

October 1, 1973

From Velma (Schoening) Golightly, Daughter of
Peter Andrew & Mary Emilyne (Cooper) Schoening

My Father, who would be your Great-Grandfather, whose name was Peter Andrew Schoening, was born near Hamburg, Germany, May 13, in the Year 1850. To my knowledge, there were in his Family Six Boys and One Girl, as follows: John, Fred, Henry, Peter Andrew, Christopher and Edward, and somewhere with these boys there was the girl whose name was Christine, or Christina. I don't recall which. Their Father died when Papa was quite young, and their Mother raised the Children. The second to the oldest boy, Fred, was sent to America by the other boys and the family, all who were yet quite young, as when they became 13 years of age, they must go into the German Military Service, so you can imagine what a tremendous struggle it was for them to get together enough money to get this one boy out of the Country, with sufficient clothes and a little money to keep him going until he could get established. His mission was to make lots of money quickly, (and in those days lots of money meant only nickels and dimes to us now) and to get it back to the family, so that the other boys could each in his time get out of Germany before the age limit. They had to be smuggled out. They, the family never heard from Fred, nor saw him again, after he left home. John the oldest boy elected to stay in Germany with the Mother, also the sister stayed in Germany.

As I understand it, Uncle Henry, the next boy brought Papa (Peter Andrew) with him, and they embarked on the great journey, which would be about the year 1861 or 1862, and as you know these were the Civil War years here in America. My Sister Clara thinks Uncle Henry went back for Uncle Chris and Uncle Ed. All had to be smuggled out of the Country. None could leave voluntarily. Can't you just imagine the decision it had to be to that Mother to send her boys out all alone, at that age, and to a strange Country?

What the boys did for a living after coming here I do not know. Imagine young boys like that having to come among strangers and make their living. I suppose they must have waited tables, or did whatever people would give them to do. At least we know times and conditions were so much different than they are now, there probably was much crime, but not as we know it today I am sure. There must have been many good people who would take all these children in and help them. Eventually they were all in or near St. Louis, Missouri.

Uncle Henry married into a very well established family, who had money. Uncle Chris married a woman in St. Louis, and I myself never knew much about her. He had a big family, boys and girls. Uncle Ed married a woman in Illinois, across from St. Louis, and Papa, Peter Andrew, in some way got clear down to Tennessee and into a little community near Paris, Tenn., and known as Big Sandy. As I know the story, Papa somewhere met a distant cousin of my Mother's and he told Papa that he knew a place where timber grew in abundance. The bark of which was perfect as a tanning process for fine leather, and why didn't they go down there and set up a tannery. They should get plenty of hides to make themselves a living. These people raised their own beef and killed same for their food, and would each share with their neighbors, and in this way they had meat to eat; they did not have any refrigeration to take care of any surplus. However, there would be beef hides to cure.

It was here in the Country out from Big Sandy that Papa met my Mother. She was Mary Emilyne Cooper, and had a twin Sister Sara Angeline, and a very dear sweet older Brother, Uncle Riley. Their Father died when the children were quite young, and their Mother married again, to a man who had a big family of his own, and then there were a half-sister and a half-brother born to that union. I tell you this, so you will understand that we were a big congregation down there in the Hills of Tennessee, with all the relatives and the In-Laws.

Mama, Mary Emilyne Cooper was born February 15, 1856, and she and Papa were married presumably about 1875 or 1876, as Christine, my oldest Sister was born May 6, 1877. I think Christine, Brother Will and Brother Ed were all born there in Tennessee, but by that time Papa was moving around. I suppose the tanning business up there was playing out, and I believe they went to Louisville, Ky., and my Brother George was born there. But, Mama didn't like it up there and she and the Children came back to the Hills of Tennessee and established themselves there; Papa worked around in different places. There were nine of us Children, as follows: Christine, William, (Edward, Your Grandfather,) George, Elbert, Clara, Luvenia, Arthur and myself Velma. We, the Family moved from Big Sandy to Paducah in the year 1903, which made me six years of age, as I was born in 1897, April 2. We came to Paducah from Big Sandy on a raft which had a cabin for protection. The raft was logs tied together. Arthur always said they came on a Steamboat, and I guess it seemed like a steamboat to him at his young age. But, in talking with Shirley, she said her Mother said it was a raft. My Sister, Christine was 20 years older than me, lacking from April 2, to May 6, or a month and 3 days. There were 2 and 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ years between the older children with 9 years between Luvenia and myself; Arthur was 5 years older than me. Mama was 41 the year I was born.

