

## *Chapter II: Habicht-Alferink*

Last Revised: November 22, 2013

My mother, **IRENE LOUISE {HABICHT} NEAL**, was born in Ashtabula, Ohio, on April 24, 1907; she was baptized on June 16 in that year in the Second Congregational Church<sup>1</sup> in Ashtabula. Her family seems to have been living then at 35 York Street (now 611 West 29th Street), and my mother was probably born at home there. Ashtabula, though originally settled by New Englanders (it is located in what is termed the Western Reserve, part of Connecticut's western lands), was by the start of the 20th century an industrial and port city heavily populated by immigrants. It had an estimated 15,000 to 18,000 residents about the time my mother was born. My mother was the oldest of three children who lived.<sup>2</sup>

Evidently my mother's family moved quite frequently. The 1908 city directory shows they were living at the corner of Commodore (now East 23rd Street) and McKelvey Streets, between the center of Ashtabula proper and that city's harbor area on Lake Erie.

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<sup>1</sup> This church, founded in 1878, was still in existence as of 2007 (and is part of the United Church of Christ). It is located on the southwest corner of Lake and Catherine (now West 3rd) Streets in the harbor area; the current building was constructed in 1905, just before Irene's baptism. She probably was baptized in this church because it was closest to the family's residence and also because it had a mission outreach program to the city's newest immigrants. See slide 12512 for an exterior view of the Second Congregational Church in 2007 and slides 12856-60 for interior views taken in 2008. The interior is said to look much the same as it did in 1907.

<sup>2</sup> My mother's brother, Harry, who was born in 1910, had an identical twin named Edward who died of whooping cough when the twins were a few months old. The youngest sibling was Edna, who was born (in Michigan, I think) in 1912. Since the site of the first Habicht farm in Dearborn, Michigan, now has a street named Edna, one wonders whether there might be some connection: did my grandfather name her Edna after the street, or was there an Edna in the neighborhood after whom both were named? See slide 12501 for a general view of York Street in 2007. Ashtabula changed its street numbers sometime during the 1920s, and matching today's homes with the numbers of the earlier system requires comparing city directories before and after the change. Unfortunately, because some houses have been replaced, the matches cannot be fixed with precision in those instances.

On the 1910 census, though, they are listed as renting a home at 24 York Street (now 514 West 29th Street), near Second Street in that same general area but on the other side of the Ashtabula River; my mother is correctly described on the census as three years old. The 1910 city directory shows them at 49 (now 1813) Harbor Street, slightly nearer the harbor.<sup>3</sup>

No later than early 1912, and perhaps a year or so sooner, my mother's family moved to Michigan, where her Habicht grandparents had moved a few years earlier. On the 1920 census, my mother is listed with her father (her mother having died in 1914) in Dearborn Township of Wayne County, Michigan; here she is described as being twelve years old, but the census that year was taken before her birthday and this probably accounts for the discrepancy. The 1920 census also states that my mother had attended school during the previous year. Dearborn at that time was an essentially rural area located twenty or so miles west of Detroit: Henry Ford was just beginning to buy up property that would become in time the headquarters of his automotive empire and the center of a heavily populated area.

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<sup>3</sup> My files include photocopies of (microfilmed) census sheets, organized by couples, usually with duplicates for individuals who can be found both as children and as adults (that is, on the census sheets of their parents' households and subsequently on the census sheets for their own households). For Ashtabula, there are also copies of the excellent contemporary Sanborn insurance maps that show the locations of the streets mentioned here. See slides 12502 through 12504 for a general view of the intersection of Commodore and McKelvey Streets; slide 12501 for a general view of York Street; and slide 12507 for a general view of Harbor Avenue. All these slides were taken in 2007. The houses at 24 York and 35 York in 2008 are shown in slides 12863-64 and 12861-62, respectively; they appear to be the same ones that were there in 1907. The same is true for what was 49 Harbor Avenue, shown in slides 12868-69, also taken in 2008.

My mother died in St. Joseph Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on November 18, 1989. She had declared for many years that she would die of a stroke during her eighty-third year, as her father and his father had before her, and she did. She is buried next to my father in Michigan Memorial Park, in Carleton, Michigan (west of Flat Rock).<sup>4</sup>

My mother's parents were **OTTO HABICHT** and **JENNIE {ALFERINK}**<sup>5</sup> **HABICHT**. The oldest of seven children, Otto was born (in Cleveland, Ohio, according to both his 1906 marriage application and his 1946 application for a Social Security card) on February 24, 1884 – although the latter application also erroneously states his year of birth as 1885. The 1900 census confirms that the year was 1884, however, so it must be the Social Security application that is wrong.

Jennie (who was usually called by her nickname, Ricka) was born on September 10, 1888, in Ashtabula where her parents then lived. There being no 1890 census, we must wait until 1900 to see her appear on a census form. In that year she is listed as a “general servant” in the Stoll House hotel, located at 14 Spring Street in Ashtabula, where she and about a dozen other hotel employees and its owner, Edward F. Stoll, were residing.<sup>6</sup> She is described as eleven years old. The city directory in 1902 states that she was boarding

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<sup>4</sup> See slides 03855 and 03856, taken in 1990.

<sup>5</sup> This name was sometimes spelled Alfrank, and even in other ways, but I use Alferink consistently.

<sup>6</sup> The Stoll House was on the south side of Spring Street (now West 46th Street) just east of Main Street. The 1900 census indicates that Jennie was not employed during five of the twelve months preceding June 1, 1900, and also that she had not attended school during any of those twelve months. This means that she either commenced steady work at the Stoll House late in 1899 or, more likely, worked part-time throughout the period from June 1899 through May 1900. Since Jennie is shown being able to read and write, evidently she had attended school for a time before May 1899 but did not return to school that fall.

with her mother at 145 Sibley Street (now, probably, either 731 or 741 East 16th Street) and that she was a waitress at the Stoll House. According to my mother, Jennie was working at the Hotel Ashtabula, presumably in that establishment's restaurant, when she met Otto, so evidently she had changed jobs sometime after 1902 but before 1906. The Hotel Ashtabula – which still exists, though not as an active hotel – may have been constructed soon after 1900. Because Jennie's brother was a railroad employee as Otto was, it could be that he introduced the couple.<sup>7</sup>

Otto and Jennie were married (presumably in Ashtabula) on December 24, 1906, by a Baptist minister named Walter A. King.

My grandfather spent most of his life farming but sometimes held wage jobs instead of or in addition to farming. The 1898 Ashtabula city directory lists him as a farmer in Township 10 of Ashtabula County, with a post office in Cork, Ohio. (He was just fourteen years old in that year.) Cork is located in Harpersfield Township and is quite a distance southwest of Ashtabula, below the city of Geneva. As we shall see later in this

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<sup>7</sup> See slides 05809 and 05810 for views of the Hotel Ashtabula in 1992 and slide 12500 (2007) for a general view of the site. There is no hotel named the Hotel Ashtabula on the Sanborn fire insurance maps or city directories for Ashtabula during this time period. In 1909, the site now occupied by this building had two residences on it, rather than a hotel, which seems to indicate that the current structure is a later one. It is likely, therefore, that when Jennie was working at the Stoll House it was still standing on this site but was later razed and the current building, also a hotel until recently, replaced it sometime after 1909. My mother probably knew the hotel only under its later name and naturally assumed that it was the one where her mother had worked. Whatever the circumstances, the Stoll House stood on the site shown in slide 12500. Views of the sites of 141 and 145 Sibley in 2008 can be seen in slides 12865-67. Some of the houses seem to have been removed during the century that had elapsed, so the precise locations of 141 and 145 Sibley are uncertain.

chapter, his parents were living in this area at this time at a farm that was on the boundary between Ashtabula County and Trumbull County. On the 1900 census, Otto is listed as a farm laborer in Ashtabula Township, located on the south side of the city of that name; he did not attend school during the previous year. Since the census sheet states that he could read and write, presumably he had attended school for awhile during the 1890s. Although his parents did not purchase property in Ashtabula Township until 1903, they are on the census there in 1900.<sup>8</sup> Then, no later than the time of his marriage in 1906, Otto had begun working for the Pennsylvania Railroad: he was a switchman when he got married in December of that year and then a conductor at the time the 1908 city directory for Ashtabula was published. On the 1910 census, Otto is shown living in Ashtabula, where he was renting, and is again listed as a railroad conductor.<sup>9</sup> All this gives us some clues about what he was doing, and when, but our knowledge is far from complete.

