

## "If Only The Walls Could Talk"

I hope you had a Joyful Christmas and will have a better year than last year.

As usually happens, we all may have heard discussions about New Years Resolutions. Most of us have made them with varying degrees of success. Long ago I thought of the perfect solution that I am willing to share with one caveat; that you actually try one or both of them. One is impossible to keep, the second impossible to break.

**#1 - I resolve to not make any resolutions.**

**#2 - I resolve to make only one resolution.**

Try one, or both, you can't go wrong with either one.

A new resource available at the Woelke Historical Research Center is the culmination not only of a long-time dream but also a lot of hard work on the part of Steve Schulze. He spent literally hundreds of hours taking high resolution pictures of every page of every issue of The Pigeon Progress and The Progress Advance. We now have those available for research. Additionally, we were able to get them all available at NewsPapers.com where they are in a searchable format. You can access them here at WHRC. You can search for specific words, get clippings of articles and ads, and download them as an image or a PDF document.

### THE PIGEON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 253 – Pigeon, Michigan 48755  
989-453-3242

Denny Esch, President

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#### Six Membership Meetings:

Second Monday of the month

January – March – May – July

September – October – November  
10:00 a.m.

#### Board Meetings:

Fourth Monday of every month

All meetings at 10:00 a.m.

#### Meeting Location:

Woelke Historical Research Center

## Our Founding Families - The Roestels

### Pioneer Families in the Pigeon Area

#### THE FRED ROESTEL SR. FAMILY



Fred and Mary Roestel Sr.

Fred Roestel was born in Germany on September 24, 1858 and Mary Wheilihan was born in Germany on October 17, 1858.

They met and married in 1884 and their first son, Otto was born on April 11, 1887 and their second son, Fred, was born on September 24, 1889. Both boys were born in Germany.

Fred and Mary brought their two small boys to the States where two more children, Henry and Louise were born.

The family migrated to Berne where Fred's mother and stepfather, Philip Damm, had settled a few years earlier. They purchased a farm in Chandler Township on Filion Road two miles east of the Hayes Church. They lived there until 1904 when they moved to another farm on Gagetown Road.

When Fred passed away in 1912, Mary and son, Otto, moved to Pigeon then moved again to a farm owned by Henry.

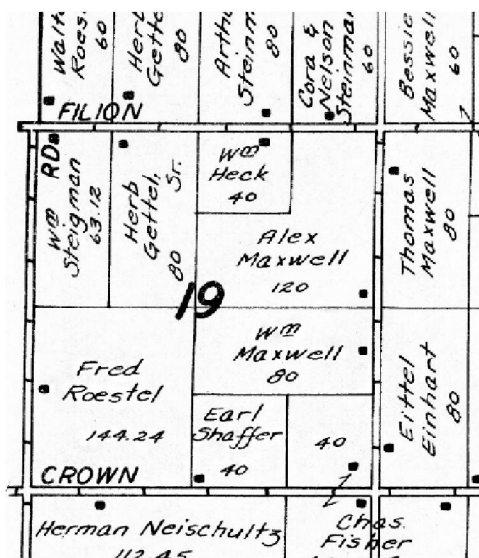
Mary Roestel passed away in 1937 and Otto died in 1963. Fred Jr. married Anna

Fritz in 1913 and had three children, Walter, Henry, and Geraldine Steinman. Henry had two sons and Geraldine had four children. Walter had one son and three daughters.

Fred worked for the J.J. Campbell Company and helped build the first telephone lines around Pigeon. Fred Jr. died in 1963.

Louise married Joe McArdle in 1919 and lived on a farm in Chandler Township which Joe's father had homesteaded. Joe and Louise McArdle continued to live on that farm and raise their children. After forty-two years of farm life they moved to Pigeon, and Leo, the youngest son, moved to the family farm. Leo passed away in 1970.

There were at that time ten children: Leo on the farm, James, Dale and Helen Hyzer lived in Detroit, Robert and Doris Dean lived near Bad Axe, Bernice Davis lived in Williamston, Mich., Audrey Thackston in Jacksonville, NC, Joe and Joan Blome lived in Pigeon. Fifty-five grandchildren and twenty-one great grandchildren were born to this clan. Most of the Roestels have been farmers in the Pigeon area and some still reside here.



The Fredrick Roestel farm is located in Section 19 of Chandler Township. It is on the corner of Gagetown and Crown roads and it comprises 144.24 acres.

