

# AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GRANDMOTHER DICKE

written after her 92nd birthday in 1924.

I, Anna Kathrina Dicke, nee' Bezler was born Oct 27th 1832 in Fauern dau, Oberamt Goepingen (maybe county or court circuit) Wuerttemberg Germany. My father's name was Johann Georg Bezler; my mother's was Anna Margarethe, nee' Straub. My father's father died when my father was 11 years old, but his grandfather lived to be 90 years old and had never been sick.

My mother's parents lived in Eschenbach, same Oberamt, where they had the inn, called "Zum goldenen Lamm" (the Golden Lamb Inn) usually called "The Lamb". Her mother died when she was 12 years old. My mother was the 3rd daughter, then there was a son and 2 younger daughters. My grandmother was the village president's daughter and as a girl was sent to the home of the police officer to deliver messages from her father. She arranged to go there at mealtime; they were one of the few families in the village who ate potatoes; then she was invited to eat of the "new fruit". My great-grandfather (on my mother's side) had been the inn-keeper.

Our home was the last one in the village, Fauern dau, then the castle hill rose on which Castle Filseck stood. Our house was quite large, as most of the houses were; the living quarters were on the 2nd floor. On the ground floor there was a passageway and a stairway; then a chicken- and goose house on one side and the cow barn on the other side; then a threshing floor and a large barn for sheep. My father was a shepherd, as all of his ancestors were. In the summer time he took the sheep to the alp (Swabian Alps) and in the winter the sheep were fed in the barn. My parents had enough land to raise enough feed for cows and sheep. My mother did the work in the field with the help of a maid. They drove with 2 cows as many did in our region. When I was about one and a half years old my father wanted to clean the orchard of dead branches, so my mother watched the sheep. It was a warm spring day, so she sat on the ground and did some knitting. From that time on she was ill and in the fall my brother was born.

I can still remember an incident of that time. My mother lay in bed and sat on the foot end of the bed. The doctor from Goepingen came, who had been there often. Only we children were home, so my mother sent Marie to call our grandmother, who lived on the other end of the village. The doctor wanted to bleed my mother and when he came to the bed with a lighted candle to heat the cupping glass, I became so frightened that he would burn my mother, that I began to cry, and then the little brother also. The doctor thought he was hungry and asked where he could find something. He found something in the kitchen, heated it and was feeding the little one when our grandmother came. Somewhat later my grandfather came for a visit and then took me with him. I was with my grandparents most of the time now and I had a good time with my mother's 2 younger sisters and her brother. My uncle was a butcher by trade, as all inn-keepers were. He had to be a journeyman to become proficient in his trade. He was in France for a while and could speak French quite well. He became sick and was in Mannheim when my grandfather brought him home with a wagon. My uncle was sick quite a while, he had tuberculosis. He died on his 30th birthday. This was his prayer in German: "Wird's zum Sterben geh'n, wollst Du bei mir steh'n- Mich durch's Todesthal begleiten, und zu Deinem Himmel leiten- Wo ich mich Dein ewig werde freuen" (This is the translation: When I must die, stay Thou at my side- To lead me through death's vale to the heavenly home, Where I shall rejoice in Thee forever)

Because my mother's health did not improve, but rather became worse, and because there was property available in Eschenbach, my parents sold their property in Fauernsau and bought that in Eschenbach. My mother's 2 married sisters, my grandparents, and 2 unmarried sisters could help take care of her. For a while we lived with my grandparents and had a maid. My mother suffered very much; the infection spread to the thigh and pus formed and oozed from the wound. None of the surrounding doctors seemed to know how to cure her ailment. Then they heard of a capable surgeon in Owen which was a 4 hour walk from Kirchhain u. Teck, a castle ruin. Our mother was taken to Owen, and we children stayed with the relatives; I stayed with my grandparents and the other 3 with the married sisters.