A year or two later, Otto and his family moved to Michigan. Judging from the fact that Otto Habicht is listed in the Detroit city directory in 1911 (and not thereafter), it may well be that he went to that city first, working there for some months before the rest of the family joined him; he is listed as a “drill hand” (might the abbreviation *hd* mean *head* instead?), and he lived at 26 Bushey Street. In April 1912 the Habichts moved to their

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<sup>8</sup> My mother and her sister both remembered that their father also farmed in Kingsville, east of Ashtabula. As a later part of this chapter will show, Otto’s parents owned property on South Ridge Road near Kingsville during the early years of the 20th century, and undoubtedly this is the property that they were referring to.

<sup>9</sup> The 1910 census notes that Otto had been out of work twelve weeks during calendar year 1909. It too states that both he and Jennie could read and write.

own farm. A little over two years later, at 6:00 am on October 3, 1914, Jennie died – of influenza, my mother told me, although her newspaper obituaries speak only of an illness lasting five weeks and the death record describes the cause of death as chronic nephritis (failure of the kidneys). Otto took her remains back to Ashtabula to be buried in Edgewood Cemetery there.<sup>10</sup>

According to the 1920 census, Otto and the three surviving children were residing on a farm in Dearborn Township in Wayne County. This farm was located on Town Line Road (now Inkster Road) near Ann Arbor Trail. Otto is listed as renting this farm, which a 1919 map of Dearborn that I found in the Library of Congress shows was owned by Otto's father, Edward Habicht, and so presumably Otto was paying rent to his father. (Edward was living with Otto and his family in 1920.) This farm, which stretched southward from Ann Arbor Trail and along Inkster Road and extended a bit below the Middle Rouge River, is now partially covered by Edward Hines Drive just south of Ann Arbor Trail. (Perhaps it was at this farm, on a prominent road, at which as a girl my mother sold produce – including to Henry Ford, she said.)<sup>11</sup>

My mother told me that her father owned two farms west of Detroit: one at Inkster Road and Ann Arbor Trail, the one that we have just identified, and another at the intersection

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<sup>10</sup> Jennie is buried in Grave 5 in Lot 129. This cemetery is just off the edge of the USGS map for North Ashtabula/Ohio but is on the USGS map for South Ashtabula/Ohio. See my 1992 photographs (slides 05798-05800) of her grave marker.

<sup>11</sup> See my copy of the large Library of Congress map of Dearborn, as well as the USGS map for Inkster/Michigan, for the location of the Habicht property. Also see slides 10464-10468, taken in 2003.

of Pardee and Pepper Roads. Pardee Road still exists, and Pepper Road, now largely gone (the remnants are called Snow Street), is shown on the 1919 map I found in the Library of Congress. It ran southeast from Michigan Avenue through what is now the Ford Motor Company's Research and Engineering Center and near to the Dearborn Inn. Pepper and Pardee Roads do not meet, at least on the 1919 map, but it is clear from how they lie on the map that they once did – near what is now Greenfield Village.<sup>12</sup> This property was in Dearborn as that town was before Henry Ford fixed his eye on it as a place to consolidate his operations following his enormous success between 1910 and 1920. It must be this latter farm, then, on which Otto and his family lived (with Edward Habicht) when they first came to Michigan from Ashtabula, after which they moved northwest to the farm on Ann Arbor Trail.<sup>13</sup>

Otto Habicht's second wife's name was Minnie Mason, a woman said to have been born in Marlette, Michigan, in 1893 who died during the early 1940s, about whom we know very little more. We do know that she was born Minnie Vanderwort, married a man named Charles H.A. Fields in 1909, was no longer this man's wife by mid-1910, and then

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<sup>12</sup> See slide 10480, taken in 2003, as well as the Library of Congress map, for a view of the area where Pardee and Pepper Roads once met.

<sup>13</sup> This summary generally agrees with the recollections of my mother's sister, Edna. She told me that her father moved to Detroit, where he worked a few years. Then, just about the time she was born in April 1912, the family moved to a farm on Ann Arbor Trail at Beech Road, outside of Dearborn. My mother does not mention this farm. Perhaps there were two farms, one of which my mother did not mention and the other of which Edna did not mention. It does seem likely that Otto came to Michigan before the rest of the family did.

married a man named Mason sometime between 1910 and 1921. On January 26 in the latter year, Minnie married Otto Habicht in Detroit.<sup>14</sup>

Otto and Minnie's movements during the 1920s and 1930s are not known. According to my cousin Janet, they lived in the Plymouth area about 1930, then perhaps somewhere in Lenawee County. The 1930 census shows Otto owning a dairy farm in Superior Township of Washtenaw County, between Plymouth and Ann Arbor, but there are no deeds to document his ownership of this farm and its exact location is not known. It is possible that Otto was paying for this property over time but never received ownership – perhaps because he could not keep up payments on it during the Depression. Sometime later, he may have farmed near South Lyon in Oakland County. In any case, during the Depression he does seem to have lost his farm, whether it was in Washtenaw County or in Oakland County.

By the time the 1940 census was taken, my grandfather and Minnie had relocated to a place at 12340 McCrone Road in Augusta Township of Washtenaw County. Although Otto's occupation is described as farmer, the 1940 census form shows that this place – worth \$600, it reports – was not a farm. This entry seems confirmed by real estate

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<sup>14</sup> Both Otto and Minnie are listed in the January 26, 1921, marriage record as being residents of Dearborn. Minnie was born on August 10, 1893, if the 1930 census is to be trusted. Otto later listed his mother's name as Freeman on his Social Security application, and before I had learned Minnie's family name I had come to wonder if that was in fact the name of his recently deceased second wife, especially since there was an unmarried Minnie Freeman born about 1893 living in Michigan on the 1910 and 1920 censuses (in Genesee County) whose parents were born in Canada, as Minnie's were said to have been. (The census for 1910 confirms this is correct: both Gilbert and Minerva {Weaver} Vanderwort were born in Canada, though by 1909 they evidently were living in Sanilac County, Michigan.)

information in 2012 describing the extent of the property at 12340 McCrone Road as .98 acres.) Furthermore, Minnie, not Otto, is listed as its owner, so its provenance is unknown. The work status of the two is a bit unclear, too, as Minnie is described as having private work (in the context of 1940, this means she was not being paid through one of the government's many work programs initiated in order to combat the Depression). Otto is shown not working at all, although some of the entries for him are ambiguous and indistinct. Presumably this place is where Minnie died, sometime during the early 1940s, after which Otto moved to the farm of his son, Harry, near Milan (also in Washtenaw County), where he seems to have lived from then through 1946.

In that year, my grandfather moved to a farm near Cass City, Tuscola County, which is in the "Thumb" area of Michigan. (Harry and his family also moved there in 1946.) Otto Habicht's Social Security application dated 1946 states that he was employed at an H.J. Heinz Company pickle receiving station in Gagetown, Michigan, which is not far from Cass City. He also is said to have lived at various times in Northville, Inkster, and Plymouth in Michigan, but if he did there are no details about where he resided and what he was doing during these years.

Later still, Otto lived in and around Milan (again) and in Oakville, both of which are near the border of Washtenaw County and Monroe County in Michigan and not far from the

place on McCrone Road.<sup>15</sup> His third wife was Helen Dobbin, who preceded my grandfather in death by a few months; she had been married at least one other time before they wed, but there is no information about Helen's previous husband(s) or the details (even the date) of her marriage to Otto Habicht. How this couple had met is not known, either, but in view of his earlier residence on McCrone Road this widow and widower might have been acquainted for a decade and more before they married.<sup>16</sup>

My grandfather died of a stroke – at (old) St. Joseph's Hospital in Ann Arbor, I believe – on September 22, 1966. He is buried in Marble Park Cemetery in Milan.<sup>17</sup>

Jennie's father and mother were **GERRIT**<sup>18</sup> **ALFERINK** and **JOANNA {WEIR} ALFERINK**. Gerrit was born in the Netherlands, probably sometime during the 1850s. One report gives his year of birth as 1853, but the age shown for him on a ship passenger list in 1881 would make him born in 1855; his death notice in 1898 suggests he might have been born as late as 1858. Gerrit was very likely born in Apeldoorn in the province of Gelderland (the Dutch province where one would most expect to find a family whose name ended in *-ink*). I cannot confirm either time or place using the information about

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<sup>15</sup> In Milan, Otto lived for some of the time on Arkona Road. See the USGS map for Milan/Michigan. For the house at 12340 McCrone Road, see digital image 01516, taken in 2012. Both places, especially the first, are a short distance from the Milan Federal Correctional Institution (a low-security prison established in 1933), which over the years has housed a number of notorious criminals. For Oakville, see the USGS map for Maybee/Michigan. For the house in Oakville, see digital image 00875, taken in 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Helen was born on December 9, 1899, and died (presumably in Milan, Michigan) in May 1966.

