light with the passage of time.

Alice Zoch Borden

