



THE CONRAD FAMILY IN HALES CORNERS

Welcome to another Special Edition newsletter. This time we're recounting the story of six generations of the **Conrad Family**, who played an important role in the history of Hales Corners.

The majority of our information was gathered through interviews with **Florence (Conrad) Schuette** and **Lloyd Conrad** in the mid-1980s, plus text from our Hales Corners history book. Then, on March 20th, we were delighted to obtain a wealth of family data donated by **Curtis** and **Mary Ellen Conrad**. Their

generous contribution, combined with items donated by Florence's family, included photos, postcards, signs, calling cards, memorials, and certificates.

We are also indebted to HCHS member **Margarete Harvey** for taking the time to translate an important document written in German. It is the oldest of our Conrad family documents, a very faded copy of the ship's record of the family's travel to America in 1849. A detail is shown below and excerpts appear on page 2.

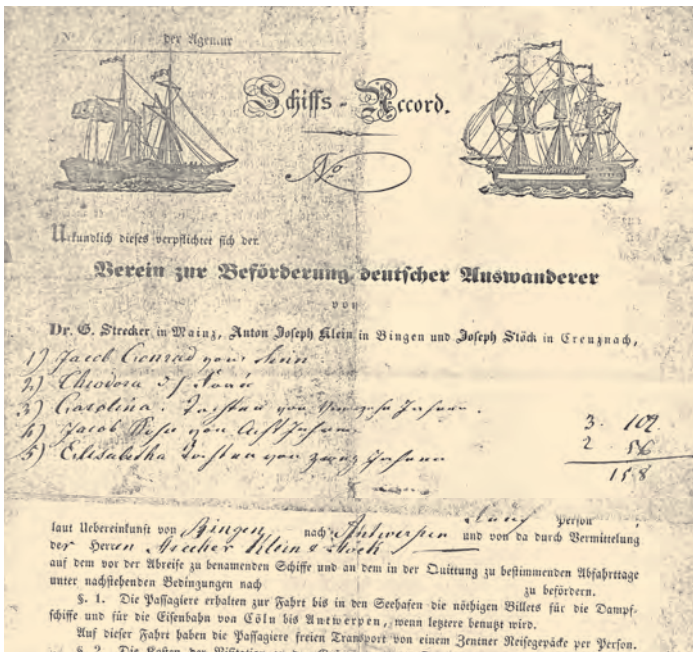
In researching the family of Jacob Conrad, Sr., we discovered that his two sons, Jacob Jr. and Adam, along with their descendants, had the most impact on Hales Corners history. Daughter Carolina married Adam Krempel, and daughter Elisabetha married John Hamme. Their sons and daughters are on record, but unfortunately no other information is available.

FIRST GENERATION: Property and Peacocks

Jacob L. Conrad, Sr. was born in 1814 in Sien, Trier, Germany. According to the ship's record and early information in our collection, he was married to **Theodora Schmidt** (born in 1813), also living in Germany. However, according to the gravestone in Emanuel Church Cemetery and inter-

views with family in the 1980s, Mrs. Conrad's birth name was **Dorothea Maurer**. Perhaps she was nicknamed "Dora," which might account for the discrepancy. We will refer to her as Dorothea from now on.

At that time, Germany was a collection of large estates. On the estate where the Conrads lived were beautiful peacocks. After Jacob and Dorothea settled in Hales Corners, they kept peacocks as a remembrance of their former home.



This is a detail from the ship's record that documents the Conrad family's departure from Germany on February 2, 1849. Also see the partial translation on page 2.



Four generations of Conrads in 1904: Jacob Jr. (63), Oscar (5), Adam (40), and Jacob Sr. (90)

The Conrads had three children born in Germany: **Carolina** (1836-1903), **Jacob Jr.** (1840-1915), and **Elisabetha** (1847-1881). They emigrated from Germany to America in 1849. Their fourth child, **Adam**, was born in Hales Corners in 1857.

In 1864 and 1865, Jacob Conrad bought the house and farm belonging to **Dr. Chester F. Ellsworth**. Ellsworth owned 160 acres of land that converged at the corners with the three parcels owned by the Hale family. The house at 10224 W. Forest Home Avenue was built around its original structure, a log cabin.

Dorothea raised hops and made her own yeast, which she used to bake her bread. Drinking water came from a spring on the farm.

Dorothea passed away in 1891,

and Jacob Sr. in 1904. Their property was sold in 1938. The barn remained in use through the 1960s, but eventually the house and barn were razed and the property is now the site of the Forest Downs Apartment complex.