<sup>17</sup> Once again, see the USGS map for Milan/Michigan. Also see slides 10461 and 10462 for views of his grave site in 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Gerrit was sometimes spelled Garrett and was usually Americanized to Harry.

European families that can be found in the LDS International Genealogical Index (IGI). In the IGI there are several Alferink births in Apeldoorn between 1845 and 1852 of what might have been his siblings but no record of Gerrit himself (unless Gerrit was not the name under which he was baptized). These births were to an earlier Gerrit Alferink and an Antonia {Witteveen} Alferink, who were married on April 20 or on May 3, 1844.<sup>19</sup>

When I was in Apeldoorn in 1991, I found that the telephone directory lists a fair number of Alferinks, so it is plausible that Gerrit did in fact originate in that city. Through a contact at the Central Bureau for Genealogy in the Netherlands, I inquired about Gerrit's parents. The Bureau replied that Gerrit Alferink does not appear in either their files or those of the municipal archives for Apeldoorn. They did find that the Alferink family lived in the hamlet of Wormingen and that several members of this family migrated to America, but our Gerrit is not listed among those who did. Perhaps his records simply do not exist, or perhaps he renamed himself Gerrit when he came to the United States.<sup>20</sup> Whatever the mystery about Gerrit's name that keeps us from positively linking him to these parents, there is other evidence to tie the Gerrit Alferink of Ashtabula County to this Apeldoorn couple. Though additional documentary evidence would be welcome, I believe we can say that Gerrit and Antonia were his parents.

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<sup>19</sup> Both dates can be found in information that has been contributed to the LDS.

<sup>20</sup> Several Alferinks may have come to America at about the same time, too. Another man named Gerrit Alferink is recorded as marrying (a Wilamina Byers) in Cleveland, Ohio, on December 19, 1891 – well after the Gerrit Alferink we are seeking is known to have married Joanna Weir. This cannot be a second marriage for Gerrit because Joanna survived him. Who this other Gerrit Alferink is remains a mystery.

Family lore, as related to me by my mother, described the younger Gerrit Alferink as a gardener or other servant on the royal estate and palace at Het Loo in Apeldoorn who was apprehended while poaching the royal game.<sup>21</sup> As my mother's sister Edna remembered it, he shot a deer while serving as a member of the queen's guard – which would explain his having a weapon. According to the lore, Gerrit was given a choice between hanging and emigrating to America, or else he fled after being caught – the details are unclear in my mind. (Such a story, especially a flight to avoid prosecution, might explain confusion over his given name.)

The director of the Central Bureau for Genealogy told me, however, that there is no evidence linking the Alferink family with the royal estate and palace at Het Loo; he even checked the records of employment, although he pointed out that such records do not cover “incidental” employees such as gardeners. The director also told me that hanging was not used as a form of punishment in the Netherlands at that time. He advised me to remember this “beautiful” family tale about choosing America over a rope for its charm, but not to put too much stock in it. I think it remains possible that Gerrit was indeed caught and fled to avoid some kind of punishment, and that this core event was embellished as it was related again and again over time, but it is also possible that all of it is just a story.

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<sup>21</sup> Gelderland, in the east of the Netherlands against the German border, remains relatively open territory even today because of its terrain. There are two national parks in the province. See slides 05044-53 for views of Het Loo in 1991.

Dating when Gerrit Alferink came to America has its problems. My mother told me that he came to America by way of New York City in 1882, and the 1900 census includes the notation that his wife Joanna {Weir} Alferink had come to America in 1883. According to my Aunt Edna, Gerrit left a wife and three children in the Netherlands when he emigrated, then sent for them to join him after he had worked here for a few years. Gerrit and Joanna had a child in Ohio in October 1884, which helps to date when both could have arrived, assuming Gerrit did come first and Joanna followed him.<sup>22</sup>

Since there are no Alferinks in Ohio in the index of that state's census for 1880 and I did not find Gerrit by means of a name-by-name search of that year's census for Ashtabula County, it is probably safe to think that he came to the United States after that census was taken.<sup>23</sup> Nor is Gerrit included in a published compendium – complete only through 1880, unfortunately – of Dutch immigrants to the United States. All this points to a conclusion that he arrived in America sometime between mid-1880 and 1883.

Proceeding ship by ship, page by page through hundreds of pages of unindexed passenger registers, I was unable to find Gerrit Alferink listed among those on board any ship that

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<sup>22</sup> My Aunt Edna also said that Genevieve was the first child born in America, but the 1900 census shows a son born in Ohio in 1884, four years before Genevieve herself was born there.

<sup>23</sup> As a result, Gerrit Alferink never appears on a census in the United States, since the 1890 census no longer exists and he was dead before the one in 1900.

arrived in New York City between January 1, 1882, and December 31, 1883.<sup>24</sup> Passenger lists from other cities that are indexed (Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans, and Philadelphia) also do not show him. I began to suspect that he arrived in another year, or at another port. Or perhaps I overlooked his name, or the sheet it was on was too difficult to decipher. I even wondered if he had traveled under a different family name or native country (a real possibility if Gerrit was in fact fleeing).

Fortunately, when I contacted the scholar who edited the compendium of Dutch immigrants through 1880 I learned that he had collected similar information for arrivals through the 1880s. He kindly checked for Gerrit Alferink and steered me to a G. Alderink who came to America aboard the Netherlands-American Line S.S. *Castor* from Amsterdam on May 4, 1881.<sup>25</sup> This man was a laborer twenty-six years old. He must have been the Gerrit Alferink we are seeking, despite the garbled name on the passenger list. At any rate, he is our only known candidate and we are unlikely to find a better one. There is no indication whether Gerrit went directly from New York City to Ashtabula or lived and worked elsewhere before settling in the latter city, but I suspect that Ashtabula was his destination from the beginning – perhaps because other members of the Alferink family already lived in the general area. In this connection, we should take note of an

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<sup>24</sup> These lists are on microfilm at the National Archives. During those two years, 1882 and 1883, nearly one and one half million persons arrived in the United States aboard many hundreds of ships.

<sup>25</sup> The S. S. *Castor*, owned by the Royal Netherlands Steamship Company, was launched in 1870. Of 1,520 tons, it was 254 feet long and 33 ½ feet wide. Its speed was 10 knots, and it carried a dozen or so first-class passengers and approximately 500 steerage passengers. See the photograph in my files. By 1881 this ship was in regular service between Amsterdam and New York City; it remained in that service until it was sunk in a collision near Dungeness, England (in the Strait of Dover) in 1894.

Adrianus Alferink who is found in Ashtabula County, Ohio, land records in 1889 and 1891 – when he sold to Anna Alferink a lot he had purchased in the previous year. It is almost certain that this man was Gerrit’s older brother and that Anna was most probably Gerrit’s wife, Joanna, who was usually called Anna. Adrianus Alferink, however, came to America almost a year after Gerrit did.<sup>26</sup>

I believe I have also found Joanna on a ship register, although she also is shown with a garbled name. She must be the Johanna Alfering who is listed with two children (Johanna, three years old, and Antonia, two years old) – but no accompanying male – on a passenger list in 1882. Joanna arrived in New York City on June 26, 1882, aboard the Netherlands-American ship S.S. *Rotterdam* from the Dutch port of that same name.<sup>27</sup>

Johanna is identified as having been thirty-one years old and a dressmaker. (In fact, she was probably about twenty-five years of age in 1882.) Although this woman is described as emigrating from Germany, it is worth noting that the register mistakenly shows both her and her daughters as males. Sloppiness on the part of the ship’s officer who was recording the information is the likely culprit here, but it is also possible that Gerrit’s

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<sup>26</sup> Anna Alferink purchased two adjoining lots and then sold the one she purchased from Adrianus in 1894. The lot (number 94 in Block B) was in the Field’s Farm area of Ashtabula Township; the other lots were 92 and 93. The Field’s Farm allotment was the original name of the area of Ashtabula Harbor where Sibley Street was located, which strengthens the argument that Adrianus sold the land to his sister-in-law, Gerrit’s wife, but it remains possible that Anna was related to Adrianus Alferink instead. Adrianus Alferink’s naturalization papers in Ashtabula County show that he had arrived in America in March 1882 and became an American citizen in 1891. See the discussion below about Gerrit’s brother named Adrianus.

