

# *Niehaus Family Newsletter*

*Indianapolis, Indiana*

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Editor, Nancy Niehaus Hurley

## ***1939 Photo Project Succeeds***

Success is sweet! With assistance from many family members who studied the 1939 Niehaus reunion photo and searched their memory for names, we now can identify almost 100% of those beautiful people at the first reunion.

We've had many eyes on those faces for three years now. It's time to share the results, even with a few questions marks. I am publishing the list for anyone who would like to keep the identifications for future generations. Pick up your copy at the reunion or contact me later to receive one by snail mail or email. If you need a copy of the photo, I have a few copies to hand out. Or I can email a copy to you.

This project was fun and informative. A few of the identifications assisted in filling in blanks in the family history. Thanks everyone.

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## ***Memorials***

Sincerest sympathy to everyone who lost a loved one over the past year. Please notify me of anyone who has passed that was not mentioned in our newsletter.

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***May he rest in peace.***

***Harry L. Simmerman, husband of Evelyn  
Ellis Simmerman – died 28 Jan 2010,  
Carmel, Indiana***

## ***A Tradition Continues***

The tradition of taking a group photo of everyone at the reunion was established from the start - 72 years ago. As far as I am aware, the practice continued, although possibly sporadically, into the 1980s. There is some question about the last group shot and I am curious to know that answer for sure. However, Gib Hickman decided in 2010 to re-establish the tradition. We now have a photo of the entire group at Mooresville Pioneer Park last year.

Now we can start this list of names while the faces are fresh. There is an enlarged copy of the photo for your examination and a blank listing ready for you to complete.

I thank Gib for sending me last year's photo by email since I couldn't attend. I'll be happy to do the same with this list of identifications. Or you can pick up a copy at next year's reunion.

Be sure to make your additions to the 2010 list.

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## ***Young Writer Wanted***

This newsletter needs a different perspective. Wouldn't you agree? I know there are some of our young people who enjoy telling stories...really. Now's the chance to have input into this family publication. Let's put the young slant on our history. Write something about a grandparent, a favorite time in your life, a family trip, or maybe your own impressions of the Niehaus Reunion.

This report or story could be one time or more. You choose. Our young reporter(s) could write a series of pieces if they wish.

Let me know if you are interested in writing a contribution for next year's newsletter. We can talk at the reunion; or see page 4 for my contact information if you decide any time before next July.

## Surnames In Our Mix

Besides the Niehaus and Wilmsen names, a report



on our family research results in about 200 different surnames. Of course, not all of these are blood related to each other. But the point is there are

numerous links in our DNA, a collaboration of many kin in all of our pasts.

With more research on the family lines there should be a wide gamut of discoveries. Maybe some of you already have a fact or two that would come to mind when a discussion starts on any of those surnames.

For instance, how about Beerman? Gerhard Heinrich Beerman, born in 1790 in Bergeshovde, Westphalia, Germany, was the father of Maria Anna Beerman Niehues, Josef's wife and the grandmother to the twelve children of Joseph and Gertrude Niehaus. Church records report that Gerhard was a hay farmer when Josef and Maria Anna married in 1847 in Riesenbeck. It doesn't appear that he had a brewing background as the name may suggest. But perhaps that occupation will come to light if we are able to find more about his father or grandfather.

Do you know any Beermans here in Indiana? There could be some connections and clues in their histories. We'll have to keep seeking the Beerman history to see what it reveals about a few more of our ancestors.

