

# Tilly Schaefer

Mathilda “Tilly” Schaefer was born in Westphalia, Germany, though she had lived all but four of her years in Polo. Her family was from Kreis (County) Büren in eastern Westphalia. Her father Carl Schaefer was born in Wünnenburg, and her mother Anna Marie Schaefer was born in nearby Hegensdorf<sup>1</sup>. Kreis Büren has been part of Westphalia since the Duchy of Westphalia emerged from medieval Saxony in 1180. The Saxons were, of course, one of the Germanic (Frankish) peoples that invaded the northern Roman Empire in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century.

Tilly’s parents Carl and Anna Marie did not speak English, but they came across as very friendly people.<sup>2</sup> They spent their last days in the home of their youngest child Anna in Orient. Claire Sweeney remembers that Anna always had plenty of sweet things to eat. This was before Anna married Pete Schlechter (at age 32).

The Schaefer family is a large one. Tilly had three sisters and two brothers, and many cousins. Her oldest sister Sophia married Anton Harde and had eleven children and 39 grandchildren. Anna and Pete Schlechter had seven children. Tilly’s brother Francis and his wife Mary had eight children, and her brother Anton and his wife Rose had six.

It is worth noting that, where Gene’s siblings settled outside South Dakota, Tilly had several siblings with large families of their own in the Polo area. In addition, Tilly had many cousins in Hand County.

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Marie’s Schaefer (Scheiffers) line has been traced back five generations in Hegensdorf, as far back as about 1689.

<sup>2</sup> Claire Sweeney’s recollection.