

Michael & Maria Zoch Schoppa Family

The Wendish village of Spreewitz, Prussia (German) and more specifically the Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche, served as the nucleus for the early days of this family. All of the central figures were baptized and were members of this congregation. Michael Schoppa was born September 18, 1833, to Matthes Schoppa (also known as Stoppa) and his wife Maria Stoppa, who were farmers in Zerze.

Maria Zoch was the eldest daughter of Johann Zoch and Johanna Schneider (also known as Krautz); she was born January 23, 1840, in Spreewitz. On January 9, 1858, Maria and Michael were married and made their home on a farm in the area. The children born to this couple in Spreewitz are: a son (name and birthdate unknown), Johanna, January 1, 1860, Maria, December 27, 1861, Christian, February 24, 1864, Magdalena, February 1, 1866, and Christiana, April 22, 1868.

The Schoppa family immigrated to America in 1868, leaving the port at Bremen, Germany aboard the three masted sailing ship, "Bark Texas". The oldest son became ill and died during the voyage and was buried at sea. They arrived at the port of Galveston, October 19, and traveled inland to the Wendish settlement at Serbin establishing their home on Rabbs Creek. Eight year old Johanna became ill and died on November 18, 1868, One year old Christiana died July 27, 1869; twin sons, Carl and Johann, born March 2, 1871, lived only a few months. All of these children are buried in St. Paul Lutheran Cemetery at Serbin.

October 23, 1871 Michael Schoppa purchased approximately 274 acres of land on Boon's Creek, 3 miles southwest of Warda, in Fayette County (property currently owned by the Robert Bohot family). Children born in Fayette County were: Traugott, born June 26, 1872, twin sons, August and Ernst, born October 10, 1874 (Ernst died November 23, 1874), Wilhelm Bernhard, born November 24, 1876, Anna Theresia, born January 12, 1879, and Carl August, born January 15, 1881. The youngest daughter, Theresia Schoppa Zoch provided the following information in letter form before her death on December 20, 1964:

"Times were hard in this new country, money was in short supply, and Michael could not buy the equipment and horses needed. The first home was a one room log cabin, but he cleared the land of pine trees and built more rooms onto the house, which also created more fields for farming. He did have a team of oxen but had to make his own yokes and harness. They could not afford wire for fences, so cattle and hogs ran wild feeding on acorns. He made all of the family's shoes from willow trees, and in the summer we all went barefooted. Sometime he would have to take the 25 mile trip to Brenham hauling the cotton to be sold on the oxen-drawn wagon. On these trips he usually bought supplies; one year near Christmas he took a bale of cotton to Giddings early one morning, returning late that night with a big barrel of flour, a barrel of apples, and some stick candy for the children. This was one of the few times that we had candy and we were so happy and thankful."

Maria Schoppa died on January 15, 1881, shortly after giving birth to Carl August, and was buried in the first Holy Cross Cemetery in Lee County. Her tombstone is one of only two in the area Lutheran Cemeteries which bear both Wendish and German inscription. This youngest son lived only four months.

Just prior to her mother's death, the oldest daughter, Maria, was planning to marry Wilhelm Schur and had wanted to break with the Wendish tradition of wearing a black wedding dress, in favor of the

American fashion of white. Since the wedding was to be April 24, 1881, the proper time of mourning had not passed; so to honor her mother she was married in black.

Additional ties were made between the Schoppa and Schur families when Michael married the widow Christiane Schur on June 7, 1881. They continued to live and farm in Fayette County. The children of Michael Schoppa married as follows: Magdalena married Christian Schult, Christian married Anna Hentschel, Traugott (who lived to be 100 years old) married Ida Hentschel, Anna Graf, and Anna Gaeble, August married Louise Ritter; Ben married Augusta Kroatz, and Anna Theresia married Traugott Zoch. Three of these families, Magdalena Schultz, Traugott Schoppa, and Ben Schoppa remained in Fayette County, while all of the others moved to Wilbarger County, in the early 1900's.

Christiane Jassenk Schur Schoppa died December 27, 1893, and Michael Schoppa died on February 22, 1903. Both are buried in Holy Cross Lutheran Cemetery at Warda. Magdalena Schoppa Schultz is the great-grandmother of the author.

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