

Chapter I

FAMILY



J. F. The following pages tell much of the history of the Schumacher, Fennel and Sheets families and the story of William Schumacher's early life in his own words. I have supplied my own recollections and reflections, and at times the stories he told us that he didn't include in his documents, to fill in details and add the perspective of one greatly impacted by his life. My reflections are introduced by the initials J. F.

The Schumachers

For the record, I will try to shed some light on my German ancestry, and even though it is somewhat fragmentary, it is accurate beginning with my grandparents, the Berlings. My great, great grandparents were Herr and Frau Berling and lived in Boizenburg, Germany. Herr Berling was a doctor and he was also the town Brugemeister (mayor). He and his wife had one daughter, who married a Schumacher. They were unhappy

with the marriage because they felt their daughter had married beneath herself. Carl Schumacher was a builder of homes, but he was not able to please his father-in-law. He left Germany after promising his wife that as soon as he was settled, he would send for her. Time passed, and finally, the family decided to send his oldest daughter to try and find Schumacher. She located him in Boston, Mass. He was a practicing physician with a large practice. When his daughter asked him how he could be a doctor, he merely shrugged his shoulders. His daughter wrote her mother and advised her to remain in Germany because she would only find unhappiness in America. The union of Schumacher and Berling brought forth four children, Emilia, Carl (my grandfather), Gustaf and Carolyn Augusta (Don Mosier's grandmother). Carl (Karl) married my grandmother, Augusta Richman. Carl Schumacher died in Germany and my grandmother brought her two children, William and Henrietta (my father and his sister) to America. Gustaf stayed in Germany. Emilia came to Denver and married a John Wilerson and they lived in Pueblo, Colorado. Carolyn Augusta came to Denver and married a William Kolkott. They made their home in Denver. They never tried to contact their father again. Don Moser, the grandson of Carolyn Augusta Kilkott had an outstanding career with the Denver Public School system.

My grandmother, Augusta Schumacher, born September 1865, brought my father and his sister to America in the year of 1910. Grandma was 45 years of age. William was 14 and Henrietta was 12. Grandma Schumacher was austere, but not unkind. She lived alone after her children died. She rose at dawn each Saturday morning to begin baking bread for the week. She had known much suffering in her life. She came to the USA as an immigrant from Germany about 1910. Grandma Schumacher's husband, Carl Schumacher, died in Germany sometime just before or after 1900. She also lost two other children in Germany. She and her son (William) and daughter (Henrietta) came to the USA shortly after 1900. Grandma Schumacher was a skilled seamstress for McClanahan's Clothing Store on 16th and Glenarm St. in Denver (store long gone). Grandma Schumacher was the grandmother that gave me

and my sister each a dime on most of our Sunday morning visits. When our visit was completed, we headed down to the Alpine Theater for the Sunday matinee.

J. F. My Great Grandma Schumacher and her two children are buried at Riverside Cemetery in Denver, but I don't know where Great Grandpa Schumacher's grave is located – somewhere in Germany, I guess. I don't believe my father knew, or if he did, he never told us. My father and mother went to Riverside each Memorial Day and at Christmas to tend and decorate the graves. For many years when I was young, I went with my parents. I always recall my dad saying how strange it was to see a headstone (his father's) with his own name on it. He also told us that at one time his grandmother had a woven metal bench made and placed at the site. The name Schumacher was woven into the back rest. His grandmother would often go to the cemetery and sit on the bench near the graves of her two children, William and Henrietta. Sadly, she outlived them both. Dad always wondered what became of that bench.

My Father – William Schumacher, German Immigrant

My father [William Schumacher] married my mother, Olive E. Fennell, in 1917. He was a fireman for the Union Pacific railroad and was killed in a head-on collision near Ft. Lupton, Colorado in October 1922. My brother was 5 years old. I was one year and one month old and my sister was not born until the 27th of the following March. My father's death was the only fatality of the wreck. The Union Pacific paid my mother the sum of \$5,000 and gave her lifetime travel passes for herself and my brother. There was also a verbal statement promising jobs if ever needed

by her sons. This proved to just be talk. After discharge from the Air Force at the end of World War II, I applied for employment with the Union Pacific and they remembered my dad, but my job application never even produced a reply. I don't know where Grandma Schumacher and her family lived at that time, but in the mid-1920's she bought a little house at 3450 Columbine St. She worked a seamstress for McClanahan's Clothiers until she died in 1933. She had a stroke and died in her home. McClanahan's was on 16th Street between Welton and Glenarm Streets (wsw side of the street). I think McClanahan's went out of business in the 1940's.

My father, William Schumacher, was a fireman for the Union Pacific Railroad. He died from injuries received in a head-on collision with another train near Ft. Lupton, Colorado. A southbound train had been moved to the wrong track, and my dad's northbound train collided with it. He died at the scene. It was late in the evening when the railroad man came to the house to tell my mother of the terrible accident. My father was pinned to the ground by metal tubing ripped free and propelled through the air by the force of the impact. He died October 22, 1922.

Through part of my lifetime, the most meaningful sound to me was one that embellished my thoughts, and I think, touched my soul. I grew up hearing this magnificent sound almost every day and every night. In the daylight, it was a strong, rushing, and yet, a friendly sound, but the darkness of the night gave it added dimension. It had a strong impact on my thinking from the twenties through the thirties. The sound had a language of its own and foretold of wonderful things to come. Sometimes it was lonely, sometimes it was haunting, but somehow, always reassuring. This marvelous sound was born, carried and delivered by the railroad locomotives. I loved this sound, and sixty years later, I still do, and always will.

J. F. My father told us of how on the morning of the train wreck, his father – William Schumacher - was sitting on the back porch singing a melancholy song - Oh, Promise Me. It

was his day off. His pregnant wife told him to stop singing such a sad tune. Shortly afterwards, a man came up to the house to ask Mr. Schumacher if he could work that day to fill in for someone who was out sick. His wife asked him not to go, but he agreed and left for work. At the time of the impending accident, with the two engines hurtling toward each other on the tracks, the engineer called out for everyone to jump from the train. My dad's father jumped. He was impaled by a metal pole torn loose from the engine by the impact. He died at the scene. His wife, my grandmother, was left widowed with two small boys and another child on the way.



My father's father William Schumacher – German Immigrant



Thought to be Augusta Schumacher's house

The Fennells

My mother's family came from Canada. Her mother and dad, Abigale and Thomas Fennell, and four of her six brothers came to Denver from Guelph, Ontario. My mother was the youngest of grandma's and grandpa's seven children. Uncle Harry stayed in Guelph. Uncle Harry was a very young man when he died of a severe case of pneumonia. Uncle Bob, for whom I cared very much, stayed in Guelph and in 1914 he joined the Canadian army and was a brave and decorated soldier. Uncle Bob was a frontline soldier and was wounded in battle three times and was severely gassed during another battle.

My Uncle Bob was a very strong man even after World War I was over. After discharge from the Canadian Army (infantry), he came to Denver to live with his parents. He was on a small pension from the Canadian government and he went to work for a furniture moving company. Severe asthma developed and he had to quit working. Bob kept the house in good shape, did all the gardening, built the incubator for the chicks,