

Many, many people migrated to the United States in the 1860's and 70's. An article in the Junction City Union of January 3, 1874, stated, "Immigrants are still coming and those coming are of the best blood for good citizens."

Among those arriving in the United States in 1874 were Konrad and Rosetta Keller Altwegg, who came to Kansas and settled for the first few years on what is known as the Danz place in Dickinson County. Their first home was a dugout, and their first children born in this country were born there.

Konrad Altwegg was born March 28, 1852, at Rehlhof, Berg Kanton Thurgau, Switzerland, the third child and first son of Konrad Altwegg and Katherina Kriess Altwegg. The other children included Anna Katherina, Susan and Jacob.

Anna Katherina, who was born July 15, 1845, married Fred Danz, and they had an adopted son, Robert Ludwig Danz, who was born July 29, 1874, in Switzerland. They migrated to America, probably in 1882, and they lived in Fragrant Hill Township, Dickinson County.

Susan Altwegg, born in the 1840's, was married to Jacob Landerburger in Switzerland. A daughter, Marie (Mary) was born in 1864, and the mother died when Mary was seven years old. Mary was married to John Meister in 1886, and after a year they came to America and made their home with the Fred Danzes for a few years. Mrs. Rose (Morris) Gfeller is a daughter of Mary Meister.

Jacob Altwegg was the fourth child. He stayed in Switzerland with his parents, but his son Konrad came to Kansas

when a young man and married Mary Gfeller, October 13, 1895. They lived on a farm six miles north of Chapman. Konrad was born January 19, 1871, and died March 14, 1948. His son Edward now lives on the home place near Upland.

Rosetta Keller Altwegg came from the large family of Peter Keller and Anna Mueller Buehler. Peter was born May 22, 1828 in Switzerland. He had a brother, John Keller, who married a plantation owner's daughter in Virginia, and a sister Anna Keller was married when 60 years of age in Canton Bern, Switzerland. Anna Buehler Keller had a brother Fred Buehler and another brother and sister. Peter Keller and Anna Buehler were married in 1849. To this union were born 12 children. Their family came to Kansas in the early 70's and settled on the place now owned by Ernie Stalder just west of the Geary-Dickinson county line 1 1/2 miles north of Highway 18.

Rosetta Keller was born at Muensingen, Canton Bern, Switzerland, June 18, 1852, and was married to Konrad Altwegg, December 6, 1870, when both were 18 years of age.

Others in the Keller family included: Anna Keller who married John Burtscher and had one son; Emma Keller, a beautiful woman with curly hair, who married Andrew Holt. She died at childbirth and her twins also died. She was buried in Deadwood, South Dakota. Lena Keller married Robert Gfeller and they had seven children.

Fred Keller was married to Anna Elizabeth Schweitzer, and they were the parents of seven children: Hulda Miclaw, Walter, Laura Taylor, Frieda Ramsour, and twin girls Lydia Franke and Lillie Manz. Another boy died in infancy.

Jacob Keller married Mary Zumbrunn, and they were the

parents of six children including Emil, Emma Norman, Matilda Gfeller, Louise Ritter, Alice Gfeller and Wilhelm, who died in infancy.

Pauline Keller was married to Gottfried Notz. They had 6 children.

Marie Keller was married to Robert Lehman and died within a short time. Later Robert married Lena Altwegg.

Two girls and one boy died in infancy. Earnest died at an early age and was buried on the Spurlock place. Probably Earnest was the only one born in America.

Konrad and Rosetta Altwegg were married in Switzerland in 1870. Two children were born there-- Jacob and Konrad III. Rosetta's parents had come to Kansas in the early 70's and established a claim on 80 acres in the south half of the Southeast quarter of section 34 township 11 south range 4 east of the sixth principal meridian in Fragrant Hill Township, Dickinson County, Kansas, so in 1874 the young couple set out on the journey to a new home in America. Little Konrad was ill and during the long voyage on the ocean Rosetta feared that he would die and would have to be buried at sea. However, he lived until after their arrival in Dickinson County, but died and was buried on what is now known as the Danz place where the Altweggs had staked a claim and set up housekeeping in a dug-out.