## Fredrick C. Roestel

1887 - 1963

Fred C. Roestel, age 75, passed away Monday evening, April 15, at his home in Chandler township following several months illness.

He was born September 21, 1887 in Germany. He came to Chandler township in 1892 where he farmed all his life.

On January 22, 1913 he was united in marriage to Annie Fritz at Owendale. Mr. Roestel was a lifelong member of the First Methodist Church in Pigeon.

He is survived by his widow, Annie; one daughter, (Geraldine) Mrs. Nelson Steinman, and two sons, Walter and Henry, all of Pigeon; 11 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; one sister, Mrs. Joe McArdle, Sr. and one brother, Otto, both of Pigeon.

Funeral services will be held Thursday, April 18 at 2:00p.m. at The First Methodist Church, Pigeon. The Rev. Marvin McCallum will officiate. Burial will be in Grandlawn Cemetery, Pigeon.

*From The Progress Advance, April 18, 1963*

## Annie (Fritz) Roestel

1893 - 1959

Mrs. Fred Roestel, 75, passed away Tuesday, January 14 at her home in Chandler Township following an extended illness.

She was born April 28, 1893 in Brookfield Township. On January 22, 1913 Annie Fritz and Fred Roestel were united in marriage in Huron County. Mr. Roestel passed away April 15, 1963. Mrs. Roestel was a member of the First United Methodist Church of Pigeon.

She is survived by one daughter, Mrs. Nelson (Geraldine) Steinman, Pigeon; two sons Walter and Henry, both of Pigeon; 11 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; three brothers, Charles Fritz of Elkton, John of Owendale, and Arthur of Pigeon.

One brother, Walter, and one sister, Mrs. William Schaper, preceded her in death.

Funeral services were held Friday, January 17 at 2:00 p.m. in the First United Methodist Church, Pigeon. The Rev. Meldon Crawford officiated with burial in the Grandlawn Cemetery.

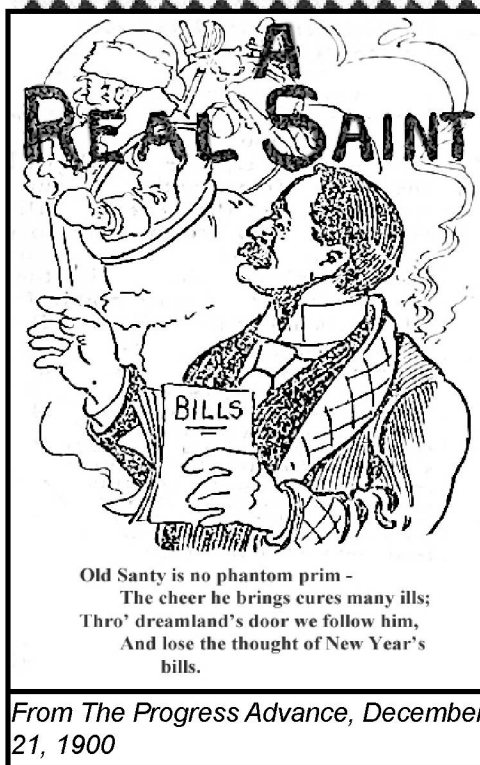
*From The Progress Advance, January 23, 1969*



Front row: James (oldest), Louise, Joe and Joan Blome (youngest); second row: Doris Dean, Helen Hyzer, Bernice Davis, Audrey Thackston; third row: Robert, Dale, Joe and Leo. Children of Joe & Louise McArdle.



Otto, Louise, and Fred



*From The Progress Advance, December 21, 1900*

## George Keim Recollection of By-Gone Days Christmas



Christmas is almost here again and I am looking forward to this one, because if everything goes right, we'll be in Kansas to visit my son Howard and his family. My youngest daughter Charlene will be there and a grandson and granddaughter from the Netherlands will be there too.

Things do happen over the years. I've seen a lot of



Christmases. When I was going to school I was chosen for Santa Claus because I was a little heavier than the other boys. Once I was Santa Claus for the village. They had a Christmas program at the Village Hall.

Willis Leipprandt was the town marshal and he got me dressed up in the fire hall and told me to get out and mix with the people. Well, I did and I knew a lot of people and I talked German to a lot of older people, and they couldn't see how Santa Claus could talk German.

Then they had the Cross Lutheran band playing Christmas carols and Rev. Burkle from the First Methodist Church and Rev. Walker from St. John's Lutheran Church of Berne gave a little talk on Christmas.

