

THE HISTORY OF F. W. LANGE FAMILY

Frederick Wilhelm Lange was born in Neuhberg Germany, October 10, 1817, he was brought up as a prospective citizen of his native country. After he became a young man he began to work with a well known and well informed cooper. This trade was well mastered and put him into a position to go out into the world and successfully make use of his learnings.

He had many friends in his boyhood days, among them was a charming young lady, Miss Fredricka Johanna Steiners, who in the year 1840 joined him in holy wedlock.

August Steiners, a brother to Mrs. F. W. Lange, had wandered to America. He kept in close touch with his sister and her husband by correspondence and finally induced F. W. Lange to attempt the voyage to America. So in June 1854, he made application to the Prussian government for a certificate of leave and was issued the following still well preserved document:

Die unterzeichnete koengliche reigierung beschoigt hierdurch dasz dem Baettcher-Meister Friedrich Wilhelm Lange aus der Stadt Bernstein im Fokdiner Kreise geboren den 10 October 1817 in Neunberg an der Weichsel, auf sein Ansuchen und Beheifs, seiner Enefrau Friedricka Johanna, geborene Steiners, geboren den 15 June 1818 in Neuenberg und folgenden muenderjaehriger unter vaterlichen gewalt stehenden kinder:

Marie Elizebeth	Geboren den 8 October	1842
Carl Fredrich Willam	" "	1 Janaur 1847
August Adolf Alexander	" "	2 April 1849
Julius Friedrig	" "	13 December 1850
Helmuth Gotlieb Lebrecht	" "	7 Mei 1852
Erdman Valentine	" "	5 November 1853

(Also the following were permitted under the same release and under the care of F. W. Lange.)

Carl August Neubauer	Geboren den 11 Febuar	1838	ein Keefer
Ernstina Willimina Weber	" "	23 December	1835
Carolina Sophia Aller	" "	16 August	1835 ein Weisenkind

Die entlassung aus dem Freuschinan unterhalten Verbande bewilligt ist. Diese Entlassung orkunde bewirkt jadoch nur fur darin ausdracklich gennanten personen mit dem zeitpunkten der aushaendigung der verlust der Eigenschaft als Preuschinan unterhalten.

I 1775 / 6-54 Entlassungs Urkunde Frankfort den 28 Juni 1854.
(seal)

After the necessary papers had been secured they immediately secured passage on a sailing vessel and braved the mighty deep and withstood many long and lonesome days away from land. All there was to see were large waves of water which sometimes splashed upon the deck of the vessel. Sometimes drifting farther back then they had gained the previous day. After some four to six weeks of battling the great waves of the Atlantic Ocean they reached the Texas coast of Indianola.

At this place a man was hired to transport the Lange family and their belongings to San Antonio, Texas, their destination.

This transportation was also slow but sure, but the Langes were enjoying same immensely after seeing all the water.

After arriving in San Antonio, Mr. Lange set out to find a home for his family. After some searching he found a house on what is now known as Alamo Street in San Antonio.

After being comfortably located he set out to secure a job which was not hard to do. He had learned of the Menger Brewery, to where he went soon after his arrival. He got acquainted with the Mengers and convinced them that he was a good cooper. They employed him to make kegs for the brewery. He not only made beer kegs but, also built tanks for the brew, water buckets and tubs, in fact all kinds of vessels that could be made of wood to hold water and other liquids.

After two years of work for the Menger Brewery, Mr. Lange had accumulated enough money to purchase 8 acres of land near San Pedro Springs and moved his family to the newly acquired property, which had a small Mexican cottage which was built out of pickets or log poles, the cracks were filled with adobe mixed with straw or grass to hold it together. It had only one door and a very small window. This was far from comfortable for the family, so Mr. Lange and his sons enlarged the hut and prepared the land for truck gardening. Some time later he purchased an additional 12 acres adjoining the first purchase. This gave him a nice truck garden very nicely located on the present site of what is known as Teck Field base ball field near San Pedro park. A rancher, Nat Lewis, allowed Lange and his sons to milk some 25 cows. The boys enjoyed this very much. The milk was sold and delivered in ten gallon cans where it was dished out to customers in pint or quarts as they needed it. They received 10¢ per quart. Best of all was that they had all the milk and butter necessary for the family. This was very beneficial to them as food prices were very high. Plenty of milk and butter interspersed with wild game now and then was quite a contrast to the four meals of potatoes that grandmother so often made mention of as having been the common fare in Deutchland. Even with all this help it was a problem as to how to feed a large family. Flour cost from \$15 to \$20.00 a barrel and coffee was not in reach of the common people. Mrs. Lange oftentimes parched rye and okra seed for a substitute, and sometimes used sweet potatoes that were cut into small squares and dried then parched as coffee. These drinks were very much cherished, after one had become accustomed to it.

