

Eventhough Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492, it wasn't until the early 1600's that young, adventurous Europeans travelled to America to establish new homes. The first colonists from England, Netherlands, and other European countries settled along the East coast from Massachusetts to the Virginias.

The German adventurers had to clear land farther west in what is now considered the Midwest -- Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana. They came in small groups from the same area in Germany, cleared the land, built crude homes and churches and raised their families. Commodities from Germany were scarce, and they had to learn many skills in order to survive. Also, they eyed the soft moccasins which the Indians wore, and they began to fashion some of their shoes accordingly.

When Ludwig Koldewei, son of Ludwig Koldewei I, came to America from his home at Hanover, Germany, he embarked at Bremen and arrived in New York on November 28, 1856. He became a naturalized citizen of the United States in the Adams County, Indiana circuit court on October 8, 1858, and had to swear that he was no longer subservient to Ernst August, King of Hanover and promise his allegiance to the United States of America. He bought an 80-acre farm in Union Township, Adams County, Ind. from James Stevens, which stayed in the Koldewey name until 1961, when Clara Koldewey sold it to Arnold Thieme. James Stevens had been given and granted this 80-acre parcel by President James Polk on May 10, 1848.

Ludwig Koldewei added another 40-acre parcel of land and farmed this as one unit. I remember that we always referred to this tract as the "other place". Ludwig and his bride, the former Sophie Thieman, raised their 10 children on this farm in their log cabin. The logs were later covered with wood boards. Then when son Louis was married, he raised the four of us on this farm: Nora, Reinhold, (me) Mildred and Lewis.

All the little communities of Germans adhered to their respective low-German dialects which had been spoken in their community in Germany. The dialects in the different communities were all a little different, and one could easily identify the speaker's community from his dialect. All church services were conducted in the proper high German. I was confirmed in German at the Immanuel Lutheran Church in 1930. The church was built in 1891. Now, in 1992, they no longer have German services, although not many years ago, they still had German services (in addition to the English service) one Sunday a month.

When the colonists settled, they had to be very independent for there were no stores, no newspapers. Ludwig Koldewei made a cobbler's bench on which he added an awl and various sizes of lasts, so that he could repair the family's shoes. He also made a 4½ foot tall shoe repair stand, so that he could repair different size shoes while he was standing. I use both the cobbler's bench (which we use in our living room) and the standing repair tool when I give my "Old Shoe Talk" to different groups and show old shoes for men, women and children which we collected during our 27 years in the shoe business.

There were itinerant cobblers who came occasionally to repair shoes, cut hair, pull teeth and whatever odd jobs needed to be done. They were always welcome, because they could relay the news and gossip from their previous communities.



By this time the "Koldewei" had been changed to "Koldewey" and the family statistics are as follows:

K.H. Ludwig Koldewey 1835-1905

Wife: Sophia Louisa Margaretha Thieman Koldewey 1841-1914

Children:

Fred 1862-1937 (Wife - Amelia)

Emma (Mrs. Fred Krusckeberg) 1863-

Louise 1866-1887

Caroline 1868-

William 1870- (Wife Anna)

Sophia 1872- (Mrs. Fred Grote)

Mathilda 1878-1953

Mary 1881-1910 (Mrs. Gustav Reinking)

Louis 1886-1955 (Wife Clara Hoffman)

1878 - 1953

Life centered around the Lutheran communities. A German tradition that prevailed into the 1940's was the New Year's eve "New Year's shooting", whereby the young men from our church went on foot to the homes of the single maidens in the church and repeated a long, German, memorized speech including wishes of good health and romance. Then they would give a gun salute and enter the home of their host for cookies and wine. It was a good thing that they walked from house to house all night, or they would have gotten extremely drunk. Reinhold only went with them once.

Two prominent men by the name of Koldewey are found in the American college history books. The following is quoted in the "New Century Encyclopedia of Names":

"Koldewey - Karl Christian born an Buchen (heim), Hanover, Germany, Hanover, Germany, October 26, 1837. Died at Hamburg, Germany, May 18, 1908. German Arctic explorer. He undertook in 1868 the first polar expedition to Spitzbergen and an expedition (1869-70) to eastern Greenland, where he discovered the large Franz Yosef Fjord."