My mother was at Owen 11 weeks and had 3 operations, not any were successful. Then the surgeon wanted to try another operation, but my mother would not consent to it because there were no anesthetics at that time. My grandparents came to see her and I was allowed to ride along. After my mother was at home again my sister Marie was in charge of the household. She was 9 years old.

My mother's wound was about 6 inches long and 2 inches wide at the center which had to be dressed. One of our aunts did it a few times, then my sister did it. She was so adept at it and was quite skillful. My mother claimed that she was so adept at it that it was less painful when she did the dressing. We little ones had to prepare the dressings which were spread with salve and put into the wound after cleaning. Then the wound was drawn together with sticking plaster. The wound began to heal and almost closed except one little spot.

My sister Marie was able to manage and get along well with us. Margareth caused no trouble, she was the best one of us. But my brother and I were continually on the warpath, because he thought he was a boy, so I had to do as he said and I thought he ought to mind me because I was older. So there was many an argument she had to judge and settle, which she did very well. Now the time had come for me to go to school. In summer school began at 6 and closed at 8; then the beginners came until 10, when school was out for the day. The older children either helped in the field or took care of the small children. In winter school began at 8 and closed at 11. Then from 11 to 12 was confirmation instruction which all had to attend 2 years. School began again at 1 and closed at 3. All children went home at noon. There were about 80 pupils in the school and we had no recesses as there are here.

My mother was quite sick the next 4 years, the bone infection also affected the back. Then dropsy developed. She and most people thought she would die soon. My mother was a true Christian who was patient in her affliction and prayed often. We children were trained from early childhood to pray and when we started for school she would call us to her bed and say "Now pray, children! 'Bless our going out, we pray, bless our entrance in like measure' or 'On all my steps and walk, dear "ord Jesus go with me!'"

The dropsy became worse so that only the hands weren't swollen and then the swelling went down, although there hadn't been any medical help. My mother was very thirsty much of the time and a craving for the "sour" or mineral water which we had at Fauernsau. The nearest place which also had this water was at Jebelhausen where my father's only brother lived. Jebelhausen was half Lutheran and half Jewish and there was a synagog there. No Jews were allowed in Goeppingen and there were no Catholics in Goeppingen. The only Catholic church in our neighborhood was in Eisingen; Klein Eisingen was Lutheran, Gross Eisingen was Catholic and there was a large church there.

My brother, probably 8 years old, had to go there 4 times a week in the summer and bring 2 crocks, one fastened on the back and the other on his chest. On Sundays several grownups would go there and get a supply which lasted several days. I think God used this water to cure the dropsy so that my mother's health improved. She was able to be up and in time could walk again and attend church services. When she had to be in bed she did knitting.

I had very happy school days because learning was easy and I enjoyed it. In our method of beginning reading, the letters were taught by sound, so I could read quite soon and also learned the Bible passages without help. My first teacher was very good to me. He did aggravate our Pastor quite often. In our church services, only 1 hymn was sung. If he noticed that the congregation sang heartily, he would change to an unfamiliar hymn tune with the next stanza. The Pastor appreciated good singing and the teacher knew this. The Pastor came out of the vestry then and began the liturgy. This teacher stayed only 2 years. Then we had a school-administrator, who was a Christian young man and was liked very much. This teacher taught me to sing several well-known folk songs. The administrator was followed by my teacher for the next 6 years and was still there when we left for America. He was a good teacher and an excellent organist, but he had an affliction which made him do queer things. For that reason he was assigned to our school. He would have been organist at the Royal Castle church in Stuttgart. After a few years this ailment disappeared.