<sup>27</sup> Built in 1872, the S.S. *Rotterdam* weighed 1,694 tons and was 255 feet long and 35 feet wide. A hybrid with both sails and a steam engine, it made just 10 knots back and forth on its regular round trips between Rotterdam and New York City. It could carry 8 first-class and 288 third-class passengers. See my files for a photograph of this ship, which just a year after transporting Joanna to America was wrecked near what was then the Dutch island of Schouwen, in the North Sea off the province of Zeeland; this island is now linked to the mainland.

wife was in fact originally German. In any case, this Johanna was very probably our Johanna {Weir} Alferink.

The elder Gerrit Alferink had married Geertruid Snellink in Markelo, the Netherlands, on April 5, 1838; when she died, he married Antonia. Among the children of Gerrit and Antonia was a male named Adrianus, and we can link this child to our Gerrit of Ashtabula County because that Ohio Gerrit's children were contacted in 1937 by a Dutch official who was trying to settle this man's estate in the Netherlands. Could this Adrianus have been the man who sold property to Anna Alferink in 1891? Might he have been an elder brother to our Gerrit who was returning to the Netherlands after inheriting his – and Gerrit's – parents' property?<sup>28</sup>

I believe the evidence is convincing enough that we should accept this **GERRIT ALFERINK** and **ANTONIA {WITTEVEEN} ALFERINK** as the parents of the younger Gerrit who came to America in 1881. If so, we can push our information – such as it is – a little further back in time. The earlier Gerrit Alferink was born in Apeldoorn in 1811 and died in Apeldoorn on May 30, 1859; he was the son of yet another **GERRIT ALFERINK** and a woman named **JANNA** whose family name was either Arkensteen or

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<sup>28</sup> My mother told me that a member of the Alferink family was a famous painter in the Netherlands. When I was visiting the Royal Art Museum in Amsterdam, I checked to see if they had any paintings of or information about any artist named Alferink, but they did not. Later, I looked in reference sources in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., but here too I could find no references to a painter named Alferink, Alfrank, or Allfrank. According to lore in another part of the Alferink family, Adrianus owned a tavern and perhaps a brothel in Ashtabula's harbor area, where we know he lived. When the Dutch notary settled the estate of Adrianus Alferink in 1938, my mother and her two siblings each received a little over \$100 as their shares of what their great uncle had left to his heirs.

Jansen. (There may be some confusion because of the Dutch patronymic names, but it is also possible that Janna was married to a man with one of these names found in Dutch records before she married Gerrit Alferink.)

For Antonia we are a little more fortunate. The LDS information gives a birth date of February 19, 1814, for her; she too was born in Apeldoorn. We do not know her date of death, however. It is notable that a second marriage (in 1847) is listed for Antonia, in addition to her marriage to Gerrit Alferink in 1843. If correct, the date of this second marriage would suggest that the earlier Gerrit died between 1843 and 1847 and would date the birth of the younger Gerrit Alferink between those years – earlier by a decade than what other information suggests. As we have seen, however, the IGI also lists children thought to have been born to Gerrit and Antonia after her supposed second marriage (in 1849 and 1853), so we are faced with conflicting evidence and the frustrations it produces. We probably should not put much stock in any of this undocumented information.

Antonia {Witteveen} Alferink's parents were **JAN HENDRIK WITTEVEEN** and **ADRIANA TEUNIS {BOEVE} WITTEVEEN**; Gerrit's brother Andrianus would have been named for her. Jan was born in Apeldoorn on December 20, 1767, and died there on July 12, 1833. Adriana was born in Apeldoorn on September 31 (almost certainly September 30 instead), 1778, and died in Vaassen, also in the province of Gelderland, on

December 7, 1859. Jan and Adriana were married in Apeldoorn on April 27, 1805. Jan's parents were another man named **JAN HENDRIK WITTEVEEN** (born in Apeldoorn about 1741) and **HENDERCIE {HARMS} WITTEVEEN** (born in Apeldoorn about 1745). Adriana's parents were **TEUNIS BERENDS BOEVE** (born in Apeldoorn about 1752) and **CHRISTINA {VAN LAAR} BOEVE** (born in Apeldoorn about 1756). Our information about all these Alferink and related lines ends at this point.

We turn now to the other side of Jennie {Alferink} Habicht's family, that of her mother, Joanna {Weir} Alferink, who usually was called Anna or Annie. She may have been born in Germany or in the Netherlands – the evidence (including from census forms) is conflicting. We have conflicting evidence as well about Joanna's birth date. It may have been 1851 (according to her age on the register for the S.S. *Rotterdam*) or perhaps October 17, 1857, a date that can be calculated from a reference in her newspaper obituary, if we take literally its reference to her having been born fifty years previously. This obituary gives the place of Joanna's birth as Germany, but the 1900 census (the only one on which she appears) states that she was born in the Netherlands and in October of 1860.<sup>29</sup> My guess is that 1857 is probably correct.

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<sup>29</sup> In 1910, Jennie {Alferink} Habicht gave Holland as the birthplace of both her father and her mother, as did her brother Harry, who was boarding with Jennie and her husband Otto. In both instances, however, the word *Holland* was written in what appears to me to be different handwriting, and this may be a case of the census taker or someone else later making a later guess based on the name Alferink. Alternatively, perhaps the two siblings first answered Germany and then corrected themselves to say Holland, and the census taker also corrected what he had first written down.

Joanna and Gerrit were probably married in the Netherlands, probably about 1878 if they had a child born in 1879. Since the surname Weir sounds more German than Dutch, it is possible that Joanna's family was from a border area, but we cannot say because we know nothing more about her and her family. Who were her parents? Where did the Weir family originate and live? Did her parents come to America? How and when did she meet Gerrit? When and where were Joanna and Gerrit married? We have a lot of questions that we cannot answer.

Gerrit Alferink evidently was a laborer, but the only job we know he had was his last: as a day laborer on the Lake Erie docks in Ashtabula, primarily unloading iron ore with a shovel. (Ashtabula was then the largest ore-unloading port in the world, the main depot receiving iron ore from Minnesota's Mesabi Range and shipping it off by rail to Pittsburgh and other steel-making centers.) Here on the Minnesota Docks, on May 5, 1898, Gerrit was crushed to death when a load of ore shifted and buried him. At the time of his death the family lived on nearby Sibley Street (now East 16th Street). Gerrit Alferink, who evidently never became an American citizen, is buried in Edgewood Cemetery in Ashtabula. His grave is marked only by a small stone with the numeral 4 (for the plot number) on it.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Once again, the cemetery can be found on the USGS map for South Ashtabula/Ohio. See slide 05801 (1992) for a photograph of this melancholy stone and its site, Lot 4 of Section 8. Gerrit deserves a stone with his name on it, and I hope to provide that one day. It is unlikely he ever became an American citizen because the census form for his widow in 1900 does not show that she was a naturalized citizen, as she would have been automatically if he had become one. For views of the Minnesota Docks in 2007, see slides 12513 and 12514.

After her husband's accidental death in 1898, Joanna continued to live in Ashtabula, first at residences she rented at 141 and at 145 Sibley Street (now, probably, 729 and either 731 or 741 East 16th Street, respectively) and then at the corner of Harbor Avenue and Webb Street; she was at the first address in 1898 and at the second one in 1900 and 1903.<sup>31</sup> I do not know what she did to earn a living, but the 1900 census lists her occupation as "housework," which likely means that she cleaned houses for others; perhaps she also sewed, as she had in Europe. That census also reveals that ten of Joanna's twelve children were still living, that she could read and write, and that she could speak English. She died in Ashtabula a few hours after a sudden stroke, on April 12, 1907 – just a few days before my mother was born. Joanna too is buried in Edgewood Cemetery, but in a different section than the one where her husband's grave can be found.<sup>32</sup>

My grandfather's parents were **EDWARD LUDWIG HABICHT** and **AUGUSTA {SCHALACH}**<sup>33</sup> **HABICHT**. There *ought* not be much question about the name of Edward's wife. Their marriage license, her obituaries, and an entry in the family Bible (which I own) all agree that her name was Augusta Schalach. There is only one

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<sup>31</sup> Once again see my detailed maps of Ashtabula, as well as the USGS map for North Ashtabula/Ohio. See slides 12505-06 for general views of the Sibley Street area and slides 12508-09 for general views of the Harbor Avenue and Webb Street area. These slides were taken in 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Joanna is in Grave 1, Lot 129, not far from her daughter Jennie. The Alferinks lived in the 6th Ward in 1890.

<sup>33</sup> Sometimes spelled Sallach.

discordant note: on my grandfather's application for a Social Security card in 1946, he filled in "Augustie Freeman" as the name of his mother. I cannot explain this discrepancy, except to wonder if Otto mistakenly wrote down the name of his recently deceased second wife (which may have been Freeman), but it is worth remembering that my grandfather also put down on this application the wrong year for his own birth and so his carelessness may explain this discrepancy.