Back to Papa's Brothers: Uncle Henry did well for himself: He made money and knew how to keep it; Uncle Chris, I never seemed to know too much about him, but I do know he had a big family. We never seemed to get too well acquainted with them. Uncle Ed, was a real GO-GETTER, at one time he had 7 Flour Mills, all going with good production, over in Illinois, across the Mississippi from St. Louis. He lived in Columbia, Illinois, and I can remember one time when we went there, Mama and I, on a visit, that he took his Surrey, (A two-seated buggy type vehicle), pulled by two fine horses, and drove us all around to see his Flour Mills. One place I can remember so well, was MILLSTADT. Uncle Ed had a lovely home, a very, very large white house, with many rooms, and lovely furnishings. It was all very impressive to me, a Little Ole Country Gal. Uncle Ed had a big family, boys and girls, and the boys all worked in the flour mills. I can remember there and they would have breakfast around 6 in the morning, and everyone was out and about their business early. At 10, or about that time, in the morning the table was set on a long enclosed back porch, and coffee, coffee cake and smear-case (cottage cheese) was served, and big bowls of fresh butter, and plenty of milk. I guess I thought I was in Heaven. All the men came from the Mills and had this break, and then back to work. Again, there was the noon meal served, and again in the afternoon was the break. I can't remember what Aunt Lizzie put on the table for that meal, and then there was supper too. Uncle Ed had his home very close to this Mill in Columbia. Can you imagine all the work with all this running back and forth to eat! Can you imagine the wife of this man and his daughters, how they had to work to keep all this going! I can remember the house was an immaculate place, and lovely furnishings, and beautiful grounds. They were a very friendly people, and Mama and I were always welcome. You will notice, I am always saying "Mama and I." I just don't know what the older Children did, or whether they got to visit very much or not. You see, my Sister Christine married a man in St. Louis; she had gone over there to visit our Cousin, Uncle Henry's Daughter, and they had persuaded her to stay with them and get work over there. Her work was being a maid in the fine and beautiful homes in St. Louis, and she met the man she married, and they established their home there, and by the time I was big enough to remember, Mama was more free, as I was the last child, and we would go over there quite frequently. Christine and I were very close to each other, and very harmonious in our relationship, throughout the years.

I can remember visiting in Uncle Henry's home too, but it was more sedate and stiff, if you know what I mean. They had a "Parlor", which was furnished in lovely furniture, which they kept covered to protect it, and when they had company, all the covers came off. I can remember walking in there, and it was like GHOSTS all around, with these white covers thrown over all the chairs and sofas. The chairs were stiff looking and had hard cushions on them, that is the straight chairs, and I can't remember many soft and comfortable sofas and chairs, as we know them now.

*Amanda

Everything in Uncle Henry's home was very sedate and proper. They only had one child, a daughter. Uncle Henry married a daughter of a Wealthy Family, and then he made money and they knew how to keep it. I never had much fun when I went there as a child. Uncle Chris was not so well fixed as Uncle Henry and Uncle Ed.

Papa, Peter never made a big showing in his profession. He was on the move too much, and I am sure Mama had a very hard time, keeping the home intact. She was an extremely sweet person, very firm in her beliefs, which were to live right and do right. She must have had to work very hard. In their early years of marriage she spun and wove the cloth to make their clothes. She always, I am sure, through the years had plenty of food on the table. She taught us to take what we wanted on our plates, but to eat what we took. Nothing was wasted. She always had a garden after I can remember, and worked so hard in it, and she had chickens, and in earlier years geese, from which the feathers were plucked once a year, to make the feather beds. She had a cow, and some fruit on the place, and they grew their sorghum cane, from which the sorghum molasses was made. Jelly they never knew what that was, as they never had much sugar. But the sorghum and some honey provided the sweet for the family.