Under the Homestead Act of 1862 any head of a family, on condition of his agreement to occupy and cultivate such settlement continuously for at least five years, could be granted not to exceed 160 acres. Formal registration in a land office and payment of a nominal fee constituted "original entry" of a settler upon his homestead. After the five years were completed, the claim was consummated and the tract of land with

the appurtenances thereof were granted to the homesteader and his heirs and assigns forever.

Konrad set claim to a peice of land described as follows: the North half of the Southwest quarter of section 34 in Township eleven South of Range four east of the sixth principal meredian in Kansas containing eighty acres.

Dickinson County records show a patent was granted by President James A. Garfield on June 23, 1881 after the Altweggs had successfully met the requirements of residency and cultivation.

What was it like in Kansas in 1874? These signs of the times were recorded in the Junction City Union during the year when the Altweggs arrived in Kansas.

B. Rockwell and Co. advertised as having the largest and cheapest stock of general merchandise in Central Kansas and was selling

3 1/2 lbs. of good coffee for \$1.00  
 7 1/2 lbs. of cut loaf sugar for \$1.00  
 matches, 6 boxes for \$.25  
 best prints, \$.10 a yard  
 flannel, \$.125 a yard  
 good undershirts, \$.75

Grain buyers were paying from \$.75 to \$.85 for fall wheat and from \$.60 to \$.67 for spring wheat. Oats were \$.55 and barley was \$.70 to \$.80.

A report on conditions in Davis County printed in the September 19 issue of the Union stated:

The grasshoppers made their appearance July 28; slightly but in larger numbers August 10. All the small grains escaped but corn and grain were badly damaged; this year's growth of fruit

trees are almost entirely destroyed. The grasshoppers disappeared on the 15th day of August without having deposited eggs. There will be sufficient feed in the country to fatten hogs; the hay crop is quite full, there being more than enough to winter the stock. There are no complaints of any extraordinary desitution in Davis County. The county is amply able to take care of its own poor.

So the Altweggs found some problems as they set up their homestead in 1874, but they stayed and worked the land and had their family. On March 21, 1875, Lena was born in the dugout, their first child to be born in Kansas.

On October 4th of the same year Peter Keller died at the age of 47 years, 4 months, and 12 days, leaving Grandma Keller to raise her family and keep the home place going. However she was able to consummate the claim and received the patent to the 80 acres on May 24, 1879. It was signed by President Rutherford B. Hayes.

Other Altwegg children added to the family. Maria (Mary) was born on September 6, 1877, Emma on October 22, 1878 and Robert on August 27, 1880. Apparently all of these children were born on the homestead claim.

In May of 1882 Konrad Altwegg purchased 160 acres of land in Smoky Hill Township, Geary County, from Edward and Margaret Richards for \$1500 with the Richards' retaining the year's wheat crop. The family moved to that place and sold the original homestead to Fred Danz on May 2, 1882, for \$1300. In 1882 the house consisted of just the center section and several additions were constructed later. This has always been known as the "home place" and the Altweggs lived there until 1917, when Fred was married.

What was it like for the Kansas farmer in 1882 when Grandpa bought the new farm? According to the Union on May 19, 1882 the day that the purchase was made, prices were as follows:

Wheat No. 2	\$1.00 - 1.06	Fat steers	\$3.50 - 4.50
Wheat No. 3	.75 - .80	Fat cows	3.25 - 3.50
Corn	.70 - .75	Fat heifers (2 yr. olds)	3.00 - 3.25
Oats	.35 - .45	Calves, per head	10.00 - 12.00
Rye	.55 - .65	Hogs, butchers	5.00 - 6.00
		Chickens, live, doz	2.50 - 3.00
		Turkeys, per lb.	.06 - .08
		Fish, per lb.	.06 - .125

Other news items printed in the paper during that year stated: O.H. Thistler living a few miles west of town some months ago wanted to sell his farm for \$3,000. He failed and has since sold \$2,900 worth of wheat off it and has the land and 40 acres of corn left. A man can make a farm in Kansas in one season. We are told that Bob Henderson's wheat is threshing out at the rate of 31 bu. to the acre.