Our pastor had only 1 congregation, no dual parish. He was concerned about the school and conducted Bible study every Tuesday and Thursday with the upper grades. In the summer we studied the New Testament and in the winter the Old Testament, mostly the historical books. Our school building was very long, so that when the pastor had the Bible study with the upper grades, the teacher was busy with the lower grades at the other end, and neither was disturbed by the other. We had no special reader; first the Primer (Fibel), then Bible History and the Bible. German language was stressed, also good penmanship and spelling. There was dictation, which was spelled; then it was written into copy books which were corrected by the teacher. We also learned arithmetic. While the teacher was busy with other classes, we had to do problems in arithmetic or write a theme or paragraphs on a suggested topic. We did not have geography or history lessons, only church history. The teacher spent much time on singing, also part singing. When my oldest sister attended school there was 4 part singing, especially if the older boys could sing bass. Our teacher had prepared tune editions for each voice in large print; the 1/4 notes were as large as a pea and the others in proportion. These tune editions were written for the Psalms and also for the hymns. The latter had been prepared by the pastor. When he came to our congregation the singing was not good, and therefore he had singing practice with the young people. At that time my mother and the aunts were not married.

When my sister Marie was confirmed, the bass voices were missing, so the singing was 3 part, unless the teacher played the bass part on the violin. My sister Marie was the star pupil for several years and then I had her place as long as I went to school. My sister Margareth could not learn as well as we two.

Every Wednesday there were prayer meetings in our church, in summer at 6 o'clock, in the winter at 10. On Friday at the same time was Catechism instruction. On Sunday morning services were held with sermon and in the afternoon, Christenlehre (probably Catechism review).

Until one was 18 everyone had to attend either Christenlehre or Sunday-school. One Sunday the older girls had to go to Sunday-school to the teacher for review of Bible passages and hymns, and we sang too; the confirmed boys had to attend Christenlehre; then the next Sunday it was reversed. No one was allowed to be absent without a valid excuse. The church was always filled morning and afternoon; everyone, young and old, went to church. The special days, as Apostle Days, were celebrated with services only in the forenoon and were called half-holidays. No work was done. The afternoons were spent by visiting or going for walks. I received much Christian instruction and training in my childhood and youth, for which I am still thankful to my dear Lord. Few children had this privilege.

Now I want to describe my home in Eschenbach and its surroundings. Our house was the last one on the south end of the village and had only 1 story. The house was arranged for comfortable living and was pleasant; the cow and sheep barns were built onto the house.

A brook was across the street and the brook flowed through the village. The first mile of the street had houses only on one side, then the street turned and had houses on both sides; then the street turned to the north again and here were the parsonage, school, and church. This was the north end. After the street left the brookside there were 3 rows of houses. The brook flowed toward the east and the street ran along side of it. It began from the corner of the street where my grandfather's inn stood. This was called Oberndorf (upper village). The houses which stood along the eastward brookside street were called Unterdorf (lower village).

The north end where church, school, cemetery, poor house, jail and court-house were, was called "Buehle" (perhaps meaning "the humpback"). Several families nearby this part had houses separated only by narrow alleys and small orchards. This was called "Tirol".

There was only a short distance between our house and the meadows and the woods and the Royal Forest and the cultivated acres. Some farmers and my grandfather owned woods. The highland timber grew close to the mountain top, called the White Wall. It was the highest point in the "Schwäbische Alp" which reached from Geislingen in the east to Kirchheim to the west. It sometimes happened that the sun would be shining on the mountain ridge while a thunderstorm would be raging down below in the valley. It was difficult to climb the mountain from our side; one had to crawl on hands and knees, but it was much easier from the east side. It was not as steep and one could ride all the way and it was wooded, but it was farther that way. We went this way for a school picnic and the pastor and family, and one time a pastor from the village on the other side came.

When the weather was clear there was a wonderful view. Directly north was Goeppingen, toward the east were the Hohenstaufen castle ruins and lower mountains. Then to the west was the Filz valley and the many villages to the south and the Teck castle ruins. This castle belonged to paternal ancestors of Queen Mary of England, who inhabited it during the early middle ages.