--Gerhard Heinrich Beerman

Born: 30 May 1790 – Bergeshovde,  
Westphalia, Germany

--Anna Margaretha Elizabeth Siegbert

Born: 24 Dec 1786 – Bergeshovde,  
Westphalia, Germany

Married: 4 May 1811 – Riesenbeck,  
Westphalia, Germany

--Daughter: Maria Anna Beerman,

Born: 7 Jan 1813 – Bergeshovde  
Married: Josef Niehues, on 10 Oct 1847 –  
Riesenbeck, Westphalia, Germany

Children: Heinrich Joseph Niehaus,  
Heinrich August Niehues, Bernard Joseph Niehaus

## 2010 Reunion Report

Our reunion organizer, Rosie Walters, repeatedly deserves our thanks. It's a pleasure to have her skills and generous contribution of time for these gatherings. Kudos for putting together last year's Niehaus reunion on July 11 at Pioneer Park, Mooresville.

We are also fortunate to have the creative talents of Peg Stull who painstakingly produces the Family Memories Quilt each year. The raffle helps us support the tradition of the reunions. And the quilt has become a part of that tradition, with everyone hoping their name will be the one drawn.

Even when I can't attend a reunion, I can participate by signing a quilt square when I'm in Indy. Or my sister completes one for me at the reunion. There are many who make remembrances to parents and grandparents, or children who put their special touch on their own square.

The 2010 Family Memories Quilt winner was Shara (Hickman) Perry. Congrats. What a beautiful heirloom to pass along.

Whether it's sharing lunch, family stories, photos, playing a game of corn hole or bingo, or maybe just watching the kids play with family, everybody has their own way of taking part in the family reunion. A special ingredient of the 2010 reunion was the Irish Blessing sung by Kieran O'Connor. Thanks so much.

## Family History Corner

### *“Stitches In Time”*

Stitching, weaving, sewing....related threads pass through our Niehaus family history in the early 1900s.

We all know that Joseph Niehaus was a rug weaver. Our family history tells us that he wove rugs in Emsdetten, Germany, before he and Gertrude and their children emigrated to America around 1885. And we've also passed along over these many years the story of how he carried on his trade at the home on South West Street in Indianapolis until his death in 1921.

The craftsman bringing his skill to this country in order to make a living is a story of thousands. But do we know how the next generation of Niehaus family members supported their families? We do have some interesting information on a few of their occupations.

Our sources for this background are partially family stories remembered and retold. Add many hours of research and sharing of knowledge by several of us curious family historians. Now the picture of how the Niehaus lives developed is gaining details. This short story is the beginning of a tale of the fabric of the family.

Our German family would probably portray many immigrant families establishing their home in Indianapolis from 1900 through 1930, taking advantage of the industry developing in the city for their livelihood.

The family lived on the near south side, close to the downtown area where industry was taking hold in the early 1900s. Joseph Niehaus indicated in 1900 that he was a “furniture filler,” the only time he did not report himself as a weaver. But this unusual fact may connect in some way to his eldest child, Gerhardt, who worked at a cabinet company in 1910 at the age of 36. His descendants tell us that a cabinetmaker's union furniture company in Indianapolis employed him soon after his marriage in 1906. Unfortunately, he was stricken by a heart attack and died at the young age of 44. There could have been so much more to his life story.

The other men and some of the ladies in the family pursued connected occupations. In fact, as a family group, the men all worked for some period from 1900 to 1930 at an “overall factory,” according to censuses and city directories. That company would be the C. B. Cones Overall Factory on Senate Avenue, just a few blocks from the Niehaus family home. Feenie and Minnie were also employees of

C. B. Cones at some interval in that time period. The threads of this company meander through the records of husbands, wives and children. Several of the subsequent generations carried on this tradition.

The C. B. Cones Co. was established in Indianapolis in 1879, just a few years before the Niehaus family arrived. It grew into a major manufacturer of overalls in the Midwest. This was obviously an opportune situation for the young Niehaus adults to obtain employment close to home. Indianapolis records show us that Joe Niehaus worked as a cutter at Cones in 1920 and remained an employee for 31 years, eventually becoming a foreman. I know that my grandfather, John, worked for C. B. Cones for 33 years and at one point was transferred for a short time to Virginia to assist in the setup of a factory there. My father, Frank, and his brother, Robert, also had jobs at Cones in Virginia, during the depression years of the early 1930s. That time frame was when Josephine (Feenie) was also making overalls, letting the census-taker know that she was a machine operator. This must have been quite a feat as she and Al still had six children at home.