Elise (Lizzie) was born November 3, 1882, soon after they had purchased the home place, so was the first child born there. Fred came on April 29, 1885, and Katherine Anna was born November 21, 1887. Twins completed the family on May 21, 1890 when Wilhelm and Wilhelmina were born.

Grandma Altwegg's mother, Anna Mueller Buhler Keller, passed away on May 14, 1893, at the age of 63 years, 7 months and 6 days. The Altwegg children grew up living just across the road from the Keller place and remembered their Grandmother well.

The older children attended the Tell School and the younger ones went to Acker School. They spoke Swiss at home, so had to learn to speak English at school. The English-speaking schoolmates called them the Dutch kids and teased them, but they stayed in school, learned the language and earned the respect of their schoolmates.

During the early years in America Konrad cultivated the soil and planted crops during the summer months and then worked at cheese-making and milling during the other part of the year. For a time he worked with Mr. Schuler (the father of Andrew Schuler I) in making cheese at P.H. Gfeller's store (now Harvey Schlappi's place). Then he worked for a mill at Industry where he walked 20 miles and came back home on weekends. He received \$.50 a day for his labor, and was able to have his grain ground into flour and cornmeal for the family use.

All the children learned to work and helped with the family living. Fruit was dried because fruit jars were considered too expensive. Some things were canned in cans and sealed with sealing wax. They had cows, pigs, chickens, butter and eggs and they made the best of what they had. Grandpa Altwegg went to town and bought calves for a few dollars from people who had milk cows, and Grandma browned flour and made a gruel which they fed to the calves. The girls learned to milk, cook, churn, sew and help with all kinds of work around the farm and the boys helped to farm the land. Grandma took eggs and other produce to trade at Glick's grocery in Junction City and bought what few staples she needed. The grocery was a meeting place for many of the Swiss people and was a social center as well as a trading place.

The church was always an important part of the Altwegg family life. The St. Johns Church of Alida was founded in 1875, and Konrad and Rosetta Altwegg were charter members. The Rev. Peter Lehman, the father of Robert Lehman, served as the first regular minister. Earlier the church had been served by ministers on a part-time basis. The children and many of the

grandchildren were baptized and confirmed in this church and many were also married there.

The church was always the gathering place and Grandma Altwegg would invite the family and friends to come home from church for Sunday dinner. She would have prepared ahead of time potatoes boiled in their jackets, fried-down meat, chicken and noodles, bread, and pies and cakes made quite often with raisins or fruit in season. She could always get up a good meal out of what she had on hand. The men were always served at the first table, then the children, and the women ate last. Many happy memories of the grandchildren center around the family gatherings at church and at Grandma Altwegg's house.

The fourth child, Mary, was the first to be married. She and Frederick Luthi were married on January 1, 1894, at St. Johns Church. For a few years they lived with Fred's parents and the first two children were born there. Then they moved to the house on the home place along the Alida road. Later they built another house on the place for their family and their son Robert and wife Jouetta were the second generation to live in the house. This house was moved to a new location when the Milford Dam forced the Luthis to sell out about 10 years ago. This house is now the home of Charles and Deanne Munson.

Lena was also married in 1894. She married Robert Lehman and they lived at Alida where Robert was in charge of the Alida elevator and store. Later they moved to a farm near the St. Johns Church and lived there until they moved to Junction City.

On December 28, 1894, the first grandchild was born Hulda Marie Luthi. Then on March 1, 1895, the second grandchild, Lillie Lehman, arrived. In the next few years many changes came



to the family as additional grandchildren were being born and others of the family were married. Emma was the next to be married. January 19, 1899 was the date of her marriage to William Godfrey Luthi. Emma and William lived on a farm near Alida for some time, then moved to a farm near Bennington.

Jacob was married to Louise Thomi on November 22, 1900, and they lived on a farm near Upland. Jake's son Herman now makes his home on this farm.