During my school years I was a nurse-maid during the summer and was not at home very much. The last summer before my confirmation I was at our pastor's. During the winter we all had to go to school and we were all at home, except the last year when I went to school. At that time Marie was working for the Notary Public near the Royal Health Baths at Bad Boll. Our pastor had prepared a petition for my mother to receive free treatments. There was a special wing for those receiving free baths. Otherwise

only the wealthy and the nobility were there for the mineral baths. We children visited our mother often, especially on Sundays. One was allowed to walk along the walks of the health resort but one could not pick anything from the shrubs or trees. There was always wonderful music. My sister stayed there only 1 year, then she worked for our uncle Walz who was the husband of our Aunt Katherine. My grandfather had assigned all his property to him and had living quarters added to the inn. My uncle Koepe sold his property in the spring to go to America. My aunt wanted one of our girls to go with them, but one did not want to go alone, so both my sisters, Marie and Margareth received permission to leave. This winter we were all at home once more. Marie came home Feb 2 to get ready for travel. They left beginning of April. That summer, my brother and I had to do the work. And since both of us were quick tempered and quarrelled often, this made our dear mother sad.

The following winter was a very severe one with deep snow. A little southwest from our house was the Lothenberg, where about a dozen families lived who attended our church and the children our school. This winter only a 10 year old girl came. My brother still went to school and would be confirmed in the spring. When he came home from school we looked out and saw that she fell into the snowbanks. My mother sent out by brother who was tall and strong to bring her to our house. She would have been frozen to death because it was very cold and she still had two miles to her home.

At one time there was a renowned Catholic church and monastery on this hill. The people in Eschenbach had to attend church here and the dead were buried here. The church had a famous picture of Mary and the Catholics still came to make pilgrimages there, although the church had been Lutheran for years. One pastor would not allow this anymore. Not long after this he did not return from a walk and no one saw him again. A church was built then in Eschenbach and the church on the hill was dismantled, the organ, bells, and life-sized crucifix and other items were brought to the small church. The picture of Mary was bought by a Catholic congregation and had a festival procession when it was taken away. My mother remembered when the bells were lifted onto the new church; she was about 5-6 years old. Her mother was one of the first to be buried in the new cemetery.

After my brother was confirmed he helped my Tante Schmidt who was a widow and had a daughter who was as old as our Margareth. Tante had sold most of her land and only kept cows, so she could use him. This last year I was home alone with my mother. It was a happy time. There was enough work; I had to do all the heavy work, cut grass for hay for the cow for summer and winter. We had enough land, so we could raise potatoes and vegetables and some special grain used for baking bread. My grandfather did the plowing and seeding with my uncle's horses. After the grain was cut and tied in bundles, he brought it to our neighbor's granery, where I threshed it. We did not have a granery.

My mother was quite well this year so she could be up most of the time and also do some housework. There was much work with raising flax and hemp and preparing the flax for spinning. Our pleasure and happiness came with a letter from America; first it was their travel description, there was a bad storm on the ocean so that the main mast broke. They were well and liked it.

There were no frivolous parties such as dances and balls in our village because the village reeve did not allow them and his permission for such celebrations were necessary. After 1848 he had to be more lenient. There was very little revolutionary activity in our village, except that the young men had drill meetings, only with sythes and a drum. In Goepingen some of the officials had an unwelcome serenade of charivari. The army remained loyal to the king.

These last years were spent almost entirely in Eschenbach. Before my sisters left home, we visited two times in Geislingen, where we had relatives from our mother's family. This was very interesting because we walked on the mountain tops until we came to Geislingen which is in the valley. Geislingen is a very old city. The streets are very narrow and the houses have several stories, the upper ones extending over the lower. We also visited our father's uncle who lived near Kirchheim. One passed through two villages, then through Bad Boll. It was not royal property anymore but belonged to a Christian Association; then two more villages which were near the Castle Teck ruins and other castle ruins in the distance. This was very interesting. We older children had no free Sundays except after "Christenlehre" or Sunday-school. In the summer I did walk up to half of the mountain side with my best school-friend. We had a beautiful view and picked wild flowers, sang, and enjoyed the echo. We were the same age and several years later she joined an organization which went to Palestine to form a colony near Jerusalem,

