

## (1823) Frederick Eisenbeis (b:2.1.1.1.6-9.5.1)

The following information was written by Sidney Wallace Eisenbeis (b:2.1.1.1.6-9.5.1.8.1) with the assistance of his son, Craig Frederick Eisenbeis. Craig followed his footsteps into the U.S. Coast Guard but stayed for a full career and retired as a Captain after serving in such positions as Commander Coast Guard Forces in North Carolina and Chief Administrative Officer in Alaska. Craig graduated from Oregon State University and received a graduate degree from the U.S. Naval War College. He is now a writer in Sisters, Oregon.

My grandfather, Frederick Eisenbeis, and his brother, Charles, emigrated from Prussia to the United States in about 1856. They were bakers, as was their father; and they opened a bakery in Rochester, New York. Soon, however, they sailed to San Francisco and thence to Puget Sound, reportedly arriving on February 24, 1858. My Aunt Lena, (Frederick's daughter) always said that her "father came around the Horn" (sailed around the southern tip of South America). Lena also explained that they came from a place in Europe that – depending on the results of the latest war - was sometimes part of France and sometimes part of Germany. We later learned that they were from Neunkirchen, in the Saarland (now part of Germany). Charles established a bakery in Port Townsend, and my grandfather did the same in Steilacoom.

Charles joined Frederick in Steilacoom in 1860 and stayed until 1865, when he married Elizabeth Berghauer (in San Francisco), also of Prussia, and returned to Port Townsend, where he became a prominent businessman and the first mayor. My grandfather married Rosina Denger, also of the old country. She was related to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the famous German writer and philosopher (1749-1832).

My Eisenbeis grandparents had seven children, of which my father, Valentine Victor Eisenbeis (1882-1965), was the youngest. Presumably he was named for my great-grandfather, Johann Georg Valentin Eisenbeiss (b. 1796). The other children were: Louise, Charles, Frederick, Henrietta, Kate and Lena. Long before I was born, the family acquired and lived on the Steilacoom block where I was later raised. The original family home still stands on the north side of the block on Starling Street. The block has eight lots.

My father, "Val," as he was known, married my mother, Mary Issabel Markham (1881-1967), on February 21, 1911, at the Markham home in Tacoma. Mother was one of four sisters; the others were Edith M. Wallace, Grace M. Carr, and Louise M. Burcham. Their father, Sidney Frank Markham, was also listed as a "pioneer resident of Tacoma" since 1889.

My Grandfather Eisenbeis died in March 1902, within a few days of his brother, Charles. The only other house my family built on their Steilacoom block was my father's house on the southwest corner. He did much of the work himself, and it was completed in about 1915, just before I was born (January 19, 1916). The house was on the choicest corner of the property, with a beautiful view of the Sound, the Olympic Mountains, and all the way to The Narrows. This is where I grew up. I sold the house in 1965, after my father's death and after my employer, Standard Oil Company of California (later Chevron) transferred me to Portland, Oregon. I began working at a Standard gas station in Seattle in 1937, and retired from Chevron 40 years later, as the Office Manager of the Willbridge Distributing Plant in Portland.

Those years in Steilacoom were great. As a youth, I spent my summers doing odd jobs, as well as recreating on the Sound. Most of our property was in orchards; and I remember that I, along with my friends, spent weekends at a produce stand in front of our house selling cherries. We made considerable money that way. We also sold apples in season. I had one of the original apple cider presses in town, and it was quite a business. I rode into Stadium High School in Tacoma with my father; and I had five gallon jugs, which we filled with apple cider and sold to the fruit stands on South Tacoma Way for 10 cents a gallon. I also sold it around town for 35 cents a gallon.

My boat was the greatest pride of my life, which my Dad had made for me in Gig Harbor by the man who built all the rental boats at Point Defiance. It was a 16 foot clinker-built lapstrake, four feet wide, with a deck on the bow three feet in length. The bow deck was made of one-inch strips of alternate mahogany and spruce.