Then we passed out some candy and peanuts in bags to the children and once in a while I'd give some old lady a bag. One old man told me to be careful what I gave to his wife.

When I was still quite young, whenever we got a catalog from Sears Roebuck or Montgomery Ward, we'd always look in the toy department to see what kind of toys they had. We knew we couldn't get all of them because our parents didn't have much money.

One thing did suit me and that was the Tinker Toys. They were only 85 cents for a set and I begged for them. And my folks wouldn't tell me if I could have them or not. They sent for the Christmas presents and when the big box came a few days before Christmas, we could hear a rattle that they got for my sister, but I couldn't hear or see anything.

I got up early on Christmas morning and I had to eat my breakfast before I could look for what I had. When I looked, here was a set of Tinker Toys.

We had company for dinner and one of my cousins hid some of them and a few days later my mother found them in a potatoe bag. I played with them until I was 13 years old and I still have them and only one stick is broke off and somebody else broke that off.

I never got many big Christmas presents when I was young but what I got I took good care of.

In I Corinthians 1:11 it says "When I was a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things." I don't need any toys anymore but when somebody says hello to me and asks how I am, even if I don't know that person, I appreciate that more than if they gave me something.

## THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

One of the greatest blessings that Christmastide brings to us is the Christmas spirit - the fulfillment to the letter of the Christian law embodied in the Golden Rule.

This is not invariably the case, but it is fortunately the rule in a great number of cases. For a little while - a month - during the Christmas season, we are turned away from all spirit of avarice and selfishness. From the tiny toddler, who has for the first time begun to realize her responsibilities as a member of the family, to the grandmother in her snowy kerchief and cap, we are all plotting and planning for others. Going to the greatest pain to conceal all our doings in order that our gifts may be genuine surprises.

If we are members of Christian churches, we have the poor with us at this season, as at no other. We think out their needs. It has been the rule in Christian churches of late years to devote the offerings of the Christmas tree to the mission school. Loving bands of King's Daughters go about and gather all manner of gifts for those who are less fortunate, for those to whom Christmas otherwise brings only empty larders and threadbare clothing. The most sordid among us, like Old Scrooge, is sure finally to have an awakening of his better nature, to find a drawing at his heart strings more powerful than the tight drawn strings of the money bags.

*From the Pigeon Progress December 24, 1897*



What A Gift - Coronado family  
15 ft. Freezer only \$389.95. Gam-  
bles. 17-19c

**Gamble's Ad**

*From The Progress Advance, December 21, 1951*

## THOUGHTOGRAPHS

Some men admit they are self-made, while there are others who blame it on their wives.

*From The Progress Advance, December 3, 1897*

## Trees Can Be Bird Feeding Stations

Your Christmas tree can go on giving service in the true spirit of joy and generosity long after you have demoted it from its station in the living room, according to George M. Sutton, associate professor of zoology at the University of Michigan.

This year, when the holiday is over and the tree is shedding its needles, why not encourage the children to carry it out to the back yard and decorate it with food for the birds? They will enjoy the pure fun of passing on their Christmas riches to the birds at a time when it is especially hard for the birds to procure food.

Of course, you may prefer to stage the birds Christmas at the same time as your own by decorating a small fir tree or bush already planted in your yard.

For ring-necked pheasants and bobwhites, a complete corn cob can be placed on the ground or on the lower branches. Cracked nuts, crumbs, and peanuts can be placed on small trays and suspended from strings or wires. Wiring, however, should be solid, as many birds are easily frightened by objects that tremble.

And when you choose the position of the gift tree, be sure it is not recessed in shrubbery from which marauding cats might creep, Professor Sutton reminds.

*From The Progress Advance, December 21, 1951*

## Looking Backward VIA PIGEON PROGRESS FILES

### FORTY YEARS AGO

February 16, 1906

It is rumored that a couple of Pigeon citizens are thinking seriously of purchasing automobiles.

### TEN YEARS AGO

February 14, 1936

A bad blizzard broke Thursday of last week and Saturday night many cars were blocked in the roads and occupants found refuge in farm homes. The Grand Trunk train was held up seven hours in the Geiger cut, south of Pigeon. Road Commission plow crews worked night and day to keep the roads open.

*From The Progress Advance, February 15, 1946*





## Santa Claus to Visit Bay Port

Santa Claus is coming to Bay Port Monday, December 24, at 3:30 in the afternoon. He will talk to all little children and present them with a bag of candy and nuts.