I do not know where Augusta was born, but her birthplace is consistently described on census forms as being Germany.<sup>34</sup> Most reports state that she was born on August 31, 1857, but the census of 1900 suggests that she was born in August 1858 instead; the age shown for her on the 1910 census would also make her year of birth 1858.<sup>35</sup> Her parents were **FRIEDRICH SCHALACH** and **ANNIE {GUTH} SCHALACH**, about whom we know nothing more for certain. One unconfirmed source states that Friedrich Schalach (here, Sallach) was born in Babenz, West Prussia, on November 7, 1831, and that Anna Guth was born in Charlottenwerder, West Prussia, on October 5, 1832. This couple is reported to have been married in Langenau Freystadt about 1853.<sup>36</sup> Without further

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<sup>34</sup> For 1900, it is her own listing; in 1910, both her own and her son Otto's description say Germany; and for 1920, his description again says Germany. I have seen a suggestion that Augusta was born in Württemberg (which is in southwest Germany). Information contributed to the LDS shows an August Sallach in Sommeran Rosenberg, West Prussia, who was born on August 2, 1829. He was thus about the right age to have been Augusta's father, but we believe that her father was named Friedrich. It is possible August was his brother and that Augusta was named for him, or that one of the names was a middle or "calling" name.

<sup>35</sup> The 1900 census, which used June 1 as its official date, also reports her age as forty-one years. Augusta's grave marker displays 1857 for her birth year, and that is probably the correct year. Her son, Otto, evidently estimated she was born about 1862, but that estimate is probably off by several years.

<sup>36</sup> The towns of Babenz, Charlottenwerder, and Langenau Freystadt are now, respectively, Babi ty Wielkie, Redaki, and gowo (sometimes spelled agowo) in Poland. All are clustered near Kisielice, which in German times was called Freystadt.

evidence, we cannot fully accept this information, but it is worth noting that all of these towns are located not many miles from Rehden Graudenz – or from Graudenz itself, where, as we shall see later in this chapter, the Habicht family lived during the late 1700s and early 1800s. In addition, we know from records the LDS has copied that a Gutt family did live in the general area of Rehden Graudenz (actually, in Graudenz itself) during the 19th century. (Gutt and Guth are variations of the same root name.) From all this we can say that our Guths and Schalachs likely came from the same geographical region as the Habichts did, but beyond this we cannot go.

Augusta came to America in 1882, later census forms (1900 and 1910) say. I looked at scores and scores of ship arrival lists for her, as I did for Gerrit Alferink and Joanna {Weir} Alferink, and I have concluded that she is the Auguste Sallach who arrived in New York City on October 23, 1882, from Bremen (having departed there on October 12) and Southampton aboard the North German Lloyd liner S.S. *Werra*.<sup>37</sup> This Auguste, an emigrant from Prussia, is described as being only twenty-two years old, but other than this slight age discrepancy there is a good fit with what we know about her. She was traveling alone, so the sister we know also lived in America evidently did not immigrate

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<sup>37</sup> The S.S. *Werra*, 4,817 gross tons, was 433 feet in length and 46 feet wide. It could hold about 125 first-class, 130 second-class, and 1,000 third-class passengers (another reference book gives slightly different numbers) and could travel at 16 knots. See the photograph in my files. The voyage that brought Auguste to America was in fact this ship's maiden voyage. Interestingly, this ship was used by Spain to transport its troops and citizens back from Cuba and Puerto Rico after having lost the Spanish-American War. It was broken up for scrap in 1901.

with her. We can presume that she went directly to Cleveland, where we know she was living only a few months later, but we cannot be positive of this.

My mother remembered that her grandfather, Edward Ludwig Habicht, came from a town called “Korda,” which she described as being in West Prussia very close to what was then the border with Poland.<sup>38</sup> I have not been able to locate a place named Korda on the excellent and detailed German maps of the 19th century; perhaps it was too small to be shown, my mother’s memory was faulty, or the name has been garbled somehow.<sup>39</sup> It is also possible that Edward Habicht, though born elsewhere, lived in a town named Korda sometime before coming to America, but the evidence indicates that he (like some other members of the Habicht family) was christened in a town then called Rehden Graudenz (in the German manner, Rehden in the region around Graudenz) in West Prussia on July 29, 1855; he had been born on July 24 in that year. We will return to the mystery of the town named Korda a little later.

According to baptismal records preserved at the Evangelical Central Archives in Berlin, Edward Ludwig Habicht’s family lived in the village of Zakrzewo<sup>40</sup> when Edward’s older

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<sup>38</sup> West and East Prussia were geographically separate but administratively one; they became the core of the German Empire that rose to power during the late 19th century and that was defeated in World War I.

<sup>39</sup> My cousin Janet Reed, the daughter of my Uncle Harry Habicht, also remembers hearing that the family lived very close to the Prussian border with Poland, and that by going down to the river for water one could approach the border itself. I have reviewed historical maps for the 19th century without finding any borders near Rehden Graudenz, and the town is not near a river of any kind; perhaps there was a provincial border nearby, but the matter of the river is not so easily explained. Could these references be to the town (“Korda”) in which Edward Habicht is said to have lived after Rehden Graudenz and before immigrating to America? See the discussion later in this chapter for more on this topic.

<sup>40</sup> Called Kressau on some maps.

sister Wilhelmine was born in 1854 and in the village of Gablowitz<sup>41</sup> when his younger brother Wilhelm was born in 1858. Both of these villages are near the larger settlement of Rehden Graudenz. When Edward was born on July 24, 1855, however, the family lived in yet another small village on the outskirts of Rehden Graudenz: Golembiewko. This village is just a short distance northeast of the center of Rehden Graudenz. In 1870, shortly after Edward was born, it had 108 inhabitants.

On some maps, Golembiewko<sup>42</sup> is shown as Taubendorf, which means “town of pigeons” – the same meaning that Golembiewko has in Polish. This name becomes more interesting when we recall that the name Habicht means “hawk” in German. We know that this family had borne that name for centuries and had its origins elsewhere in what is now Germany, so perhaps it is only a coincidence that in West Prussia they lived in a town with pigeons in its name. It is possible, though, that the Golembiewko Habichts raised – as an avocation or for income – either pigeons or the hawks that hunted them, as this traditional sport remained a popular activity in 19th-century Germany. (At his death, however, Edward Wilhelm Habicht was described as a shepherd.)

Golembiewko dates back at least to 1386 and belonged for a time to the Teutonic Knights (about whom more in a moment). Although the area around Golembiewko belonged to the Prussian ruler after 1789, it was typically leased out for long periods of time for

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<sup>41</sup> Sometimes spelled Gawlowitz.

<sup>42</sup> The Polish name is Golembiewko.

income purposes. In that year the hamlet is recorded as having just nine “hearths” (households), and when the Habichts arrived a few decades later it is likely Golembiewko’s population was still small, perhaps no more than two or three dozen persons. Judging from the way the Habicht family moved around in the environs of Rehden Graudenz, it was undoubtedly working someone else’s land. They may even have been under the direct control of the Prussian monarch, as some families were. This was a common pattern in this rural region, much of which was comprised of large landed estates whose agricultural workers were not farmers or tenants in the modern sense but servants in circumstances that made them more like serfs of the landholders or leaseholders than free laborers.<sup>43</sup>

Rehden Graudenz has an interesting history worth pausing to consider, since although we lose sight of Edward for a quarter of a century following his christening there we have to suppose that he spent many years in and around Rehden Graudenz before departing for America. Many of the town’s records evidently were destroyed during or immediately after World War II, and we are fortunate that the church records showing Edward’s christening were among those saved in archives located elsewhere. The town was settled in 1234, a time when a group usually termed the Teutonic Knights (sometimes called the Knights of the Holy Cross) was spreading out of older sections of Prussia, conquering

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<sup>43</sup> Complicating things a bit, until 1865 Golembiewko/Taubendorf had sometimes been called Sagen. The name Habicht, though spelled with a *t* at the end, is pronounced as if it were spelled Haybick.

and then colonizing the area between Prussia and Poland with people from German areas further west.<sup>44</sup>

The region surrounding Rehden Graudenz changed hands often over the space of the next several hundred years, sometimes being governed by the then-powerful Poles and sometimes being ruled first by the independent kingdom of Prussia and later by a united Germany. The Poles took control after 1466, until Poland was divided in 1772 and the portion including Rehden Graudenz went to Prussia. Germans from elsewhere were actively recruited and “implanted” in Rehden Graudenz and its surrounding areas on a number of occasions. As we will see, the first of our known Habichts arrived in the Graudenz region during the 1770s, and it seems likely that some of his descendants – including that man’s grandson, Edward Ludwig Habicht’s father – were encouraged to colonize the agricultural area southeast of Graudenz during the period from about 1830 into the early 1850s, for there are records placing some of these Habichts in Rehden Graudenz by the early 1840s. Thus colonization may explain how Edward’s parents came to live in or around Rehden Graudenz when Edward and his siblings were born there during the 1850s.