During all this time the Brother-in-Law, August Steiners who had instilled the Lange family with the pioneering spirit, was about one hundred miles northwest of San Antonio with the Doss Brothers at Doss Valley one of the loveliest villages in Southwest Texas. Besides a cattle ranch these gentlemen had found a wonderful spring gushing out from underneath a ledge of rocks high above Threadgill Creek. The water of this spring impounded could be used in turning an overshot wheel. Here is where the ingenuity of August Steiner came into use. Under his supervision a mill was built and a water race from the spring to the wheel gave the first mechanical power ever used in the section. The Doss brothers were very enthusiastic about their location and pictured in their minds what the future held in store for them. They estimated that an abundance of wheat could be gathered in the immediate vicinity that their milling business would flourish. Time was required and the wheat and corn yield did not come up to their expectations and the little mill did not bring the returns that had been anticipated.

The Doss Brothers next venture was the building of a saw mill. In spite of the crude rustic machinery the saw mill did much in serving the surrounding countryside with lumber for building purposes. Having sufficient lumber they built a nice mansion on the hill just south of the spring from where they could look and enjoy the beautiful scenery and also observe their stock and wild game such as deer and turkey. After they had become permanently located in their home misfortune overtook them. The wonderful structure that they had built was totally destroyed by fire. It was ignited by a band of robbers, often referred to as "bushwhackers". This misfortune and the milling business not being what they had anticipated they became discouraged and were willing to dispose of their holdings at a sacrifice. Mr. Steiners, their employee, upon being informed of their intentions immediately got in touch with his Brother-in-law, F. W. Lange, and explained the matter to him. He in turn began to investigate and finally decided to advance sufficient cash to purchase the Doss Brothers holdings. Mr. Steiners returned and bought the property paying a handsome price for the same.

Mr. Lange then disposed of his property in San Antonio and again the family journeyed westward, over hills and valleys for another one hundred miles of unknown country following

cow trails for the greater part of the way. After several days they reached their destination. This was a building that was on the property which was rather small for the Lange family. Preparations were made for building of a new home. This was built of post oak logs which Mr. Lange and sons cut near by using only good sound timber. A fine grade of clay mixture was found near by to close up the cracks between the logs.

Mr. Steiners being a millwright and experienced in many other trades, made suggestions to his brother-in-law which after consideration were carried out by Mr. Lange. A crude lime kiln was built nearby where all the lime that was used in the mill building and dam was prepared. Sand was in abundance and the stone was quarried nearby.

A Mr. Buchmeyer, a neighbor, Julius Klingelhoefer of Fredericksburg, Mr. Cook of San Antonio were employed as stone masons. Mr. Paul Loeffler a nearby neighbor, Mr. Zahara of San Antonio were employed as carpenters. The Lange boys as helpers worked very diligently to complete the undertakings. It was the custom of the stone masons to lay their chewing tobacco on the walls while eating. Making use of the occasion Helmuth and Bernhard Lange occasionally slipped around and took a big chew, sometimes with very bad after effects. The mill building was the first to be erected and completed. Unfortunately Mr. August Steiners died before the structure was completed. This caused a great loss to the Lange family. They continued their work and the mill building was soon completed. After Mr. Buchmeyer who had charge of the masonry work had finished the mill building finished he immediately began to work on the dam (1870). It was his desire to erect a good structure, so he had the Lange boys drag large stones to where the dam was to be located. These stones were brought on sleds drawn by mules--then placed in position by the use of large iron bars.

The Lange boys worked hard and diligently in order that their goal might be reached. What interested the boys most of all was the idea of having a nice large swimming pool in front of the house. After months of hard labor the dam was completed and water released into the proposed pool. It required only 10 to 12 hours to fill the pool to its overflow.

The boys enthusiastic about their project being completed and seeing the pool of crystal clear water, celebrated the occasion by diving Indian style into the pool. Near the center of the pool stood a large Sycamore tree. This tree the boys judged as a safety line should the dam break. Soon the boys were ready to immerge from the water and dress. Standing at the edge of the pool admiring its beauty and thinking of the great power that could be derived from this structure they had erected, they were startled by a sudden rumbling noise and saw the structure that they had just completed, together with the large Sycamore tree disappear before their eyes. Debris was scattered quite a ways down the creek. This shock was great to the family and Mr. Buchmeyer was greatly disappointed that the structure did not withstand the pressure.

Mr. Lange and sons however were not discouraged. They immediately went back to work built a new dam which was much larger than the first one. This of course delayed the grinding of grain for another six months.