In the winter we were busy spinning the flax into yarn so that it could be brought to the weaver in the spring and then the material could be bleached. Till 11 o'clock we had "Spinnstunde" (A spinning club) which we had at our Tante Schmidt. We were 5 or 6 girls who lived in Oberdorf. We had many happy hours, visiting and singing, and if it was a beautiful evening we would get the wood sled from the shed and pull each other up and down the street. We couldn't do this too long because a certain quota had to be finished by the time the night watchman called 11 o'clock. Then we went home. Then I had to measure if I had enough and then bandage my mother's foot and then to bed.

My mother was very homesick for my sisters and wanted to go to America, but my father had no desire to go. He was very good to my mother; I never heard him scold about the doctor bills or about us. At last in the spring of 1849 he decided to go to America to please us, and sold everything and made arrangements for the travel to America. A relative of my mother's, a widow and her son travelled with us, also a girl from Heinigen, who had an uncle in New York. The uncle had visited her family several years ago and wanted to take her along then, but her mother did not allow it then. The mother had died now and the father was remarried. She asked my father to advance her travel expenses, her uncle would repay it.

Early in June we started out for America. My uncle Walz took us to Goepingen, from where we travelled by railroad to Stuttgart. Then we travelled on a steamer down the Neckar to Mannheim. Here the revolutionary element had a large gathering and the leaders addressed the assembly and the common soldiers had taken the Duke prisoner and led him in triumph around the city. The King of Prussia declared war against them. Mannheim was the most beautiful city I saw on the entire trip. From here we travelled on a larger steamer down the Rhin to Rotterdam. This was enjoyable too.

Rotterdam is a very old city with narrow streets, stairs and the canals that cross the city. Many large ships can move in them. From Rotterdam we travelled to Havre on the North Sea, which was very rough and many people were sick. We were in Havre several days before the ship sailed. We had to buy our own provisions, no meals were furnished, we had to cook our own meals. The ship was not large, only 200 passengers could be accommodated; the name of it was Switzerland. Four persons had to sleep in 1 bed. We four women folk were fortunate that our cabin was an upper one near the large opening and we were not sea sick. My father and the boys were in front. My father was seasick almost the entire trip. He was so "out of sorts" that we didn't hear a friendly word from him. No wonder! We were to blame that he was travelling to America.

At the beginning of the ocean crossing it seemed we would have a disturbance. A young man had arranged a dancing party on the deck, but it didn't last long. One of the sailors was a young German, who was brought on deck by the helmsman, who tied him to the ship's wall and beat him with the tow rope. The young man who arranged the dance came up to the helmsman and began to beat him; then the captain came with a long pole; now the dancer ran down the stairs and hid. The helmsman looked for him but couldn't find him. An older sailor, a German, told us that if the helmsman had a grudge against these two, we should not interfere, but if anyone of us is hurt, we should confront him in a group. We had a quiet time now, the trouble-maker did not feel safe to be seen on deck for a long time. There was no storm, only a strong wind at times. A few days of calm too, so we had a good voyage. We saw whales and during the calm the whales swam around our ship like a herd of sheep. The ocean voyage took four weeks. Our ship could not enter the harbor because one person on board had small-pox. We were taken to the New York harbor in a steamer and then brought to our lodging place. The innkeeper sent someone to find and bring Christine's uncle. The morning hours were going by and the uncle did not come and we wanted to go on that day. A German employee said he was well acquainted here and he would go with us to find him. We girls went along and ran around without results, which one man noticed and spoke to us. We didn't understand him, he then motioned for us to follow him. He went to our house and a woman came out and spoke to us in different languages and finally she asked us if we didn't have an address. When she saw it, she said it was the address of the bakery he had rented to someone. Christina had another address which her uncle's son had given her. When the young woman saw this, she said: "This is where they live" and showed us the house across the street. We went there and a 10 year old girl opened the door and took us down into the dining room. Christine's aunt said that the uncle would be with my father now. He came before the noon meal. Here we met the two grown up daughters and the dressmaker. After the meal the uncle showed us his house, very beautiful, as a wealthy American could afford it. He went with us to our lodging and paid my father for Christine's fare. In the evening we boarded a river steamer and travelled up the Hudson to Albany.