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<sup>44</sup> The Teutonic Knights, a religious order founded in 1189 to engage in crusades, turned to subduing pagan Poland during the 13th century. They developed much of what is now Poland, building castles and bringing in settlers. The Teutonic Knights controlled vast areas – not only in Poland and Germany but in such other areas as the Low Countries – until the 1400s but declined in influence between then and about 1600. The order still exists, primarily in support of hospitals; it is based in Vienna but has several branches.

The population of the Rehden Graudenz area remained mixed, both Polish and German, at least until the end of World War I and probably right down to World War II. Located in what became known as the Polish Corridor after the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 (a narrow north-south strip of Germany awarded to newly reconstituted Poland so that it would have guaranteed access to the North Sea), Rehden Graudenz was very close to the German-Polish frontier when World War II erupted in September 1939. The German forces rolled right over the Corridor – both eastward from the main part of Germany and southward from East Prussia, which was physically separate from West Prussia.. Rehden Graudenz was under Nazi control from 1939 to 1945, of course, and then it was part of the large section of eastern Germany that was transferred to Polish sovereignty following the war. Since 1945, virtually all German influences in what was Rehden Graudenz seem to have been obliterated.

When I visited Rehden Graudenz, now renamed Radzyn Chelminski (the Poles employing the same construction to show that it is Radzyn in the Chelminski region), in 1993, there were almost no signs that the town had ever had a German resident. One poignant vestige did stand out: a spoked wagon wheel, once featured on the town crest of Rehden Graudenz in Prussian and German times, remains imbedded in a stone wall.<sup>45</sup>

The large Protestant church that is prominent on 19th-century German maps (and where

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<sup>45</sup> I took extensive photographs of all the sites mentioned here. (See slides 06601-46, taken in 1993.) It was a gray and dreary winter day, which casts an interesting mood over the town but makes the photographs a bit less revealing than one could wish. According to one Habicht researcher, some members of the family had a coat of arms that featured a wheel similar to the one found in Rehden Graudenz.

Edward Habicht surely was christened, since his records are in a Protestant archives in Berlin) is entirely gone now, either destroyed during the Russian advance in 1945 or – more likely – torn down by the Poles after that; a former resident of the town with whom I corresponded stated that it was purchased and razed by a rich Pole. On the site of this church (whose name, if any, is not known) now is a town square and a monument to Polish martyrs of World War II. Gone, too, is the nearby Protestant cemetery (near the marketplace), which was probably destroyed at the same time as the church.<sup>46</sup>

The most notable feature of Radzyn Chelminski, besides the historic St. Anna's (Roman Catholic) Church<sup>47</sup> at the other end of the central portion of the town from the square, is an impressive ruin just north of the town center. My mother had told me about a "Habicht castle" her grandfather and other Habichts said they had played on when they were children. As soon as I rounded a turn in the road entering Radzyn Chelminski and saw this ruin, I knew that I was looking at the "Habicht castle." And the crumbling structure I saw – its name is Ordensburg – is in fact the remains of one dating to the 13th century, when the Teutonic Knights were actively building such fortresses for their order. Indeed, Ordensburg was among the first of those built throughout the region by the order, and it is regarded, after the one at Marienburg, as the finest surviving example of the architecture of the Teutonic Knights.

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<sup>46</sup> There is a large cemetery on the outskirts of town, but the grave markers seem to have only Polish names and fairly recent dates on them. According to the former resident with whom I corresponded, the church at this cemetery is called St. George's (Roman Catholic) Church.

<sup>47</sup> Erected in 1340 and renovated in 1885-86.

According to the former resident of Rehden Graudenz with whom I corresponded, Ordensburg was damaged in 1456 (when the Teutonic Knights were losing their grip) and perhaps only partially repaired after that; since 1712, no one has lived in it. The residents of the town, she said, helped themselves to stones from the structure whenever they wished to construct. Today only the southern portion of Ordensburg, with two corner towers, remains of what was once a large and imposing fortress. The remnant is in increasing danger of collapse, and it is a pity the ruins are not being preserved or at least stabilized.<sup>48</sup>

This, then, was the town that Edward Ludwig Habicht knew as a boy and, probably, as a young man. During his first twenty-five years, Edward may have worked on local farms, although he might have gotten a little education as well.<sup>49</sup> Family lore has it that Edward worked on the railroads in Germany until he broke both legs in an accident. When an official told him – presumably in jest – that he was no good for the army and might as well be shot, Edward decided to leave and go to America, where he had an uncle. Thus it is possible that he lived and worked somewhere besides his home town during his early manhood, perhaps even in one of the German towns whose names resemble “Korda,”

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<sup>48</sup> A splendid model of Ordensburg is supposed to be on view at the branch of the Teutonic Knights in Bad Mergentheim, Germany.

<sup>49</sup> The 1900 census states, however, that he could read but not write. In 1910 and 1920, he is listed as being able to do both. Augusta is described as being able to do neither in 1900 but both in 1910.

before emigrating from there to the United States. This might explain why my mother thought her grandfather came from a town with that name.

Whether or not this family tale of broken legs and an unsympathetic official is true, sometime during the late 1870s, if not earlier, Edward Ludwig Habicht made up his mind to leave Germany for America. It was a decision that many young men and women in Germany (particularly in north and east Germany) made at about this time: population increases and the growth of commercial agriculture began to squeeze out small farms like the ones Edward may have labored on. The men also faced military conscription. But as a younger son (he had two and perhaps three older brothers), Edward had long realized that he would have to go elsewhere for greater economic opportunity. Economic depression in the United States from 1873 onward discouraged emigration, but when conditions here improved at decade's end Edward was one of many Germans who took advantage of ever-cheaper transport across the Atlantic Ocean and set out for the New World. He was among the one and one half million Germans to emigrate to the United States during the 1880s.

Once he decided to leave Germany for America, Edward Habicht made his way – possibly by sea, or perhaps via inland waters or rail – to Bremen, Germany. Here he boarded a North German Lloyd steamship called the S.S. *Weser*, which left that port on October 24, 1880. It arrived in New York City on November 9 in that year, a fairly

typical passage for that era. On the register of passengers for that voyage, Edward Habicht's name is the third of many hundreds of names of men and women who had traveled in steerage on the S.S. *Weser*.<sup>50</sup>

Edward Habicht thus is the fourth of my mother's grandparents whose arrival in America during the 1880s we have observed (although chronologically he was actually the first of the four to have landed on these shores). All four – Edward, Augusta Schalach, Gerrit Alferink, and Joanna {Weir} Alferink – would have arrived first in Hoboken, New Jersey (where both the Netherlands-American and North German Lloyd lines had their docks) and then been taken across the Hudson River to Castle Garden, a former fort and music hall then just off-shore from (and now physically part of) the Battery in lower Manhattan. Castle Garden was used to receive immigrants from 1855 until the 1890s, when Ellis Island was pressed into service to accommodate the growing numbers of new arrivals. During these late 19th-century years, the transatlantic shipping lines typically charged \$20 to \$25 per passenger, which included rail travel in the United States to the passenger's ultimate destination if it was not the city where the ship docked. This charge covered food on board the ship and carriage of a limited amount of baggage – but not the use of blankets and eating utensils en route, which each passenger had to supply.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> The S.S. *Weser* was built in 1867. It was 2,870 tons, 325 feet in length, and 40 feet abeam. It made 11 knots and held 60 first-class, 120 second-class, and 700 third-class (steerage) passengers. See the photograph in my files. This ship operated until 1896, when it was scrapped.