SECOND GENERATION: Entrepreneurship and the Opera House

Like his father, **Jacob Conrad, Jr.** was a farmer in the Hales Corners area. He married **Marie Hamme** (born in Sien, Trier, Germany in 1840). They had two sons, **Adam** and **John**.

Their farm extended from 108th to 116th Street on the north side of Edgerton Avenue, and included the area that is now Whitnall High School. Jacob maintained a large herd of Holstein cows, chickens, and prize-winning ducks.



John and Adam pose with their father, Jacob Conrad, Jr., and the family dog, c.1870s.

became a target for a neighbor boy's rifle, and the peacock was later sold.

Marie passed away in 1907, and Jacob in 1915.

The youngest son of Jacob Conrad, Sr., and the first of his children to be born in Hales Corners, was **Adam Conrad**. He married **Sophia Stoll** or **Stahl** (born in 1855). She and her father, **Hans**, lived on an adjacent farm at 9724 W. Forest Home Avenue. Their farmhouse was constructed of Cream City

SHIP'S RECORD

Per this document:
The Society for the Transport of German Emigrants
 Belonging to:
Dr. G. Strecker in Mainz, Anton Joseph Klein in Bingen and Joseph Stoeck in Creuznach
 is obligated to transport

1. Jacob Conrad , a man		
2. Theodora , his wife		
3. Carolina , daughter of fourteen years	3	102
4. Jacob , son of eight years		
5. Elisabetha , daughter of two years	2	56
	_____	_____
Five persons		158

3. In the cities where we stop overnight, the passengers will have to pay for their own stay: but their luggage will be brought from one steam ship to the other free of charge, as well as to the railway and the ocean ship. But the owners will have to watch over their own luggage, because the Society cannot be responsible for mix-ups or theft etc.

9. On the pre-determined ship the five passengers will have

- five seats in the middle deck
- free transportation of luggage and utensils for their private use
- a bed and if needed, a pharmacy
- room in the kitchen for cooking
- fresh water, wood and light and _____ on arrival in America
- freedom from the hospital or poor house fee, the so-called head money, because that is included in the following amount _____ .

This is the translation of portions of the Conrads' document of transportation (see image on page 1). The numbers to the right of their names indicate a charge of 3 adults at 34 thalers per person and 2 children at 28 thalers per person. A thaler was a unit of German currency. We've also included articles 3 and 9 (of 14), as they provide interesting insights into travel conditions of that time.

Because his parents loved peacocks, as noted on page 1, Jacob bought one for the farm and sent all the way to California for a peahen. Unfortunately, the peahen



ADAM CONRAD
 Non-Partisan Candidate
 for
Side-Supervisor
 Town of Greenfield
 PRIMARY, MARCH 16, 1918.
 ELECTION APRIL 2

Authorized and Published by Adam Conrad, Hales Corners

Adam Conrad appeared on this campaign poster, 1918.



Stahl-Conrad Homestead, 2007

brick in 1870. That house, its milk house, and barn still remain today, and is known as the Stahl-Conrad Homestead.

Adam and Sophia had nine children: **Jacob, Mary, Dorothea, Helen** (also called **Caroline**), **Henry, Jeanette, Veronica, Herman, and Barney.**

Adam was a distinguished-looking man who dressed in a black broadcloth coat with fur lining, with a hat to match. His appearance and demeanor commanded respect, and he gave it in return. It is said that he had a hearty handshake and interacted easily with everyone he met.

He was an entrepreneur with

diverse business ventures. Adam sold farm machinery and was granted the first franchise to sell McCormick reapers. He started the Janesville Buggy Co., and also managed a saloon for the Pabst Brewing Co. on the first floor of his house at 10539

W. Forest Home Avenue. There, he conducted much of his business over a card game and a glass of beer. At the same time, Sophia Conrad would entertain the wives in what was considered a more respectable wine room with its own entrance.

Adam also dealt extensively in cattle and horses. Wild stallions and mares were brought in from Wyoming by train, loaded onto wagons or electric railroad cars for the trip from Milwaukee to Hales Corners, and then sold at auction on the Conrad farm. The Conrads took exceptional care of their animals and thus earned an excellent reputation. They built a substantial barn for any horses or cattle that



Sign advertising horses for sale, apparently by the pound!

required special care. The upstairs of the barn stored hay, and later was divided into rooms for offices. At one time, the Village's veterinarian had his office there.