This was the night from the third to the fourth of July. I saw a Fourth of July celebration as never again. By that evening our things were at the railroad station and we travelled by train to Buffalo, and then with a steamboat to Toledo, then on a canal boat to Fort Wayne. We arrived here during the night. The boat tenders began to unload our things which we did not want to allow. Then some people told us that the boat could not wait any longer. Now we sat on our boxes and cartons at the canal. It was a beautiful moonlit night. A man came who was waiting for the mail-boat. He asked to whom we wanted to go. When we told him to Koepf, he said he could tell us the way to Fort Wayne, and he did too. He was the scoundrel who coaxed my uncle to Fort Wayne with impossible stories. I saw him several times at Uncle Koepf's. At the sale of the land he was the "middle man" and cheated my uncle

of \$ 600 and was guilty of other dishonest dealings. The two boys and I got started in the morning and found the way. My father looked for my sisters; they had given us the address of a store where we could ask for them. Margareth came to meet us when we were half-way to Fort Wayne with the ex-team.

We stayed with Uncle Koepf for several days until we found a house. I found work too; the husband was German and his wife was English; there were 6 children. There was enough work and I was paid 75 cents a week; the children and their mother were good to me. My sister Marie came to see me after a few weeks and after seeing everything told me that I could not stay here any longer; I could never learn anything. "You must work for a lazy woman who shows her way once and you must learn for yourself" was her advice. I stayed for a few weeks more; then I worked for the Hamiltons; Mrs Hamilton was a sister of Mrs. Breckenridge where Marie worked. The Hamiltons were young people and had 1 child about 2 years old. Mrs. Hamilton let me do everything and I stayed through the winter. In the spring they moved into the country and I did not want to go along. In spring Marie was married and I took her place. Mrs. Breckenridge had died shortly before and now his mother came to manage the household.

My sister Margreth married a half a year earlier and they lived with my parents. Both husbands, Margreth's and Marie's were carpenters. When we came to Fort Wayne there was a cholera epidemic; about 39 persons in the congregation had died. My sister had attended services at Dr. Sihler's congregation (St Paul) so we went there too. There I saw Prof. Wolter several times when he conducted the liturgical service. He also died of cholera and I attended the funeral services. Dr. Sihler's sermons made a deep impression on me. They were very personal, like one friend speaking to another, or like a father speaking to his child; they were easy to remember.

Mrs. Breckenridge Sr still had her home in Covington Ky. and wanted to go there in the summer for several weeks with the 4 children; the oldest was 7 and the youngest one and a half years old. I had little desire to go along but the children were used to me; she encouraged me and also gave me \$ 1.25 a week instead of a dollar.

Shortly before that Margreth's husband went to Logansport to see if he could find suitable work there; then, if so, she would follow him. We agreed that when I came back, (the canal also went through Logansport) I would let her know and she would come to the boat. I had received word that Margreth was in Logansport.