Santa has asked all children to gather around the community Christmas tree to await his arrival. If the weather permits, Santa expects to arrive in his sleigh. His visit is sponsored by the Bay Port Chamber of Commerce.

*From The Progress Advance, December 21, 1951*

From the pages of *The Pigeon Progress*, Ninety three years ago, January 4, 1929: There were 604 births and 271 deaths and 155 couples were married in 1928 in Huron County.

**ELECTRIC MOTORS REPAIRED**  
Rebuilt and re-wound; also checked and installed. Alfred "Herk" Dietzel. Phone 93R12, Pigeon. 19-21p

*From The Progress Advance, December 21, 1951*

Have an idea for an article in *The Recorder*? Family history? Memorable event? Historical information about a local business?

Do you have an article you want published? We can scan and edit copy for *The Recorder*. Like to write articles? We welcome your contributions. Need an idea for an article? We have hundreds!

Contact us by e-mail at [pigeon-historicalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:pigeon-historicalsociety@gmail.com) or contact me directly at [pschuetter@gmail.com](mailto:pschuetter@gmail.com).

Paul Schuetter, Editor.

## Every Business Place in Town Contributes Gifts

From Webber Brothers and Gettel Implement Company on the west to Wieckenberg & Dast on the east and from Pigeon Tile Works on the north to Erich Kraft & Son on the south, not one Pigeon businessman failed to take part in the donation of gifts to be given away to children this Saturday. Santa Claus says that it's that kind of cooperation which makes Pigeon his favorite town.

He will be here again Saturday for his last visit before Christmas Eve, and will help distribute the gifts that Pigeon merchants have wrapped and placed in the window of the village hall. This will start at 3:45 and will be followed by the presentation of the Chamber of Commerce awards. Last week's winners were Donald Leipprandt, Roy Horn and Ethel Truemmer.

*From The Progress Advance, December 21, 1951*

**FOUND**—Man's wrist watch in Pigeon. Inquire of George Swartzendruber. 25p

**LOST**—Ex-service man's wrist watch, somewhere in Pigeon or vicinity. Notify E. W. Brewer, Sebawaing, Phone 5081. 25-26p

*From The Progress Advance, February 8, 1946*

*Do you think they found each other?*

From the pages of *The Pigeon Progress*, Seventy three years ago, January 21, 1949: A new corporation, Thumb Publications, Inc., has been formed by Walt Rummel, editor and published of the *Pigeon Progress*, to obtain production personnel necessary to handle the increased volume of advertising and job printing. Other stockholders of the new firm are Norman Curtis of Caro and Harry Klinger of Pigeon.

### Woeke Research Center is Open Year Around!

September to May - Friday, 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

June to August - Thursday & Friday, 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

Grandmother used to tell us stories of her family when we were young. We listened with intense interest but never wrote anything down. Now, as we grow older, we wish he could remember who Aunt Millie married. What was Uncle Pat's wife's name? If only we could find our history. Where do we start? Do we have to pay for information on the internet?

Whether you are a novice at genealogy or a seasoned professional, we welcome you to become a member of the Pigeon Historical Society. The Society meets in the Woeke Historical Research Center the second Monday every two months, at 10:00 a.m. If you are interested in joining, stop into the Woeke Historical Research Center. Membership is \$20 per year. We do have internet, so bring your laptop or tablet. We have access to genealogy software and will help you fill in the blanks on your family tree.

#### No computer?

We now have extra laptops for public use!

Pigeon Historical Society

59 S. Main St. / P. O. Box 523, Pigeon, MI 48755

989-453-3242 (Leave Message)

**Visit our Facebook Page**

<https://www.facebook.com/Pigeon-Historical-Society-192639410782381>

**Or our website**

<http://pigeonhistoricalsociety.com/>

### We'd love to see you on our Team!

An individual or business can become a member by contracting any active member or by sending your tax deductible cash or check to Pigeon Historical Society, 59 S. Main St. / P. O. Box 523, Pigeon, MI 48755. Dues are renewed at the annual meeting each year.

**Individual Membership:** \$20.00 (active member with voting privileges)

**Life Membership:** \$120.00 (active voting member with lifetime privileges)

**Supporting Membership:** \$15.00 (non-active supporting member)

**Business Membership:** \$20.00 or more (contributing member non-voting)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings. Be our guest and become a member!**