The next one in the family to be married was Elise (Lizzie). She and Edward Gfeller were married on March 19, 1903. They lived on the farm west of Junction city where their son Bill now lives.

Robert Altwegg took Lillian Cott as his bride on January 22, 1906, and they took up housekeeping at the home place where Waldo and Helen Altwegg later lived. It was the custom in the family for the sons when they married to receive 160 acres of land, a house to live in, a team of horses and some implements, all of which became their property when they reached 30 years of age. Robert and Lillie had a new house to move into when they married. Later the large colonial style house was built as their family required more room.

On December 24, 1907, Katherine married Charlie Munson.

This write-up appeared in the newspaper:

At 10 o'clock this morning at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Konrad Altwegg, Miss Katherine Anna Altwegg and Mr. Charles O. Munson were married. After the wedding ceremony a reception and dinner were given the wedding party. Mr. and Mrs. Munson left this noon for a trip in the east.

Mr. and Mrs. Munson are two of the well known young people of this county and will make their home on the Munson farm west of the city.

Their son, Gaylord, now lives on the home place just west of

Junction City.

On December 15, 1908, Wilhelmina (Minnie) was married to George Hall. They lived most of their married life in the house where their son, Gerald, now lives in the Upland community.

Wilhelm (Bill) was married to Laura Louise Gfeller on April 17, 1916. They lived one year in the house west of the county-line which was built for them. Then they purchased the Alva Acker place and made it their home until their daughter, Noreen, and husband, Dan Zumbrunn, took over the farm. On March 21, 1917, the last one of the family was married. Fred married Florence Tietze, and they lived on the home place. The parents moved to the small house which Bill had lived in, and that is the place that many of the grandchildren remember best.

When Grandpa and Grandma Altwegg went to visit their family or went to church or to town, they traveled by horse and buggy. They had a trusted horse named Jenny. Many of their grandchildren rode in the buggy. Grandpa Altwegg did purchase a car in about 1915 but it was driven by Fred and Bill. It was an Overland, a 2-seated touring car with prestone lights that had to be hand-lighted.

The field work was done with horses. Later Fred, Bill and Bob bought a Rumley tractor and threshing machine in about 1920. The cost was approximately \$3000. Grandpa Altwegg had the reputation of making the best wheatstacks in the country --really shed water.

Education was always important to the Altweggs and the grandfather was especially proud of his grandchildren as they gained higher education. When Lillie Lehman was ready to enter the 7th grade, her parents moved to Junction City, and they

built the house at the corner of 8th and Webster, which their nieces and nephews remember well. Aunt Lena was always available to help where needed and was present when many of the nieces and nephews were born. She always said she gave a good many of them their first bath. The children often stayed with Aunt Lena when their parents were trading in town.

Lillie Lehman graduated from high school in 1914 and from Kansas State Agricultural College in 1918. She was graduated with honors and with a record of never having been absent or tardy during 16 years of school.

On December 5, 1920, the Altweggs celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. According to an article in the Junction City Union, they were surprised by their children with a "delightful dinner" after which Rev. T. Franks of the Evangelical church gave an address. At that time they had ten children and 38 grandchildren, all of them living near them.

The first grandchild to be married was Bertha Altwegg. She and Arthur Otto were married September 14, 1921.

The first big break in the family came on February 11, 1922, when Grandma Altwegg died. Grandpa continued to live in the home for some time, but spent his later years at the home of his son, Bill.

On December 28, 1922, the first great-grandchild was born, Maxine Otto. The second grandchild to be married was Lillie Lehman. She and Fred Racherbaumer were married on July 18, 1923.

Edna Gfeller was married in 1925. Honoring her before her marriage Grandpa Altwegg entertained his children and grandchildren with a picnic supper at the Abilene City park. He

supplied ten gallons of ice cream for the occasion. Edna and Vernon Coulson of Industry were married at the Ed Gfeller home, the ceremony being read by Rev. Norman L. Stock of Alida. According to the Junction City Union Miss Helena Cott sang two songs, "Oh Promise Me" and "I Love You Truly." The newspaper article said, "The bride and groom were accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Racherbaumer. The procession entered the spacious sitting room from the second floor and faced a large decorated canopy of flowers. The bride was presented by her father. Following the ceremony a wedding dinner was served in courses." Many of the family members remember the chivaree held later that evening.