In 1893, the World's Fair, also known as the Columbian Exposition, took place in Chicago. Industries across the midwest were approached to market their products at the Fair and at large parades leading to the exposition grounds. The owners of Independent Brewery, a small local brewery, decided to enter a beer wagon in one of the big parades. They asked Adam to supply something unusual in the way of horsepower. Up to the challenge, he assembled a team of six matched mules, and that entry won the honor of first place in the competition. He used that event to his advantage by later distributing



Adam Conrad's Saloon and his house at 10539 W. Forest Home Ave., c.1900. The side entrance was for women.



This 1987 photo shows the house that Jacob Sr. and his wife, Dorothea, bought from Dr. C. F. Ellsworth in 1864. Adam Conrad modernized it and retired here.



Adam Conrad's son Henry in front of the Opera House, c.1908



Old Jules, a family retainer, standing alongside a horse that might have been "Pacer," 1914

advertising calendars with a picture of the mules and wagon.

Adam built another tavern, called Conrad's Opera House, on Forest Home Avenue in 1908. Despite its name, no opera was ever performed there. It featured a large hall where spring and fall dances were well-advertised and attended, and the first movies seen in Hales Corners were shown in the Opera House.

In time, Adam and Sophia enlarged their house to have five bedrooms because their growing family needed more space. They also added a basement and installed a pump, so that water did not have to be brought in from outdoors each morning. However, wood still had to be gathered outside, as the cooking was done on big, wood-burning stoves.

Those same stoves heated the water and the heavy irons that smoothed the stiffly starched clothes. There was a great deal of ironing to be done, because ladies wore several petticoats under their long skirts, and men wore stiff shirts.

The Conrads had cleaning help several days a week, but Sophia spent most of her day doing the cooking herself, with extra help only for dinner parties. She was always prepared to have her husband bring home extra guests for meals. At those times, the children waited until the men had eaten; then they and Sophia ate, properly seated in the dining room at a linen-covered table.

The family always had the latest in buggies and horses available for their use. There was one very fine rig with lanterns at the sides,

leather upholstery, and rubber tires, pulled by a beautiful black horse named "Pacer." He had formerly been used at the Elkhorn Race Track to start the races. Pacer was also in the habit of standing outside the back door where he'd be fed sugar from the hand of Florence, Adam's granddaughter.

Adam believed in giving his customers the highest level of service. Frequently, his son, Jacob, daughter-in-law, Emma, and their daughter, Florence, made delivery to a customer of a horse, buggy, or wagon. Emma kept herself and Florence well-dressed at all times to be ready for those occasions.

Because Sophia had been looked after by a nanny as a child, she was well-versed in etiquette. She never forgot to teach the children and



Adam Conrad admiring his rose bushes, c.1930



No more horses at the Conrad barn, c.1930.

grandchildren good manners. Her method was to say quietly, "This is the way we do it at our house," an expression that was handed down through the family.

An interesting event in Adam's life took place when former President **Teddy Roosevelt** attended a political rally in Milwaukee on October 14, 1912. Adam was very interested in politics, having run for various offices himself. He and his son, Jacob, were at that rally where an attempt was made on Roosevelt's life. Teddy's eyeglass case and a folded-up copy of his speech stopped the bullet, and he went on to deliver his speech. The Conrads escaped unharmed in the excitement that followed, but they accidentally left their overcoats behind.

Sophia passed away in 1925, and Adam in 1933.

THIRD GENERATION: Apple Blossoms and Taverns

Adam Conrad, the first child of Jacob Conrad, Jr. and his wife, Marie, was born in 1864. He married **Julia Jungbluth** (born in 1867). They had four children: **Maria, Arthur, Henrietta, and Oscar**. Oscar is pictured with his father and grandfather on page 1.

Adam's brother, **John**, was born in 1869. He married **Louisa Kurtze** (born in 1876). They had eight children: **Brenart, Fremont,**



Julia and Adam Conrad on their 50th Wedding Anniversary, 1938



Emma and Jacob Conrad, Nov. 19, 1900



Jacob and Emma Conrad lived above Uncle Ed Link's grocery store.

Madeline, Mildred, Adda, Delbert, Laura, and Edwin.

Jacob Conrad, the first child of Adam and Sophia, was born in 1877. He married **Emma Guetzkow**, who was born on a farm in Tess Corners in 1877. However, she was not a "country" girl, having a sophisticated bearing about her. She sewed beautifully and made her own clothes as well as her daughter's. Emma was dignified and low-key and was a respected leader in the community.