Some years later, my love for that boat was probably the reason that, when we got into World War II, I ended up in the U.S. Coast Guard. Early in 1942, there was a program where volunteers could bring their own boats and join the Coast Guard Reserve. So, a buddy of mine and I bought a big Chris Craft and joined up. For the next year we patrolled the Columbia River from the mouth to Bonneville Dam, guarding against saboteurs. Once the war effort got into full swing, though, we were replaced by military picket boats; and I was sent to Portland, Maine, for port security duties. After a few more months, I was assigned to a Coast Guard-crewed Navy Frigate, the USS Burlington (PF-51)

in the Pacific Theater. We sailed from the Aleutians to the Philippines and most of the islands in between. We fought in the Battle of Leyte Gulf when we retook the Philippines; and we were getting ready for the invasion of Japan when the bombs were dropped and the war ended.

So, my boating days on Puget Sound indirectly ended up in me sailing the whole Pacific Ocean. Of course, as a youth, I didn't know where my boating adventures would eventually lead me. Back then, camping on the Puget Sound islands by boat was a very popular thing to do; and, with my boat, I could go in all kinds of weather. I got the boat when I graduated from the eighth grade, and a year later acquired an 8 horsepower Caille outboard motor. It was a pretty good motor. I could take that boat – which was a pretty heavy boat – and, when I was running alone, it could plane. Our favorite islands were Ketron, Anderson, Harstene, Heron and McNeil. Our favorite camping place was the old barn on Harstene Island, which incidentally was the same barn that my folks used to camp at around the time I was born, and afterward with the motor launch.

I also looked forward each summer to the run of humpback salmon. We called them bluebacks, which we caught in abundance out toward Fox Island. These were from small fish on up to about four pounds in weight. When the tide was coming in, the fish were so thick that once I actually had a salmon jump into my boat!

I remember when my baseball hero, Babe Ruth, visited Steilacoom on his way to entertain prisoners at the McNeil Island Penitentiary. Lynn Scholes and I got out of school, and we met up with The Babe down at the dock while he was waiting for the pen boat to take him out to the island. He signed a baseball for me with the most beautiful handwriting I could imagine. My son, Craig, now has this baseball in a glass case in his office.

When I went to college, I went to the College of Puget Sound, because it was much cheaper to live at home. I transferred to University of Washington and completed my last two years, as did most of my friends. I spent my summers in Steilacoom, of course; and played on the Steilacoom town baseball team. They used to play in a league around Tacoma, where the competition was rather intense on Sundays during the summer. The athletic field adjacent to the school had been recently completed, and it was a very nice place to play.

It is hard for me to remember the names of the other players. I was the youngest member of the team and played first base. Some of the names on our team were our two very good left-handed pitchers, Nearn and Rasty Attwood, also George Saltzer, Kenneth & Jim Jack, and Tiny Gimill, whose mother was the town barber. Players who were national celebrities included Freddie Steele, the World Champion Welterweight Boxing Champion, and Ben Cheney who was in the lumber business with Roy Hatcher.

These fellows just played for the fun of it and because they liked baseball. Ben was part owner of the New York Giants, and the Tacoma Baseball Stadium bears his name until this day. Ben wasn't very good, but he loved to play.

Roy Hatcher was one of the four Hatcher boys, who were much older than me. There was Roy, Sid, Walt and Nat; and they grew up on the Hatcher property across the street from the Eisenbeis block. Incidentally my first cousin, Manette Carr, came to Steilacoom from Tacoma to teach school, and she married Roy Hatcher. I always remember Lynn Scholes saying Manette was the prettiest teacher he had ever seen.

My Dad was a man of many trades and a great sportsman. When he was young, he was the champion trapshooter in the State. After he was married, he worked for Kimball Sporting Goods in Tacoma. Later, he became an electrician. He had been in the National Guard, but because of being too old and having a child, he did not go into World War I; but he went to Fort Lewis at that time as Head Electrician, until his whole life changed in 1929 and he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. He spent most of the next year in bed, until he eventually recovered and was appointed Pierce County Welfare Commissioner. Then came the Great Depression, and his district was taken over by the State.