The last grandchild arrived in 1927, Noreen Leota Altwegg.

On January 13, 1933, Konrad Altwegg died leaving his ten children, 41 grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren and a host of friends to remember him as a kind and good father and grandfather.

These notes from the obituaries of Konrad and Rosetta Altwegg tell of their character.

Mr. Altwegg was a man who did not borrow trouble. His philosophy seemed to be, to meet whatever came, as best he could, whenever it came, and to bear bravely whatever could not be changed.

Of Grandma Altwegg it was said, "We have learned to love her for the love and kindness with which she treated us. We have learned to esteem her because of her Christian character and her trust in God. We are inspired to make those noble and gentle and good characteristics our own. We pray to God to bring us closer to Him, that some day we may behold her face to face."

The family tree of Konrad and Rosetta Altwegg was transplanted in America one hundred years ago. It has withstood much hardship, suffering and adversity. It's roots are deep and

over the years as the branches grew many, many twigs were added.

Konrad and Rosetta Altwegg were able to see ten of their eleven children grow up, marry and have children, and all of them lived within 35 miles of home. Their family worked hard and accomplished much to help this new state called Kansas to grow and develop from the horse-and-wagon days to the space age.

All of the family are indeed fortunate to have such a heritage.

## ALLTWEGG

Mr. and Mrs. Konrad Altwegg were among the early settlers of this community.

They were married in Switzerland in 1870 and came to America in 1874, with two children, Mrs. Altwegg's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Keller had come to America several years earlier.

They homesteaded in the Alida community. Their first home had living quarters and about four steps down from the ground level with an earthen floor, and a loft like structure above for sleeping quarters.

Konrad Altwegg was a cheese-maker. Upon arrival in this country he worked at a mill in Industry. He walked twenty miles to the mill on Monday morning and returned home on weekends. His pay was 50 cents a day. He also made cheese at a cheese factory in P. H. Gfeller's store in the Tell community.

These pioneers made the best of what they had. They had cows, pigs, and chickens which gave them of plenty of meat, lard, milk, butter and eggs.

Fruit jars were considered too expensive so most of the fruit was dried. Any canning done was put in tin cans and sealed with sealing wax. They made mattresses out of corn husks stuffed in ticking.

Their life centered around their family and church.

Mr. Altwegg had the reputation of making some of the best hay and wheat sacks in the community. He also dug many wells in the neighborhood. The weekly shopping trip to Junction City was made with his trusty white horse and black buggy.

The older Altwegg children attended the Tell School, later all the children attended Acker school. The family spoke "Swiss" at home and the children had to learn English. They were called the "Dutch Kids" and other students would get provoked when they talked "Swiss" among themselves at school.