Where we lived, that I can remember was a log house, on a slight hill, and the spring was at the foot of the hill, and that was her refrigeration. All the milk and butter was kept in this cold spring water, and sometimes the wild coons would rob the spring, getting the butter and into the milk. They would wash their little paws which were their hands, in the milk. I can remember seeing them one time, and they were just too cute; I thought was very funny.

All the washing had to be done here at the spring. There was a big wash boiler, that the clothes were boiled in, and that the water was heated in. You see Mama and her girls had to work very hard, but I am sure they must have had a good time and enjoyed each other. Mama made her soap for the washing from lye, which she got from wood ashes. She had a hopper, which was made in a V shape, and would hold a number of bushels of ashes. These ashes were from Hickory wood, if I remember correctly, wood which was burned in the fireplace for heating, and then they were put in this hopper, and she would pour water over them every day, and that water would run through them, and the hopper was made so that the water would drain to one end, and she would catch this, and it was lye, and then the soap was made from mixing this lye with fat, and that was their source of cleanliness for their clothes. What kind of soap we had for our hands and face I can't remember.

My Sister Christine wanted to go to school to learn to be a teacher, and my Brother Ed was working in a Tannery here in Paducah at the time, and he gave her the money to go to Camden, The County Seat of Henry County, where they lived, and she studied to be a teacher, and then taught at some of the one room schools near our home. Uncle Henry's Daughter came down to visit her and the family and spent a month, and she persuaded Christine to go home with her and find work there, in St. Louis, the Maids in the big aristocrat homes made much more money than any teacher could make in those days, so she changed her profession. But she always had a very close place in her heart for Brother Ed, (your Grandfather), because he had been so generous with her in helping her to prepare herself to teach. In those days a teacher did not have to have a college education like now, but she did have to have some preparation, further than the one room schools in the community. My Sister Christine was a very refined and Genteel person, She gave birth to five children and raised four. She lost her first child at childbirth, then she had two girls and a boy and a girl. The boy died when he was quite young. He was married and had a little son about 3 and twin girls six months old. His death crushed my sister so much, as it was so very sad. All of that family are gone now, with the exception of the youngest daughter, and the Grand-Children. Christine and her oldest daughter Jennie came to visit Brother Ed and Anna in 1950.

My Brother Will stayed in Paducah, Kentucky and married a girl, Ora Durham, from here, and to my knowledge never left. He had five Children, and one of them died, Ona Mae, the year before your Mother died. Brother Ed had left this part of the country long before I could remember, in fact, years before I was born I am sure. I can't remember him prior to the time we moved to Paducah from Big Sandy, Tenn., but after that he became a very frequent visitor with us, and I grew extremely fond of him, and I think it was mutual, a very close relationship between us. I can remember very well when he and Anna were married, and I always loved and had great admiration for your Grandmother, Anna Gubser. (Me too, Clara Elizabeth)

Brother George married a girl from out in the country here, Lottie Ara Hall, and soon afterwards they started toward the WEST. They had one son, Glynn, a very fine and lovely person, who lives in Loveland, Colorado now. (As of May 1994 Glynn and his wife Mildred Alene Bellmire Schoening, live at 3839 Highland Cove Lane, #306, Salt Lake City, Utah 84106, Phone No. (801) 272-7279.) My Sister Clara married soon after we moved to Paducah, a very fine young man of a Good Family, and to their union were born ten children; they lost the first baby, a girl, soon after birth and they raised nine. They had a lovely family; they worked hard, both she and her husband, George, and the children. Clara had most everything to do the hard way, washing and all the chores, but she was a very happy person, and has always been so happy with her family. You know Clara, I believe. She has always been a very lovely and dear person, and her children have always been decent and good people. Two of the oldest boys are gone now, and her husband, too. During World War II, she had five sons in the service at one time, and Ralph one of the younger boys lost both legs in the service. He has moved to Oregon, and seemingly is getting along very nicely. He married and has one son. (He is deceased as of this retyping.)