At last this structure was completed and the mill was put into operation through the power of an overshot wheel that had been built by the carpenters. The water was turned on the wheel but the power was too great and the shaft broke. Then preparations were made for a turbine. Mr. Lange and one son made a trip to San Antonio for the purpose of buying a turbine. One was located at Boyers Mill. Mr. Lange purchased it and returned home. The turbine was finally placed into position and tried out. This proved too large for the amount of water on hand so the cups of the turbine were filled with lead so that a lesser amount of water was required to produce the power. This proved successful and the work of the new industry was started. People from far and near brought in their grain which by this time had become abundant and of very fine quality.

When the customer brought his grain it was weighed and placed into an elevator. It was lifted to the second floor of the building where a cleaner or blower had been erected to clean the grain of chaf and dust. Then it would pass through a chute down to the mill where it emptied into a shuttle that gradually fed the mill where the buhrstone would crush the grain. The crushed substance was again elevated into a bolter, where it was separated. This bolter was of a cylinder shape--the outside portion being covered with a very fine mesh of copper wire of three different grades of fineness placed on an incline position. As it would revolve, the first section having the finest screen would sift out the tiniest portions of the crushed grain into the bottom of the bolter box. This box was also divided into sections. Immediately under each section of the bolter a box would receive the three different particles that the bolter would sift out. The bran came out at the end of the bolter.

The customer would thus receive four different products made from his grain. Sometimes he would pay cash for the grinding and at other times perhaps give toll which was one pound of every ten. This toll was placed into especially prepared sacks which bore the brand of the mill to wit the words "PECAN SPRING MILL" encircling a running deer with F. W. Lange across the top. This brand was made by one of the Lange boys. It was made of odd pieces of wood bolted together, making a block 12 by 12 inches square. The carving was all done by hand and was a wonderful piece of craftsmanship.

The flour was also graded by a very simple method. A thin smooth board was provided which was some 8 by 10 inches square. A small nickle plated blade about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and 6 inches long would then be used to spread the flour out on the board. After this was done the blade was again used to smooth out the flour and if it remained smooth it was considered a very high grade. If it would show cracks it was graded according to the size of the cracks that would show.

On August 2, 1873 death took a son, Erdman Valentine, a young man of 20 years out of the family. This was a sad loss to Mr. Lange.

On October 5, 1877, the father, F. W. Lange, was claimed by death leaving his bereaved wife and children to mourn his death. At this time four of the sons were married. C. F. W. Lange the oldest son took charge of the mill and his mother's affairs for the first year. He then took the stock (merchandise) that his father kept for the convenience of his customers to Cherry Spring, where he entered into business. Two younger brothers, Julius and Bernhard, then took over the family mill and other affairs until the death of Mrs. F. W. Lange on September 3, 1910.

Delays during the time that the mill and dam were under construction was when the father, F. W. Lange, sent Julius and Helmuth out early one morning to get the horses which had drifted to Brookmans Point some three miles from home. The horses were found and were brought home and left by the creek to graze until they were needed.

A neighbor, Mr. Fritz Ellebracht, came up to the Lange's home and told them that he had seen some Indians. Then Julius took an old 44 Winchester and got on the horse that Ellebracht came on and went down to where they had left the horses. Helmuth came following on foot with a 6 and 7 shooter. The Indians had the horses surrounded and were preparing to chase them when Julius arrived and the fight began. Helmuth soon arrived on foot and did all he could to save the horses. All horses were saved except one that belonged to Helmuth. Instead of his favorite saddle horse they left him an old ridden down plug. Of course Helmuth took it.

A month later the Indians made another raid and Julius and Helmuth again stood them off and saved their horses. This time they killed one of the Indians. They retreated so Julius and Helmuth got their horses saddled and followed their trail which lead to the home of Bill Neighbors. Here they overtook the Indians. The Lange boys put up another good fight and saved the girls from being captured by the Indians. The

Indians again retreated and the two brothers went for more help and the trail was followed quite a ways but the Indians were never again overtaken.

After this Mr. Lange and sons built a small horse pasture containing about 100 acres with the thought that this would save their horses from being stolen by the Indians. This fence was built of rail, brush, and stone.

Early one morning Julius again went out after the horses. When he found them he also spied the Indians, who had torn down a portion of the fence. Julius again intended to put up a good fight but had forgotten that his gun was not loaded. He moved the lever but the cartridge hung. He pointed his gun at the Indians but could not shoot. The Indians noticed him and gave chase. Julius was in his bare feet and he ran home in such speed that he did not stop until he reached the hill that was at the back of the house. Then Julius extracted the cartridge from the gun and he and his brothers followed the trail of the Indians but found that they did not get any of their horses. After this the Indians did not bother them anymore and they worked in peace.

Please send old letters or diaries to Kermit C. Burrer, Star Route A, Box 894, Austin, Texas 78710. They will be copied and returned promptly to the sender. Old family bibles very often also contain important bits of information.