<sup>51</sup> The two lines had their docks between 4th Street and Newark Avenue, but the piers are long gone. (See the USGS map for Jersey City/New Jersey; also see slides 10180 and 10181 for how this portion of the waterfront in Hoboken appeared in 2002.) I do not believe that anyone in our ancestry came into America through Ellis Island. It is interesting to remember that these late-19th century immigrants could have seen, from Castle Garden itself, properties owned by two much earlier immigrants on the Neal side of our family:

What became of Edward after he stepped ashore in New York City? I do not know where he went, or when, or how he traveled. He could have remained in that city for a time or moved on within hours to some other place. Family lore tells of Edward working in wheat fields in western states soon after his arrival in the United States, and so he might have gone west from New York City. If his uncle lived in Cleveland, as I suspect, it is most likely that after being ferried to Manhattan for processing Edward was brought back across the river (there were no rail bridges or tunnels during those years) and got on a train for Ohio. We know only that he was present in Cleveland, Ohio, by March 26, 1883, for on that date marriage records in that county show that he took Augusta Schalach as his wife. (Edward's Bible and a photograph taken on their wedding day<sup>52</sup> record the date as February 16, 1883, and the 1900 census suggests that they were married in 1882. None of these dates can be ruled out from the birth of their first child – my grandfather, Otto, who was born in early 1884.)

It is possible that Edward and Augusta had known each other in Europe, but I have seen no evidence that they did. In my opinion it is likely that they were acquainted before they came to America, because only a few months elapsed between her arrival in Cleveland in October or in November 1882 and their marriage the following March; indeed, Edward

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Abraham Verplanck and Albert Bradt – had they only known where to look. We will meet these men later on. See slides 08428-31 and 08837 for views of Castle Garden in 1996 and 1997; it is now a museum.

<sup>52</sup> Both are in my files.

may have come to America first and then sent for her when he was settled and had sufficient resources that they could get married. All of this argues that Edward himself had arrived in Cleveland at least by late 1882.

Family lore that Edward's first permanent job in America was walking the sewers and breaking up stoppages with a pole suggests that he was living in a larger city at that time, and this was probably Cleveland. His son Otto said that when he was born in 1884 his father was a blast-furnace operator in a foundry, but in the Cleveland city directories Edward is never described as anything except a laborer, and no employer is ever shown for him.

Because our first evidence of Edward after March 1883 is his appearance in Cleveland's city directory for 1885-86, it is possible that he and Augusta lived somewhere other than that city between their marriage and sometime in 1884, when their first child, Otto, was born in Cleveland. I think it is more likely that they were living with Edward's presumed relative, August, who first appears in the Cleveland city directory for 1883-84.<sup>53</sup> August

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<sup>53</sup> Just who August Habicht was remains a mystery. He was quite likely the August Habicht, thirty years old, who arrived in New York City from Germany in April 1880. This age might mean he was Edward Habicht's brother, but my information about the Habicht family does not show Edward having had such a brother. Or he might have been one of Edward's older brothers who was using his middle name; if so, the best candidate would be Gustavus, whose middle name is not known. August may also have been Edward's cousin. If August was in fact a brother or cousin who preceded Edward to Cleveland, as appears likely, this might explain why Edward chose northeast Ohio as his own destination in 1880. In later years an August Habicht, apparently the elder August's son, lived in Kingsville near Ashtabula, where Edward and Otto are thought to have lived. The children of this August Habicht bore names very similar to those found in Edward Habicht's family, so we can be confident there was a family connection of some sort between our Edward and August. Another possible relative of Edward Habicht also came to America in 1880: Ludwig, twenty years old, who arrived in October in that year.

is listed at 28 Jewett Street in that year and at nearby 222 Broadway in 1884-85. Both of these addresses – indeed, all of those cited in this chapter – are close to one another in a working-class neighborhood about two miles southeast of Cleveland’s downtown area.

When Edward does appear in the Cleveland city directory, in 1885-86, he is listed as a laborer living at 59 Lester Street. In 1886-87, Edward and August are both listed at 39 Victor Street – yet another street in this same neighborhood, but by 1887-88 Edward (his name is misspelled “Eduard”) and his growing family had moved next door to 37 Victor Street. By the following year, 1888-89, Edward and his family had shifted to the address – 1 Louisa Court – where he continues to be listed through the 1894-95 directory.<sup>54</sup> That is the last Cleveland city directory in which he is listed, and my guess is that Edward Habicht and his family left Cleveland for Ashtabula County in 1895 or in 1896.

This guess seems confirmed by the fact that Edward and Augusta purchased 50 acres in Harpersfield Township of Ashtabula County on November 24, 1894. This property was part of Lot 149 on the boundary line separating that county from Trumbull County to the south.<sup>55</sup> Five years later, however (March 23, 1899), Edward and Augusta sold this property and moved to Ashtabula Township, where they were living when the 1900

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<sup>54</sup> See my detailed maps of Cleveland for the locations of these streets. The area in which they are located is now an isolated area almost surrounded by a rail line (which was already there during the late 19th century), I-490, and I-77, but most of the area’s streets appear to have survived the surrounding construction.

<sup>55</sup> Specifically, the property began at the northeast corner of Lot 149, ran south along Lot 148 to the county line, then west to the line of Lot 150, and in a similar fashion back to the start. This property is in Range 5, Township 11 and is south of Cold Spring Road and east of the state highway. See slides 12870-71 for 2008 views of this property.

census was taken. (Given the economic depression of the 1890s, it may be that they could not continue payments on the land in Harpersfield Township.) Edward is described on the 1900 census as a farmer, age forty-four years, who was renting his land, but since he also had a mortgage that may mean that he was purchasing it – either that or he continued to owe on the debt he had incurred back in 1894 for the Harpersfield Township property. On November 7, 1903, Edward and Augusta purchased 3 1/8 acres on South Ridge Road in Ashtabula Township; this property evidently was not far from Kingsville, but the exact location is not known. They sold this land on February 27, 1906, presumably in preparation for their imminent move to Michigan. During their residence in Ashtabula Township, on November 7, 1904, Edward Habicht became a United States citizen; he had filed his declaration of intent to do so on December 15, 1894.<sup>56</sup>

It may have been during the spring of 1906, therefore, that Edward Habicht and his remaining family moved to Michigan, perhaps to be near Augusta's sister, who lived in River Rouge, Michigan. Although many people were migrating to Detroit in order to find jobs in its growing industrial sector, Edward evidently was not among them: he remained a farmer. The 1910 census shows him (correctly, as fifty-three years of age as of April 1 in that year) renting a "general farm" in Dearborn Township in Wayne County, Michigan, not far from River Rouge. The farm was located on Telegraph Road between Yentrels Road and Retreat Road – very close to St. Joseph's Retreat, obviously an

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<sup>56</sup> The 1900 census shows Edward as an alien who had yet to take any steps toward acquiring citizenship; the censuses in 1910 and 1920 show that he was a naturalized citizen.

institution of some sort. I have not yet been able to locate those two roads on either contemporary or modern maps of the area.<sup>57</sup> My guess is that the Habicht farm was close to the intersection of today's Telegraph Road and Michigan Avenue, where the 1919 map of Dearborn (referred to earlier in this chapter) shows a religious institution operated by the Sisters of Charity, a natural location for a Retreat Road, which may have been nothing more than the name of the institution's entry lane.

As we have seen, in 1920 Edward Habicht, age sixty-four years, was living in the household of his son, Otto, who had since joined him as a resident of Dearborn Township in Michigan. Edward's wife Augusta had died on November 29, 1913; she is buried in Northview Cemetery in Dearborn.<sup>58</sup> At some later date, Edward and Otto went their separate ways, but the details are not clear. Edward Habicht is said to have owned a farm east and south of Plymouth in what is now Canton Center, Michigan, but by 1928 he was living in Dearborn. On the 1930 census he is included in the household of his daughter and son-in-law at 317 Garrison Avenue in Dearborn. Sometime later in the 1930s he must have moved a block or two away to 433 (later renumbered 22433) Garrison Avenue, where he was probably a renter, for this was his address of record when he died on March 26, 1937. These two addresses on Garrison Avenue, between Military Road and Howe Road in what is now downtown Dearborn, are quite close to where Pardee and

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<sup>57</sup> The major cross roads seem to have been John Daly Road, Michigan Avenue, and West Town Line (now Inkster) Road.

<sup>58</sup> Northview Cemetery is located along the east side of Outer Drive just north of Cherry Hill Road. See the USGS map for Inkster/Michigan. Also see slides 10471-10474 for views of the joint grave site of Edward and Augusta {Schalach} Habicht in 2003.