"Koldewey - Robert, born at Blanburg, Germany, September 10, 1855. Died at Berlin February 4, 1925. German archeologist. In 1899 he directed the German excavation at Babylon. Author of 'Investigation at Assos' (1902-21) with others and 'Die Tempel in Babylon'."

Pamela Grapner has visited the Pergamon Museum several times and has seen Karl's photograph. Also in 1991 Pam and I visited the museum and took pictures of the Ishtar Gate which Robert Koldewey excavated in Babylon. The Ishtar Gate of Babylon is today the main attraction of the Pergamon Museum. The excavation, which took place by the Euphrates River in Iraq was headed by Robert Koldewey from March 26, 1899, to spring of 1917.



Lewis W. Koldewey was born on the farm homestead near Decatur, Indiana, on November 18, 1921. He attended the parochial elementary school by the Immanuel Lutheran Church, as we other three children had, and graduated from Decatur High School in 1940, where he was editor of the high school year book with a major in journalism, and a star catcher for the high school baseball team. This athletic distinction gave him a one-year scholarship to Indiana Central College in 1941. After his year at college, he worked in Decatur at a service station in order to save enough money to continue college. However, he foresaw the imminence of World War II, so he registered for Service and entered the army on July 1, 1942. He was an officer in the field artillery in 1943; he took pilot training and became an observation pilot; he was the writer for the camp military and played baseball and football for the army. He suffered from battalion ears and was given a medical discharge from the army with the rank of lieutenant.

Lewis enrolled at Valparaiso University near Chicago and again distinguished himself with his athletic prowess. He was president of his senior class, as well as president of his fraternity. He graduated with a Juris doctor of law degree.

While at Valparaiso, Lewis was very much attracted to a little freshman girl, Lois Sauter of Portland, Oregon. Lois was born July 28, 1926, and they were married on September 7, 1942, and moved to Chicago, where Lew worked for an insurance company. On November 13, 1948, he was accepted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation under J. Edgar Hoover in Chicago, and then lived in Washington, DC. During World War II, his German background served him well, and he was assigned to interrogate German prisoners in the German language for the FBI. Also, for the FBI in Los Angeles he interviewed German immigrants for espionage.

Four children were added to this union:

Michelle, born August 27, 1949, lives in Walnut Creek, Cal. part-time student

Son: Sasha born August 6, 1975. In 1992 attends high school, shoe salesman and model

Lynn, born November 13, 1951, lives in Walnut Creek; works for Senior Citizens

Joanie Michaelson, born March 16, 1956, lives in Walnut Creek, transcribes medical records for local hospital, married to Rodney Michaelson

Children: Jessica, born September 18, 1975, H.S. student

Naomi, born September 22, 1981, elementary student

Jill, born January 4, 1959, computer whiz, worked for John Hancock Insurance company until recession in 1991. Going to school part-time and working part-time in Boston

Lewis was assigned to the Phoenix, Arizona, office, and on April 12, 1950, he was the senior agent for FBI Los Angeles for 14 years for San Bernardino County. During this time they lived in Arcadia and San Bernardino. Their last move was in June, 1972, when Lew was transferred to the San Francisco office, and they made their home across the bay in Walnut Creek. He worked in the San Francisco until 1978, when President Nixon made it mandatory for all FBI agents over 55 to retire.

A born story teller, Lew delights his audiences with the harrowing details of his exciting experiences.

Following his forced retirement at such a young age, Lew did various



jobs, including selling solid brass adornments for a hardware company which purchased supplies from Germany. In 1981 the Federal Government asked Lew to assume various hats while working as an investigative consultant for the U.S. Air Force and the Department of Defense, a position which he still assumes to a small extent. From 1988 through 1991 Lew also did work for the nuclear regulatory commission.

At this time, in the spring of 1992, Lew and Lois still live in their Walnut Creek home at 235 Vallecito Lane. Lois enjoys walking, an exercise which Lew does not indulge in because of a total hip replacement, but they both enjoy their swimming pool.