We were pretty poor back in those days. My Dad never owned a car when I was little. His spinster sisters (Henrietta and Lena), however, who lived in the neighboring family home, had a car and a garage; but they didn't drive. So, my Dad did all the driving for the entire family with their car. When he finally did get a car, it was due, in no small part to the community-mindedness of the Ford dealer in Gig Harbor. That man always remembered the work that Dad did for the County and the State and thought that such a public servant should be entitled to the best deal possible. He made it possible for Dad to own a car, and I still drive a Ford to this day. Dad remained working for the State of Washington until his retirement. For many years, he also had the unpaid job of Clerk of the Steilacoom School Board. For a time, he was also a Special Deputy Sheriff of Pierce County, and my son still has his badge.

My father was the youngest in his family. His uncle, Charles, was the brother who settled in Port Townsend, and we have kept in touch with his descendants until this day. Both of the original immigrant brothers had sons named

after themselves and their brother, so there was a Charles and Frederick on each side of the family in the next generation. Both of the younger Charles' met untimely deaths. My Uncle Charles died as a youngster, long before I was born, when he fell from an apple tree and died. The younger Charles from Port Townsend died from a self-inflicted gunshot in 1897.

My Uncle Fred married and lived on Queen Anne Hill in Seattle, but he had no children. I remember that he had a crippled foot and worked as a longshoreman. The Port Townsend Fred never married and also had no children. As a result, I was the only male carrying the Eisenbeis name into the next generation - in spite of the fact that the original two brothers from Prussia had a total of 15 children! After I was married, my Dad's cousin Fred from Port Townsend told me he would give me \$500 if I had a son to carry on the Eisenbeis name. I did; but nothing happened, so I assumed he'd forgotten about the offer. But when he died in 1949, he left an old building in Port Townsend to my son, Craig.

My Aunts Henrietta and Lena were both schoolteachers and never married. They lived in the original Eisenbeis home in Steilacoom until their deaths, Henrietta in 1939 and Lena in 1957. Henrietta taught me to play cards when I was little. Aunt Louise married Al Curtis, who was Chief Engineer for the Washington State Ferry between Kirkland and Seattle; they lived on Lake Washington, near Seattle. They had two sons, Lloyd and Maurice. Aunt Kate married twice but had no children. Because there were so few children from that generation, I never had very many relatives.

My mother was very active in community and church affairs, DAR & PEO. She was State President of PEO for a time. My mother's sister, Aunt Edith, was also the national PEO President. I had a few more cousins on my mother's side. I mentioned Manette, who was my first cousin and ten years older, but she was really more like a sister to me. Her mother was Grace Markham Carr, and I remember when I was in high school that Aunt Grace got a brand new Buick with Wizard Control. Wizard Control was a new shifting system that allowed you push a button with your foot so you didn't have to use the clutch to shift. It was about the fanciest car I'd ever seen, and Aunt Grace offered to let me drive it to a high school dance. I was pretty excited. My date was Bernice Scholes, Lynn's sister; and, although that was more than 70 years ago, I remember that date like it was yesterday. There I was driving along in that brand new fancy car with Bernice, when I hit a patch of ice. Well, we started sliding; and the car spun completely around and slid all the way across the road. When we finally came to a stop, I was sure I'd wrecked my aunt's brand new car; but when I got out to check, there wasn't a scratch on it. I never told Aunt Grace what happened until many years later; but, I credit that incident with making me become an extremely safe and careful driver for the rest of my life.

There is an amusing story about my Aunt Grace, too. During the Depression, she was a welfare case worker in Tacoma; but, being "a lady," she didn't want to visit any clients who lived on "the wrong side of the tracks." Of course, later I realized that that was kind of ironic since it made it pretty hard for her to serve the people who probably needed welfare the most. Still she was a tough little thing; I don't think she measured as much as five feet tall. Like most of my family she was quite long-lived, the longest, in fact. She lived alone in an apartment in Tacoma well into her nineties, and she finally died at the Frank Toby Jones home in Tacoma at the age of 105. Her Hatcher grandchildren are among the closest of my few relatives to this day.

When my folks passed on, they were the last of the Eisenbeis family to live in Steilacoom. I sort of had plans to move back there when I retired, but my cousin Lloyd Curtis got control of most of the family property; and, well, things just didn't work out. It's been a while, now, since I've been back to Steilacoom. My wife of 66 years, Harriet, and I live in a retirement home in Bend, Oregon, near our son and daughter, Jane; and it's pretty hard for us to travel. Still, I often think about Steilacoom and all my happy memories of growing up there in that special place.