The family first lived over **Ed Link's** general store on Forest Home Avenue. Ed was married to Jacob Conrad's sister **Jeanette**. Jacob and Emma had two children: **Ralph** (1901-1902), and **Florence**, born in 1903.

The Conrads moved around quite a bit, living in West Allis and Milwaukee during Florence's childhood. They also moved for a time into the living quarters of each of the family-owned taverns on Forest Home Avenue.

In the 1920s, Hales Corners had many fine apple orchards, and the blossom season was an especially lovely time of year. It was customary for Jacob and Emma to invite their Milwaukee friends to come to Hales Corners for a refreshing outing in the country during apple blossom time. Hales Corners was just the right distance from the city to make it a good "get-away place" or holiday location.

Jacob Conrad passed away in 1952, and Emma in 1970.

Jacob's younger sister, **Helen Conrad**, also known as **Caroline**, was born in 1882. She married **John Ircink** (born in 1877), who was a tavern keeper at the Bosch Tavern at one time. The Ircinks had



Emma and Jacob Conrad with their dog, "Prince"

four children: **Veronica, Arthur,** and twins **Dores and Dolores.**

From 1936 to 1948, they operated the Ircink Tavern at 10520 W. Forest Home Avenue, probably a logical result of John's previous experience at tavern-keeping.

Both John and Helen Ircink passed away in 1958. Their son, Arthur, continued to manage the tavern for a time, and was also the Village fire chief from 1964 to 1970.

FOURTH GENERATION: Schoolhouse and Schuster's

Oscar Conrad was the son of **Adam and Julia (Jungbluth) Conrad**, not Adam and Sophia Conrad. He was born in 1899, and attended Valley View School at 5307 S. 92nd Street from 1906 to 1912, although he never officially graduated. At that time, schooling was considered to be completed when a child had read and been tested on a certain number of readers or books.

In 1922, Oscar married **Celia Kingston** (born in 1900). They probably met at Valley View School, as she taught there from 1919 to 1922. Previously, Celia had attended the State Normal School for two years, which is now the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. They had two children: **Carl and Lloyd**, who provided some of this Conrad family history.

In 1923, Oscar began planting apple and other fruit trees, until his orchard contained more than 500 trees. Oscar's mother, Julia, was the School Clerk at Valley View School. In 1938, Oscar took over from her and continued as Clerk until 1946. During his tenure, a new two-room schoolhouse was built, which had a small auditorium downstairs and two bathrooms. The only water supply at the previous school was an out-

door hand pump. This building was heated with coal and wood, and it was the teacher's job to keep the furnace going.

While the school was under construction, World War II broke out and the U.S. government limited vital metal supplies. Rightly or wrongly, metal needed for the school's ongoing construction was concealed beneath a hay mow in the Village, kept out of sight until the schoolhouse was completed.

Oscar Conrad passed away in 1952, and Celia in 1961.

Florence Henrietta Conrad was born in 1903. Among her childhood friends were **Jimmy, Lorette,** and **Elmer Godsell**. In 1910, their father, **James Godsell**, built the original State Bank Hales Corners on what is now Highway 100, just north of the Bosch Tavern. While the bank was being built, the four children would play inside, running through the rooms, and even into the bank vault. One day, Florence became trapped inside the vault when the door swung shut. Fortunately, James Godsell was there to rescue her.

During Florence's school years, she lived in Hales Corners, West Allis, and Milwaukee. Some weekends, she would ride to Hales Corners on the Rapid Transit to stay with her grandparents, Adam and Sophia Conrad.

Florence attended South Division High School, where she met the boy who was later to become her husband, **Clarence Schuette.**



A formal portrait of Florence Conrad, c.1917

He always arrived in class early, with his books and papers neatly prepared in front of him. Florence was usually late, busily trying to do one more thing before class began. As is often the case, opposites attracted.

At that time, young women like Florence who came from prosperous families were enrolled in special schools to learn etiquette



Florence Conrad (second from left) pouring tea at the B.G. Girls Club



Detail of Clarence and Florence Conrad's marriage certificate, June 1, 1935

and proper speech. For a fee of \$10 per year, she attended a school conducted by **Laura Sherry**, who formed the Wisconsin Players, and whose memory was preserved through the Laura Sherry League, now known as the Friends of the Milwaukee Repertory Theater.