Pepper Roads once came together, and so to where Otto Habicht and his family once had lived. The Garrison Avenue sites were once part of the United States Arsenal grounds, which occupied more than 1,600 acres in what is now downtown Dearborn from 1837 through 1875. Edward Habicht is also buried in Northview Cemetery in Dearborn.<sup>59</sup>

The parents of Edward Ludwig Habicht were **EDWARD WILHELM HABICHT** and **CHRISTINE {BENDISCH} HABICHT**. He was their fourth or fifth child of seven.<sup>60</sup>

At least one of Edward Ludwig Habicht's siblings also came to the United States, but neither of his parents migrated to this country. It is possible that Christine's Bendisch family came from the Rehden Graudenz area of West Prussia, since information contributed to the LDS shows a Bendeisch family living in that area at about the time the Habichts were living there. To my knowledge, though, there is no evidence about when Christine was born, who her parents were, or indeed anything more about this parent of Edward Ludwig Habicht. We must continue to look for such evidence.

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<sup>59</sup> Edward Habicht's death is recorded in his Bible, and there is a newspaper obituary pasted into it. See the previous footnote for Northview Cemetery. My mother was almost correct when she said that she would die in her 83rd year just as her father and his father had: Edward Habicht was actually a few months short of starting his 83rd year. Edward Habicht is listed in the Dearborn city directory for 1928-1929, 1930, 1932, and 1934. He is not in the 1926 directory. See slides 10475 and 10476 for views of the sites of 317 and 433 Garrison, respectively. From slide 10477, which shows the surviving houses from that era on the opposite side of Garrison, we can tell the kind of houses he must have lived in. All these photographs were taken in 2003. On July 29, 1931, Edward Habicht purchased Lot 29 near Badger and Coon in the Bruin Lake Shores area of northwest Washtenaw County, Michigan. (Specifically, it was in the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 2, Township 1 South, Range 3 East. This is in Lyndon Township.) In September 1934 he signed a time contract to sell this property, and this sale was completed by his executor in February 1938. Most likely this lot had some sort of cottage on it and was not used as his principal residence. See digital images 00754-57 for views of this area in Bruin Lake Shores in 2010.

<sup>60</sup> Judging from the extant information, Edward Ludwig followed Friedrich (1844), possibly Gustavus (1846), Carl Otto (1847), and Wilhelmine (1854). Another child, Wilhelm, was born in 1858 but died a year later. Further evidence is needed before we can verify all of these children.

Edward Wilhelm Habicht, who in accordance with German tradition often went by his middle name, was reportedly only 44 years, 7 months, and 16 days old when he died in Gablowitz at 2:00 a.m. on May 4, 1859, so he would have been born on September 19, 1814. He was buried three days later in Sellnowo, another of the numerous hamlets that surrounded Rehden Graudenz.<sup>61</sup> The register that lists his death appears to attribute it to a long illness, perhaps of the lungs, and shows that he died without medical assistance. I do not know when Christine {Bendisch} Habicht died or where she is buried. Nor do I know when or where the couple was married, although the timing of their children suggests the marriage took place during the early 1840s.

Information that has been contributed to the LDS makes it appear that Edward Wilhelm Habicht may have had as many as four brothers,<sup>62</sup> since as many Habicht males had children born in or near Rehden Graudenz around the time Edward and Christine were having their own children. None of this information, unfortunately, furnishes any clues about where or to whom all these Habicht males – including Edward Wilhelm – were born. If we expand our search to include men named Edward or Wilhelm Habich (without the *t*, in other words), we do find some potential birth information: two such men were born in Prussia and might in fact be the Edward Wilhelm Habicht we are looking for, but we are beyond the scope of what solid evidence tells us.

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<sup>61</sup> Sellnowo is now the Polish town of Zielnowo.

<sup>62</sup> Johann, Friedrich, Julius Gustav, and Ferdinand.

Information from another researcher whose family and ours descend from a common Habicht ancestor enables us to learn more, however, about how Edward Wilhelm Habicht's family came to be in West Prussia in the first place. According to the lore of that Habicht family, a Heinrich Habicht from near Lauterbach in Upper Hesse (where many Habichts lived) was hired in 1778 by the Prussian ruler Friedrich II, commonly called "the Great," who was then engaged in a conflict called the War of the Bavarian Succession. It would be the last of this well-known monarch's wars.

Heinrich Habicht was sent to Bohemia, near the present border of Poland and the Czech Republic, as one of the replacements for soldiers who had died. The casualties came not from fighting (there was none to speak of) but from disease and the generally wretched conditions in what became known as "the potato war" because the soldiers had to grub for their food in the fields if they wanted to eat. (It was during these same years that Hesse – historically a source of mercenary soldiers – was also supplying men to the British for the war to put down the revolution in North America.)

At some point Heinrich deserted and decided to head north rather than home to Hesse. Here he was again hired by Friedrich II, this time to help build this king's enormous new fortress (begun in mid-1776) on the east bank of the Vistula River just north of Graudenz. This citadel was intended to block any advance by Russia in the event of a future war. It appears Heinrich Habicht had skills as a miner (Hesse is mining country), which made

him valuable as a “sapper” who knew how to construct the extensive foundations, tunnels, and passageways this fortress would have below the surface of the earth. (The fortress, which was never completely finished, still exists.) At the same time, Friedrich II was encouraging German settlers to move into the area around Graudenz.

When work on the citadel ended, in 1789, Heinrich decided to remain, evidently in nearby Neudorf, where he had been living during the construction. He married about 1790, but the identity of his wife is unknown. Since he is the only Habicht who lived in the Graudenz area, all the Habichts in later generations living in this region must have come from this union, and presumably they gradually spread out from Graudenz – evidently with encouragement from the Prussians – as they began to start their own families. This, then, is how our Habichts came to be living in Rehden Graudenz.

We do not know the name of Heinrich Habicht’s son who fathered our particular Habicht line, but because the ancestor of the other Habicht researcher mentioned above descends from Friedrich, a second son born in 1798, it is clear from the 1814 birth of our Edward Wilhelm Habicht that he had to have been the son of Heinrich’s eldest son, who would have been born sometime during the early or mid-1790s. This first son’s name may well have been Heinrich, too, since that given name was not used for any of the other sons born to Heinrich, the patriarch of this line, and it would have been unusual for it not to have been used for one of his sons.

As we have seen, the descendants of Heinrich Habicht began to appear in the Rehden Graudenz area at least by the 1840s; presumably, before then they had lived either in the Graudenz area or somewhere between the two places. We do know that the elder Heinrich and his family took refuge in the massive fortress in mid-November, 1806, when it was besieged by Napoleon. After a peace was achieved in 1807, the area around the citadel – Graudenz and Neudorf included – was ceded to Prussia. We know nothing more of Heinrich's life, or his death, but it seems safe to conclude that our Habicht line can be traced back through him to Hesse. There were also Habichts living elsewhere than in Hesse, but until we get another lead we can only speculate about any connection with them – or when our Habichts first arrived in Hesse.

We conclude with two more guesses about the mystery of the identity of Korda, the town my mother mentioned as the home of the Habichts. Through circumstances I do not recall, I learned of the existence of a small town named Rehden in western Germany. It is situated not far from the Dutch border. To my surprise I discovered, not far away, another small town whose name is Korde. This got me to wondering if Rehden Graudenz in West Prussia had been colonized by Germans from Rehden who naturally named their new home after their old one. Possibly the group colonizing Rehden Graudenz included other Germans, from the surrounding area – including Korde. How this connects with the Habichts, who had lived in Hesse, is not clear, but one can speculate that a relative by

marriage might have been a native of Korde in western Germany and this led to the Habicht tradition that the family came from a town called “Korda.”

The second guess is that the family of Christine Bendisch, wife of Edward Wilhelm Habicht, might have lived in a place called Kordalski (or Kordulski), which is located not far from Graudenz. It could be that young Edward Ludwig Habicht went there to live with his mother’s relatives sometime before he left for America in 1880. Kordulski is in fact in West Prussia near what was the Polish border, and so lore about his having lived there might have been the source of my mother’s memory. The evidence is not strong enough here, either, to enable us to do more than note this possibility before moving on.<sup>63</sup>

To sum up: my mother’s portion of my ancestry is largely unknown beyond a couple of generations before her birth in 1907. We have a few details about the Alferink and Habicht families in her ancestry, but all of the female ancestors are almost complete mysteries to us. Perhaps we will be lucky in the future and uncover additional information. In general her ancestry seems to have been largely if not entirely Dutch on her mother’s side and solidly German on her father’s side, but of course we do not know what stories and ethnic elements lurk beyond the point where our information gives out.

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<sup>63</sup> This mystery has yet another angle. There is an old town called Rheden in the Netherlands, possibly in the sector that was part of the realm of the Teutonic Knights. This town is on the Dutch-German border near Arnhem – and only about thirty miles from Apeldoorn, in fact. It seems possible that some of the settlers of Rehden Graudenz came from there and named the new town after their old one. (Today’s spellings are irrelevant.) Could the Habichts actually have been Dutch originally?