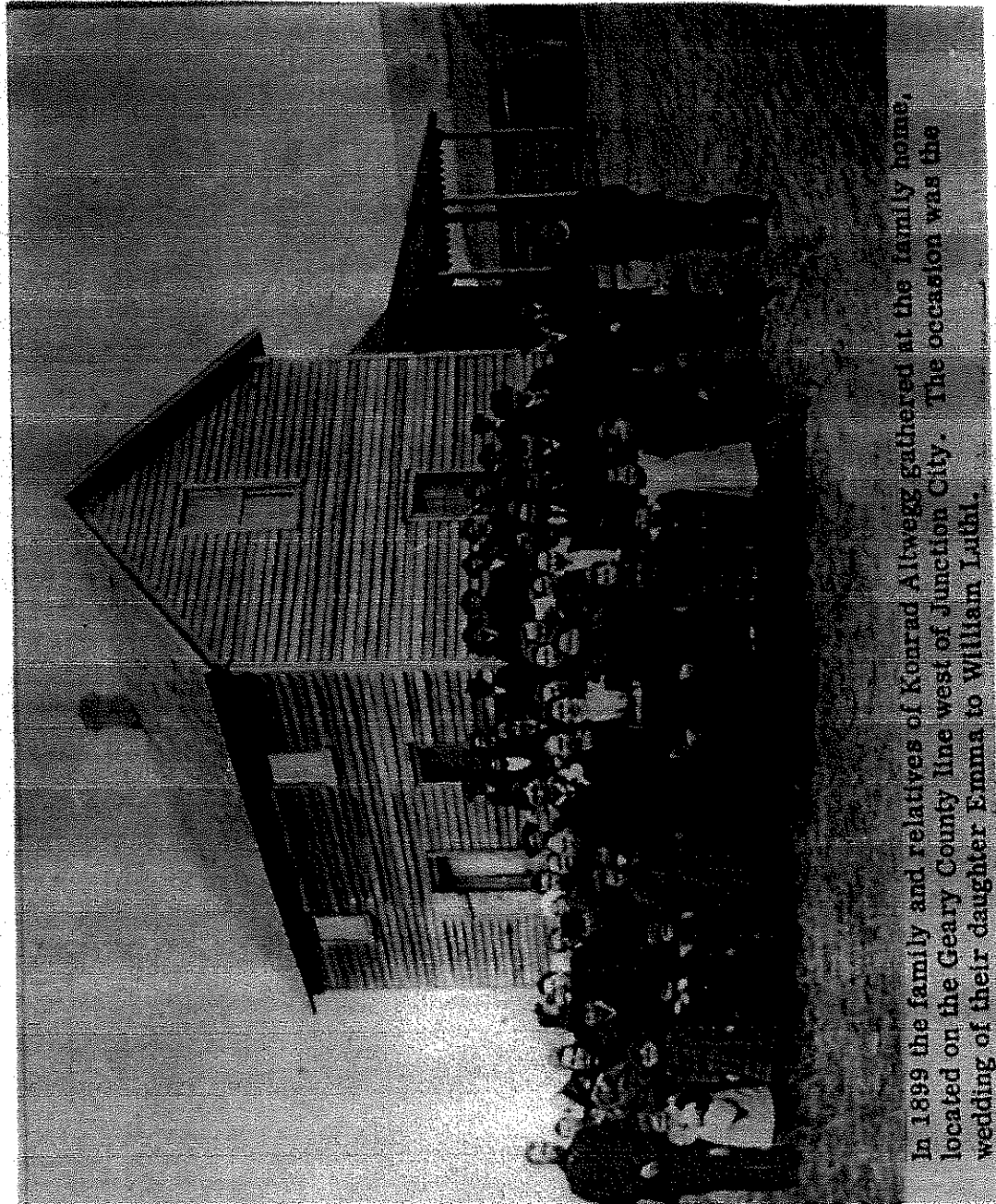
There were eleven children, Jacob and Konrad Jr., were born in Switzerland. Konrad Jr., died soon after their arrival in Kansas. The other children were Lena Alt-

wegg Lehman, Mary Altwegg Luthi, Emma Altwegg Luthi, Robert, Lizzie Altwegg Gfeller, Fred, Katherin Altwegg Munson, and Twins, Willaim and Minnie Altwegg Hall.