During the 1920s, Florence attended Milwaukee Downer Col-



Clarence, Florence, and Stuart Schuette, c.1950s



Florence Schuette, c.1980

lege, where every young woman was required to take physical education classes. After Florence returned from a field hockey game with bloody knuckles, her mother demanded she be excused from such a "rough sport." In order to make up the credit she would otherwise lose, the school arranged for her to work a few hours a day at four large department stores in different parts of the city. At Schuster's Department Store, she was assigned to learn all she could about the making, processing and selling of what was then a new fabric: rayon.

Florence needed to be in several stores during a single day, and because street cars were rather slow, her father, Jacob, decided she needed a car to get around more easily. And not just any car! He sent her to the Jones Cadillac Agency, where the sales staff

sold her a sleek black and gray Cadillac.

As mentioned earlier, Florence became engaged to her classmate, Clarence Schuette. They traveled to New York City and were wed at the Church of the Transfiguration on June 1, 1935. They had one child, **Stuart**, born in 1938.

Clarence passed away in 1976, Stuart in 1988, and Florence in 1993.

FIFTH GENERATION: Orchard vs. Expressway

Lloyd Charles Conrad, the younger son of Oscar and Celia, was born in 1924. His brother, Carl, was born and died in 1923.

In 1949, Lloyd married **Audrey Esch** (born in 1929). She had lived on a dairy farm in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. Audrey joined Lloyd on the farm he grew up on at the southeast corner of Highway 100 (formerly known as Conrad Road) and Layton Avenue. They lived on this property for their entire married life of 66 years.

"Pomona Farm," as it became known, was started by Lloyd's grandfather, Adam, in about 1888. It was a thriving dairy and fruit tree operation. As mentioned earlier,



Lloyd and Celia Conrad spraying apples, with Oscar behind them, 1950



Lloyd and Audrey Conrad, c.1990s

Lloyd's father, Oscar, was mainly responsible for growing the fruit tree operation by planting the bulk of the trees in the 1930s. At its peak, the orchard had more than 500 trees.

In addition to maintaining their farm, Lloyd worked for the Hales Corners Post Office as a mail carrier. Audrey worked at the Boerner Botanical Gardens, first as a gardener, and then in the gift shop. They raised four children,

Curtis Lloyd, Colleen Kay, Sharon Ann, and Denise Ellen.

Lloyd and Audrey's time as residents of the Hales Corners area was marked by huge changes to the physical world. An aerial photo of the farm and surrounding area taken in 1954 displays the contrast. It shows contoured cropland and a rural landscape. That same photo today would be of a parking lot and an expressway ramp.

As turbulent as the 1960s were for all Americans, they were especially difficult for Lloyd and Audrey. In 1963, they were informed that their farm was in the path of the Department of Transportation's project that would become known as the Hale Interchange. Consequently, all but a triangle of four acres of their farm was taken by the state's power of eminent domain. Luckily, Lloyd and Audrey were able to build a house on those remaining acres. About 75 apple trees were left. Lloyd and Audrey harvested the apples on those remaining trees from 1964 until he was physically unable to, in his eighties. They sold apples at roadside stands in Hales Corners and at markets in Delafield and Waukesha.

Thus ended the multi-generational agricultural work of the Conrad family. Even though Lloyd held a full-time job off the farm, he always

loved farming and never stopped referring to himself as a farmer.

Lloyd passed away in 2015 and Audrey in 2021, each at the age of 91.

SIXTH GENERATION: Family Pride and Preservation

Curtis and Mary Ellen (Pliska) Conrad are the couple who recently donated Conrad family items to our collection.

Curtis and Mary Ellen were both born in 1950. They met while attending UW-Stevens Point and were married in 1973. They have two daughters, **Amy Beth** and **Caroline Mae**. Curt worked as a truck driver after college until retiring in 2020. Mary Ellen worked for the Greendale School District for 32 years. They moved to Greendale in 1979 and still live there today.

Their daughter Amy married **Michael Schultz**, and they have a son, **Kenny**. Daughter Caroline married **Tyler Roberts**, and they have two children: **Charlie** and **Leah**.



Celia and grandson Curtis selling fruit on Highway 100, 1953



Curtis and Mary Ellen Conrad, c.2015

HALES CORNERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

5885 South 116th Street, Hales Corners, WI 53130
414-529-6150, Ext. 24

info@HalesCornersHistory.com www.HalesCornersHistory.com
www.facebook.com/HalesCornersHistory