

Introduction

Somewhere I read that a glutton for punishment is a person who habitually takes on unpleasant and burdensome tasks, or an unreasonable amount of work. In earlier centuries the expression applied to someone being a glutton for work, changed later to punishment.

Whatever the meaning, I probably fit the bill. Late in 2006 I published an ancestral study of the Fritz, Groh, Waiss and Wiedman families that came together in my parents' marriage, along with a brief history of the town where they married. Research for *New Light on Freistatt, Missouri: The Fritz, Groh, Waiss and Wiedman Family Legacies Meet* (2006) should have turned me from gluttony once and for all. Instead it prompted my spouse to ask, "When are you going to do my side?"

I answered her fateful question with a giggle. "Any time you want," I boasted without thinking. She called my bluff, and you hold the result in your hands.

Following Nancy's suggestion, I began gathering data on the ancestors of her parents, Leslie Irving Asher and Margaret Elizabeth Seigel. This rather narrow assignment soon widened to include both sides of both parents. I began wrestling with the lineage of Les's father William Leslie Asher and his mother Guri Bendina Hanson. Then it was time for Margaret's father Henry Edward Seigel and her mother Lena Althea Wheaton. I traced all sides back as far as I could, and included other people who were variously related by blood, marriage and common ancestors. The process resulted in separate treatments of the four seminal families in Part II (Asher), Part III (Seigel), Part IV (Wheaton) and Part VI (Rust and Hanson), although some overlap resulted. Part V (Washburn) continues the ancestral background of Part IV.

Part I includes almost two hundred pages of photographs with multiple photos on many pages, totaling well over a thousand photographs. The photos are sorted alphabetically by surname. Captions identify the people in the photos. The Index includes all persons mentioned in the captions and directs you to additional information about that person elsewhere in the volume.

The Asher train is Part II, "Ancestors and Descendants of John Asher (b. 1833) and Margaret Asher (b. 1840)." It will transport you back to the earliest Ashers, and in some cases the ancestors of spouses. As it moves into the twenty-first century the train collects the multiple descendants of John and Margaret Asher.

Part III, entitled "Ancestors and Descendants of Simon Seigel (d. 1909)," begins with Margaret Elizabeth Seigel's grandfather on her father's side. The story of Margaret's ancestry on her mother's side is told in Part IV, "Descendants of Thomas Wheaton," while Part V, "Descendants of Samuel Washburn (b. about 1782)," covers some of Margaret's other ancestors.

Part VI, entitled “Ancestors and Descendants of Hans Olsen Rust (1806-1881) and Ingebjorg Colbjornsen (1813-1883),” takes up the history of Les’s maternal grandfather (Stengrim Rust Hanson), and incorporates the ancestry of Les’s maternal grandmother (Gumbjor Knudson Rauk). A number of people discussed in Part VI are descendants of Hans Olsen Rust but are not in the Asher family line.

Some biographical entries appear in more than one Part. For example, my spouse Nancy Irene Asher and her sisters Carol Frances Asher and Martha Jane Asher are identified as Asher descendants in Part II, but as descendants of Simon Seigel (d. 1909) they also appear in Part III, as descendants of Thomas Wheaton in Part IV, and as descendants of Hans Olson Rust in Part VI. Part V recounts the ancestors of their maternal grandmother, Lena Althea Wheaton, and some of Lena’s siblings.

Supplementary notes added to individual biographies are printed only once, namely, the first time the individual’s biography appears in the text of the volume. If you encounter the person’s name again in a later Part, a reference directs you to the Part in which that person’s supplementary note first appeared.

All references to women use only maiden names, including the Index. For example, my spouse is consistently referred to as Nancy Irene Asher and not Nancy Asher Groh. This makes lineage easier to track.

When a date in parenthesis follows a name, such as (b. 1833) or (d. 1902), the date distinguishes that person from another person with the same name but different dates. Without the date added it is impossible to distinguish one person from the other or to index identical names correctly. You may consult the Index under “Alexander Asher” for examples.

Part VII includes recipes that first appeared in the “Asher Cookbook” in the 1950s. Some descendants in the William Leslie Asher family submitted their favorite recipes while others offered recipes they received from earlier family members or compiled themselves.

A word about sources is in order. In the Acknowledgments I cited people on whose research shoulders I stand. Occasionally I found and used trustworthy information that contradicted their data, and I added missing information whenever possible. Primary sources, including online census records, letters, files, photographs, ship records, social security records and other sources are not always referenced, although some are cited. Richard Leon Seigel (b. 1933) and his spouse Barbara Jean Williams provided an extensive array of materials from the federal Pension Office of the Bureau of Interior, which I used to trace the pursuit of a pension by Simon Seigel (d. 1909), a Civil War veteran.

Most living descendants in this volume are American or Canadian citizens, but the ancestors of my spouse and her sisters make up a veritable United Nations. The early Asher clan came from Scotland; the Seigels came from the Kingdom of Wuerttemberg in southwest Germany; Elizabeth Jones, wife of Simon Seigel (d. 1909), immigrated from England; Hans Olsen

Rust and his wife Ingebjorg Colbjornsen arrived from Norway; and the Wheaton and Andrew clans (the lineage of the mother of Margaret Elizabeth Seigel) lived in the northeastern United States. The five flags on the book's cover reflect this mixture of national backgrounds.

This volume covers almost 1,000 individuals (992 at last count) and 652 families. The research reached back to the 18th century and forward to the youngest descendant born in the 21st century. This list shows how many males and females carry each surname in the pages that follow.