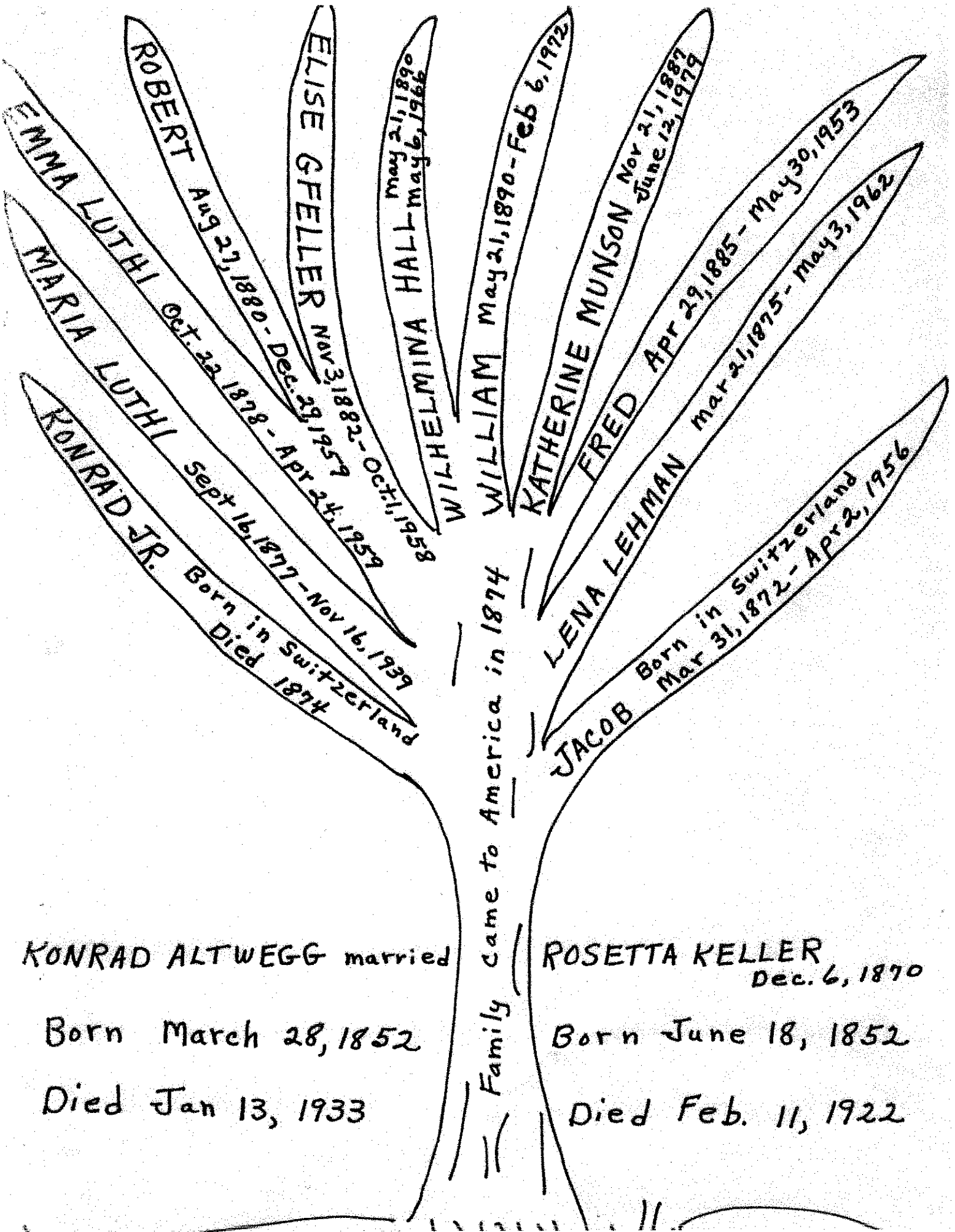
The 10 children settled in homes of their own, all within a radius of 35 miles. There are forty-four grandchildren, all except four have made their homes in this locality. Russell Altwegg a great-grandson, and his wife Sally, Steven and Angela (fifth generation) live only a short distance from the original homestead.

The grandchildren have many fond memories of the Sunday dinners at Grandma Altweggs. Hardly a Sunday went by without some of the family being there. Grandmother must have cooked all week.

Konrad Altwegg was a strong and healthy man, never needing a doctor until just a week before his death in 1933, at the age of 81. Mrs. Altwegg passed away in 1922.



