

A Special Letter to Cousins

June 2018

from Florence DANIELS Pierson, Great granddaughter of Mary and John Pfeiffer

Greetings to ALL you cousins....old and young, short and tall, male and female, rich and poor, smart and funny, Joseph, Benedikt and Mary Schmid's offspring!

In lieu of being physically among you, (my spirit says "go", but my body says "no",) I just want to send a bit of the excitement I feel to be part of this adventurist family of immigrants that picked America to be their land of choice so many years ago. I get goose bumps thinking of their lives and struggles, blended with the joys and heartaches they must have endured to lay a healthy foundation for the secure, rich, fulfilled life we enjoy today.

Imagine making the decision to pull up stakes, move across the ocean to a strange country and start life anew!!!! What fortitude, imagination and true grit they had. Of course I didn't know my great grandmother Mary, but I certainly DID know her daughter, Emma, my grandmother, and SHE was SOME KIND of energy machine. I have to assume she took after her mother! Admiration has to overflow for Mary and her brothers for the perseverance they had in those early years.....and later ones.

After Mary Schmid and John Pfeiffer married, (around 1851) they had six children....John, Jr., Joseph, Peter, Emma, Albert and Frank. My grandmother, Emma, was the only girl among all her siblings so it's no wonder she ended up knowing how to take care of herself! What a hard worker she was. Nearing adult years, she, with some of her family, moved to Trenton N. J., where Emma married George Daniels. He disappeared shortly before their child, Howard, was born in 1887. Her father, John, presumably was lost in the Johnstown flood of 1889. A few years later, Emma, son Howard, mother Mary, and two brothers Albert and Frank, moved back to Minnesota, bouncing around from place to place before she married again. This time it was to Henry Moore, a farmer and a teamster. Together they had 5 children. Around 1911 her mother, Mary (83 yrs old), who was in her care, passed away. Only a year later her husband, Henry, died, leaving Emma to support and care for her family, the youngest of five children being only 4 years old. She made a name for herself by doing laundry and cleaning for some of the more affluent people in Frazee. As a "washer woman" she took immense pride, as did the other neighborhood ladies, in hanging the clothes on the line "just so", with the towels and sheets on the outside lines and the "unmentionables" on the inside lines...it was more or less a competition to see who had the neatest clothes lines. All these chores were done with none of the modern conveniences we expect now....washtubs had to be set up, water heated, washboards used, hand wringing and of course the clotheslines for drying. In lieu of electrical power, muscle power kicked in. I vividly remember Grandma's house, with no indoor plumbing or running water....We used the slight inclined path to the outhouse for any necessary trips. It's no wonder folks back then had to be in good shape with all the physical activity necessary to navigate through a day. I'm glad she lived long enough to enjoy SOME of the conveniences of a "newfangled" life before she died at age 75 in 1941. What troopers she and her brothers were!!!!

You and I can only TRY to relate to how those Schmid siblings endured their lives from the almost primitive days of adjustments, when they first landed on our shores, to the eventual rugged conveniences as their years went by (approx. 1818-1911).

What a treat it is to shuffle back in time and visit our beloved courageous ancestors !!!! AND what fun to meet and know some of the cousins that carry on our family genes.

I send my love and appreciation to all of you.

Florence Daniels Pierson (b. 10-16-1920) Great granddaughter of Mary and John Pfeiffer