I liked the region around Covington, but I did not meet a single German person. We did all the work, so there was enough to do. At last, after 9 weeks instead of 4, we went home. On Sunday evening I put the children to bed earlier, so I could watch when we came to Logansport. There were many people at the landing place, also my brother-in-law. Through the window I asked him where Margreth is. He told me she had gone home. I answered that I thought she liked it. He told me then that Margreth had died two weeks before. That was a severe blow to me and I was allowed to spend a day there. The relatives who came from Germany with us lived there and I stayed with them. Now I could see where she had lived and also go to her grave. The reason I did not get word about Margreth's death was that my father would not allow it. He was afraid that I would be homesick and die too. I did not stay with the Breckenridge family much longer. My hands became very sore with infection around the fingernails, so I could not do the work anymore. I came home. Then I went to work at Ewings. The girl who had worked in the kitchen got married. I was there 3 years.



In these years there was a death in the family almost every year. A year after Margreth died, my brother died of typhoid fever in Logansport where he had been an apprentice blacksmith. My father went to see him, but he was in a coma and did not know my father. About half a year later my mother died. She was sick only a few days. After Margreth had moved away, my parents lived with Marie. Soon after this, Marie's half-year old baby girl died and my grandfather in Germany. These were serious calls for reflection.

We had a Young Women's Society in the congregation; I was a member from the beginning. At first we did not have anyone helping us. Then Dr. Sihler sent a student who should read to us and sing with us. The first one was Link, and others I don't remember all the names. One could not sing at all. Probably that is why Pastor Foehlinger taught singing. Then Student Sommer began to review the sermon with us at the direction of Pastor Kuehn. Dr. Sihler was in St. Louis at this time to substitute for Dr. Walther and Rev. Wyneken who had gone to Germany. When Student Sommer left, Pastor Foehlinger introduced another young student by the name of Dicke. The name and person was unknown to me then. He also reviewed the sermon and read to us. He wasn't with us very long because he had to take his final examination very quickly and go to Frankenlust, Michigan where there was a cholera epidemic and Pastor Sievers was also sick.

About this time my father married again, a widow with three daughters. At first they lived in Fort Wayne, but later rented a farm. About a year later I received a letter from Pastor Heinrich Dicke in which he proposed marriage to me. That was a surprise! I didn't know him at all, had never spoken to him personally or met him anywhere else. I didn't know if he was from North or South Germany. I had no inclination to marry. I was happy where I was. It was not possible for me to say yes to the marriage proposal. But he did not give up, and wrote again and again and gave reasons which compelled him to realize that it was God's will that I should become his wife. Finally, I too thought that it was God's will and became engaged to him in a letter. I did not see my Heinrich until a few days before our wedding.

That summer the synodical convention met in Cleveland and Pastor Lindemann had charge of the congregation at the time. He came to see me one day, saying that he had a letter from Dr. Sihler in which he should announce my approaching marriage the next Sunday. Pastor Dicke would come from Cleveland to get married. I said this was impossible, because I had nothing ready and furthermore the Ewings were gone for several weeks to Saratoga N.Y. and planned to stay longer. There was no one in the house except the hired hand, the negro houseboy and I. Then the wedding was set for October 9th.

The 9th of October was on a Sunday and in the afternoon Pastor Foehlinger performed the ceremony because Dr. Sihler had to be away. The wedding celebration was at my sisters which was my home now. Then we started for our new home. The first day with the canal-boat to Toledo, then with a steamer to Detroit. Here we stayed over Sunday with Pastor Schaller. Then with a steamer to Lower Saginaw and Frankenlust. My Heinrich had received a call to Frankentrost before he left for our wedding. Dr. Sihler and Prof. Craemer advised him to accept the call, which he had wanted to do. Now he had to deal with the congregation in Amelith, which had built a house for us. While all things were being settled we stayed with Rev. Sievers and this was such a wonderful time. The Sievers family was such a lovable family and had a very inspiring family devotional service.

Then our things were sent to Frankentrost and we started out on the trip, Heinrich on the horse and I walked the 17 miles to Saginaw. Here we stayed with a family with which Heinrich was acquainted from Nuernberg. The next day I could ride with the Frankenmuth merchant. I had met Mrs. Roebelen before. After a few days we two travelled the 7 miles to Frankentrost as before.