Brother Elbert married Sally Rickman, a girl from the country here, and they had one daughter, Mildred. He contracted Tuberculosis early in life, caused from extreme exposure to the elements where he worked, in a barrel stave factory, which they worked in water most of the time, also not taking care of himself. They moved to Texas where they lived for a number of years, later going on to Tucson, Arizona, where he died and is buried. Their daughter lives out from Amarillo, Texas, and his widow is still living near the daughter, (both gone as of this retyping.) Luvenia, I don't believe you ever met. She married an Army man, and they left this part of the country. They never had any children, and both of them are gone now. Arthur, you know, I am sure. He was five years older than me. (He married Florence Daisy Fischer from Hazen, Arkansas, a very dear person, ask us kids, we all loved her because she was so kind to us, and did such a wonderful job of taking care of us, even with her hearing loss, and only had one eye she could see with. She said she lost her hearing because they had Malaria and her Mother gave her too much Quinine, however, her Brother George said he noticed her losing her hearing after lightening struck an apple tree next to she and her sister, who were sent to the barn to get potatoes for supper, in a bad storm that was coming up. They had five children. They lost the first child Earnest Arthur, with the Flu epidemic in 1918. They have four living, all nice self-respectful people. (Clarence passed away January 3, 1987 with Meloma cancer of the bone marrow.) You know Clara Elizabeth I am sure, and Arthur Jr. who came to see your Mother, Velma, a few months before she died. Also, Edith Earline, a daughter.

And me, Velma, I had one daughter, Shirley. She married John McGuirk, and they have three children and three Grand-Children, and that makes me a Great-Grand-mother. My Mother, Mary Emilyne had Scotch and Irish blood in her veins, and of course, my Father, Peter Andrew was pure German, so from your Grand-Father you get this mixture. We have always been hard working people and very proud of our heritage. Papa's Mother was a Brahm, a Sister to JOHANNES BRAHM, THE NOTED COMPOSER OF MUSIC. No, I have that wrong, Papa's Mother was a Sister to Johannes Father, which made them cousins. In our Family there are only three of us left, Clara, Arthur and myself, Velma. (All gone as of this retyping.)

I never knew any of my Father's people, other than these I have told you about, not by Grand-Father nor Grand-Mother or any of the relatives in Germany. Papa never went back to Germany, so far as I know, so when he left, just a mere boy, to come over here, it was a "GOOD-BYE" to his Family over there. My Grand-Mother on my Mother's side was a MOSS. Her Father was a Presbyterian Minister. She married a COOPER and Mama's name was Mary Emilyne Cooper. She had the Twin Sister, Sara Angeline. She and Papa were married about 1875. She was born February 15, 1856, and she died in September 1933, and is buried in Mount pleasant Cemetery, Big Sandy, Tennessee. Papa was born May 13, 1850 and died December 3, 1923. He is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery, Paducah, Kentucky.

I believe this will give you a little history of your Grand-Father's Family on your Mother's side, and this will let you know a little of the back-ground of our families. We have never set any woods on fire, and to my knowledge we have never burned any of them down either. This last is just a soliloquy, just saying we have a solid background, and we all are still striving to live a solid life.

Written as per request of Julianne Conrad Zaenkert that she might learn a little of the background of her Mother's people. Julianne would be the Great Grand-Daughter of Peter Andrew Schoening. In her Grand-Father Edward's Family there were six children: Edward, William, Velma, Alberta, Leonard and Dolores. Edward died from an accident when quite young. (Velma died April 1974.)

I've re-typed this Family History as my copy was light and I couldn't make copies from it. I've added names in places, and some things that I knew that wasn't in it. May 1994. Clara Elizabeth (Schoening) McSparin. My husband Albert is deceased as of March 13, 1985.