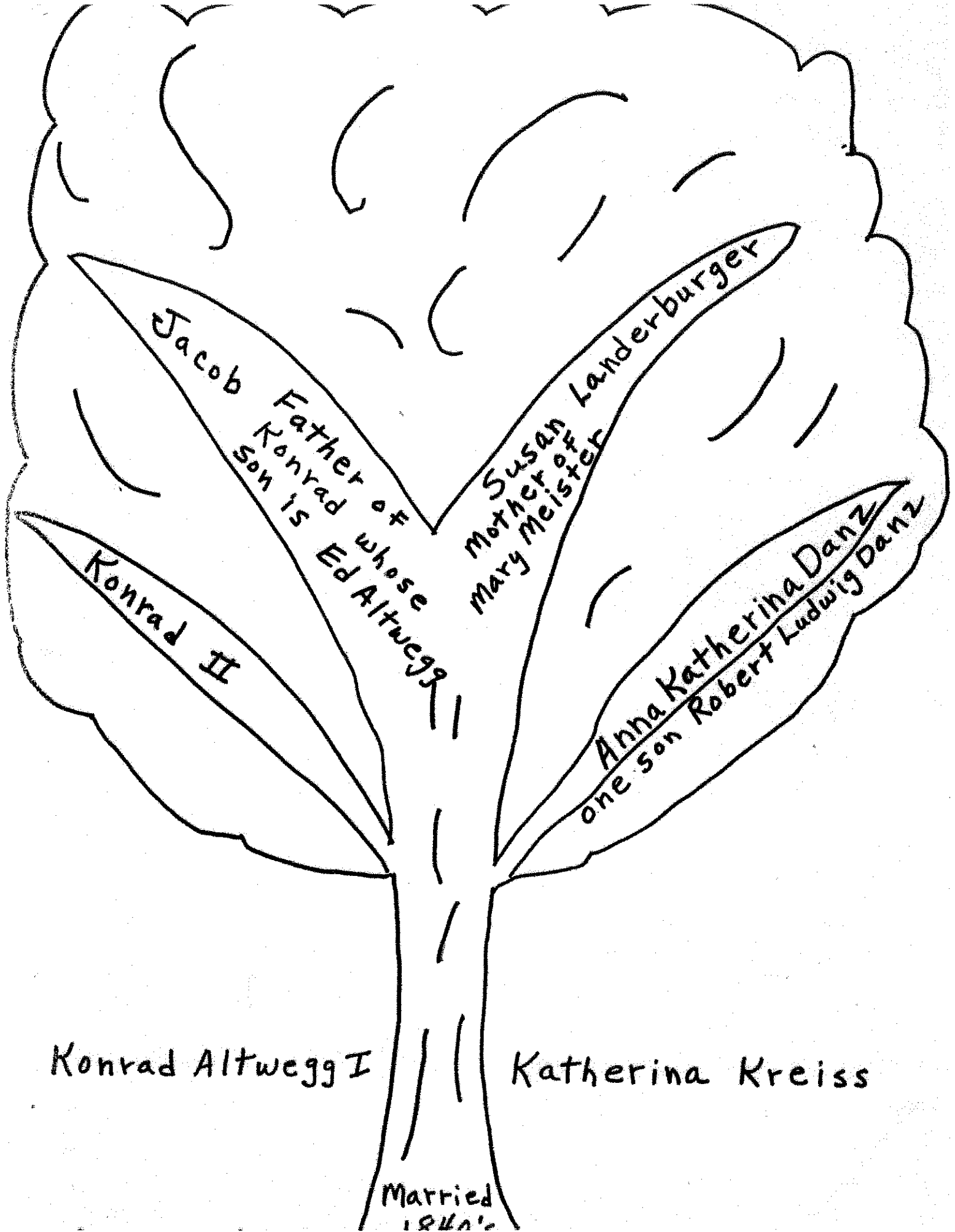
In 1899 the family and relatives of Konrad Altwegg gathered at the family home, located on the Geary County line west of Junction City. The occasion was the wedding of their daughter Emma to William Luthi.



KONRAD ALTWEGG married  
 Born March 28, 1852  
 Died Jan 13, 1933

ROSETTA KELLER  
 Dec. 6, 1870  
 Born June 18, 1852  
 Died Feb. 11, 1922





Konrad Altwegg I

Katherina Kreiss

Married  
1840's

Konrad II

Jacob Father of whose  
Konrad is Ed Altwegg

Susan Landerburger  
Mother of  
Mary Meister

Anna Katherina Danz  
one son Robert Ludwig Danz