Another connection to the clothing industry, the cotton mill in Indianapolis, provided work for three of the Niehaus ladies. Rosa, Josephine and Lena all reported this occupation on the 1900 census. Mary was identified as a shirt maker in 1900 as well. By ten years later they list no occupation, presuming they are involved in raising their children. It is still a mystery what type of occupation Anna and Clara may have had as young women, before their child-bearing and family raising jobs. As culture dictated at the time, the women would have been unemployed as they became pregnant.

The ties in the family to the clothing manufacturing business go deeper too. Mary's husband, John Hoskinson, John's wife, Louise Albers, and Ralph Lark, Rosa's husband were all employees of the Cones overall manufacturer. Additionally, as we follow Ben Niehaus through his life he moves from being a tailor of overalls, to a machine operator at a clothing factory, to a tailor at Jackson & Co, to a fur alterer for Wm. H. Block Co. when he died in 1943.

The majority of the early family had some connection to clothing production. Their stitches provided a sturdy fabric for growth and success of the descendants that followed.

Does this make you stop to think? Do you like to sew, or to work with fabric in some way? There may be undiscovered talents in the family.

## ***Tips For Preserving Photos***

Have you ever noticed how your photos are yellowing in those self-adhesive albums we all used about twenty-five years ago? Maybe you've discovered the box of photos in grandma's basement that are hopelessly deteriorating. Or there are the photos of deceased family with writing on the back that is now showing through on the front. We didn't talk as much in years past about how temperature, glues, scrapbooks and ball point pens can destroy photographs. But now there is a great deal of helpful information and products for preserving old photos.

Here are five tips that might help you hang onto Great Aunt Minnie's and Uncle Joe's likenesses:

- Store your photographs in a place that is 65 – 70 degrees Fahrenheit and about 50% humidity. If you are displaying a favorite photo, you may want to make a copy to hang on the wall and store the original out of the sunlight.
- If you need to write on the photos, use an acid-free photo marking pen. Or if you don't have one available, mark lightly with a soft lead pencil.
- Use only acid-free, lignin free paper for storing photographs or in albums. And when using plastics, look for the PVC-free type, such as Polyester or Polypropylene. These types of materials are very often labeled as archival safe and are easy to find.
- Look for photo-safe glues and tapes at a craft store. Chemicals in many glues, such as rubber cement, can deteriorate photos.
- Scan, save and share. We have lots of fun using the computer to view and share our digital photos. My suggestion is to take that a step further. Scan the old photos in your storage. Then, share copies with the family so that if there is a crash or someone hits the delete button there are always more copies. And.....don't forget your friendly family history person here who is willing to store old photos, too.

## ***Nancy's Notes***

In case you haven't noticed, I really enjoy doing family research and writing family history. But, the research is a lot more fun when there's input from others. I want to be sure to acknowledge and thank the other Niehaus family historians who've been helpful. Pat Niehaus Cracraft, Shirley Ellis Jones, GeorgiaLee Kirn Taylor, Marilyn Niehaus Schuster and Jenni Whisler Masterson shared their research generously. This information provided me with leads in my own research and ideas for some of the stories you read here.

I'm also very appreciative for the family stories shared by several relatives at reunions and elsewhere. Anytime a story comes to mind, I would be glad to hear from you and share your memories as you wish. I realize that many of you know what I don't know. Never hesitate to correct me or add more details to the story. Even though dates are very important, there is so much more to a history. I have a Family Memories form for you to write down your thoughts if you prefer that.

If you know of family members who can't attend the reunion but might like to receive a copy of the Niehaus Newsletter. Just give me their email or mailing address. A newsletter will get to them.

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*Contact me with any suggestions, questions or family history contributions:*

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