Our things were there, so we could move into the parsonage at once. The people were so friendly, I was never homesick. Because Heinrich would have fever spells whenever he preached, I taught the school. The congregation did not allow him to preach for a while; then the fever spells stopped. In the fall of 1854, the 9th of October, our first child was born, Karoline; and on Jan 11th 1856 our Heinrich was born. Now we were all well and everything in the congregations was peaceful, so we were real happy.

Then a call came from 3 congregations in Wisconsin near Mayville. Both congregations, Frankentrost and Frankenhilf, would not give my Heinrich a release, so the call was returned. It was sent again and this time it was formulated with many sound reasons, that the congregations realized that the call must be accepted. They let us leave in peace and harmony. This was at the end of January 1857. My brother-in-law, John Herman Dicke, who had been sick had come to us from London. After he was well, he worked in Frankenmuth. He moved with us. We spent several days with Pastor Roebelens and then in Detroit with Pastor Ficks. We were in Milwaukee by Sunday and we stayed with a member of Pastor Fleischmann. On Monday we arrived at our new home. My brother-in-law left soon after this for St. Louis, where the other brothers and their sister were.

There was much work, but there was peace and harmony. Soon all three congregations had teachers. At first there were only temporary teachers in the upper congregation until the congregation built a house for the teacher. Then a teacher Hoppe from our own seminary (then in Fort Wayne) was called. He was a good teacher and was there about four years, when the split came.

A man in the congregation died and then his brother wanted to marry the widow. When that could not be done, they were married by a pastor of the Wisconsin Synod, which was quite liberal and unionistic at that time. The pastor who performed the ceremony had two congregations in the neighborhood, and as he himself said, in the one congregation he instructed according to the Lutheran catechism, and in the other according to the Reformed catechism. Several members announced their withdrawal from our congregations, because of private confession which was customary in our congregations. After many meetings and consultations of both synods proved that father was without fault, the people who left because of private confession admitted that the only complaint against it was that they couldn't kneel so long. Then father accepted a call to congregations in Shawano county. All this is in father's autobiography.

Although we lived in circumstances that could be called "almost poverty", our heavenly Father knew and showed that we needed food and clothing. We never had to go to bed hungry. We had the necessary clothing, although it was the plainest. We were well, so that the children and I worked on the farm and in the garden. This and other work was blessed so abundantly by our dear Lord, that all our many debts could be paid on our farm and home and we could look forward to a quiet old age without worry about provisions. This blessing I am enjoying now.

It did not harm our children that they had to endure some hardships in their youth. All of them have a good livelihood and in religious matters they have the pure preaching of God's Word in abundance. If they have a cross to bear, they know that the Heavenly Father sent it to keep us sinful beings on the way to salvation. For this I thank and praise Him, for happiness and the sorrow I experienced in my life. I pray that He will graciously regard me for my Savior's sake and call me to Him through a blessed death. Dear children, please join me in this petition of thanksgiving.



Kathrina Dicke  
Autobiography

Now I have fulfilled your wish and have written my biography. You must excuse the mistakes in some of the names, I could not remember how they were spelled. I wrote to much of my childhood and youth in Germany because I was reliving it as I wrote what seemed important to me.

(It is my prayer) that the loving God will unite all of us, children and children's children before His throne for the same of Jesus Christ. Ah, that will be a joy! Oh, that we were there!

Your mother and grandmother,

Kathrina Dicke

This is a translation of the original. Copies of the original were made by H Daib in 1936. The translation was made and completed in June 1971 by Eleanor Daib, a granddaughter.

Grandmother Dicke died September 23, 1930 at the age of 97 years, 10 months and 26 days. The funeral was held at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Town Washington, Bonduel Wisconsin on September 28, 1930. The Committal was in the church cemetery. Pastor Herbert Borchers preached on Revelation 14,13 and also had the committal service. 30