

William John (Wilhelm Johannes) Rodenhauser (1842-1919) was among a large contingent of German immigrants to arrive in McLean County in latter part of the nineteenth century. A carpenter and cabinet maker by trade, and with half of his life already behind him, he found his way to Bloomington's Chicago & Alton Railroad shops (C&A) to craft paneling and furnishings for the fine coach cars being built at the shops. While endeavoring to preserve his German heritage, he followed the dream that many European immigrants of the day pursued—that he and his family would find a better life in America. After 25 years as a highly respected craftsman for the C&A, he met with a cutting equipment accident that forced him to retire. Undeterred, at the age of 67, Rodenhauser became part of Horace Greeley's hope for young men seeking fortune and open spaces: he “went West,” claiming 640 acres of farm property in Colorado through the Homestead Act. In less than 40 years in the United States, Rodenhauser earned a reputation as a master craftsman, acquired property in the American West, and forged a future for his family.

William John (westernized version of the German, Wilhelm Johannes) Rodenhauser was born February 22, 1842, in König, a small village near Darmstadt in southwest Germany. He was the oldest of six children born to Johannes Heinrich and Henrietta Elisabeth (Schum) Rodenhauser, (five of whom survived to adulthood).¹ William's first and middle names were taken from his father and his paternal grandfather, George Wilhelm Rodenhauser. William's wife, Christiana, switched his given names in her last will and testament, referring to him as “John William Rodenhauser.”²

William's surviving siblings were Marie Magdalene (1846-1919), Augusta (1848-1919), Juliana (1850-1925), Anna Maria (1852-1853), and George Ludwig (1854-1942). Their parents died within 26 days of one another in 1855 of what was believed to have been meat poisoning.³ Their mother succumbed on January 1; their father, January 26.⁴ The likely culprit was botulism, which, during that time, was thought to be associated with German sausage. Food-borne botulism, untreated, disrupts nerve function, causing paralysis and, ultimately, respiratory failure.⁵ Following this devastating loss, the five surviving children were placed in foster homes, which was supported by the proceeds from the sale of the Rodenhauers' estate. At the time of his parents' deaths, William was 12 years old; the youngest sibling, George, was less than four months old.⁶

William married Christiana Liederman in König on September 10, 1868. The couple became parents of four children: Margaretha “Maggie” (1870-1954), Henry Charles (1875-1945), Julia (1877-1945), and William Robert “Will” (1880-1980). All of their children were born in König.⁷

Very little is known of Rodenhauser's work life until about 1880, when he began a two-year apprenticeship in carpentry.⁸ How he, to that point, earned an income sufficient to feed a family of six is unknown. Considering the events of the time, it was, perhaps, difficult for him not only to find work but to tolerate the wages and working conditions of the work he did find.

¹ Dunn, Mark, “William J. Rodenhauser,” 4, McLean County Museum of History Library and Archives.

² Rodenhauser, Christiana, *Last will and testament*, September, 13, 1915.

³ Dunn, 4.

⁴ Ancestry.com, *Ancestry Family Trees*.

⁵ Sobel, Jeremy, “Botulism,” *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, 41(8) (October, 2005): 1167–73.

⁶ Ancestry.com, *Ancestry Family Trees*.

⁷ Dunn, 5.

⁸ Dunn, 6.

For breadwinners of the working class, which would eventually include William Rodenhauser, mid-nineteenth century Germany offered little hope for prosperity. In this era, 90 percent of German people were peasants, without the possibility of owning land. Over time, their plight became desperate and, ultimately, insufferable. When emotions reached a crescendo, the middle and working classes challenged what they considered the oppressive, autocratic rule of the German Confederacy's monarchies through a series of events—from demonstrations to all-out rebellions—known as the “March Revolution of 1848.”⁹

Though passionate, those in revolt were divided in purpose. The middle class fought for representative government and individual rights, while the working class (i.e. the peasantry) had less lofty goals, such as better wages and working conditions, and a higher quality of life. The lack of coordination between the classes allowed the imperial armies to—quite literally—divide and conquer, resulting in a retreat to the underground or emigration for the leaders of the middle class, and either grumbling quiescence or emigration for the workers. Many chose the latter.¹⁰

Externally, the political climate was no less volatile. The German Empire had less-than-cordial relationships with neighboring countries. The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 pointed to rising militarism which was manned by a military draft.¹¹ According to Rodenhauser's descendants, one of his expressed reasons for leaving Germany was his anticipation of compulsory military service.¹² Whether it was the prospect of inescapable poverty, forced military service, or both that compelled him, Rodenhauser, like many of his countrymen, imagined a better life elsewhere.

And so began an exodus, principally to the United States. Some 4.4 million Germans entered the U. S. between 1851 and 1900, a third of that number in the decade between 1881 to 1890. The greatest single year for German immigration was 1882, the year that William Rodenhauser, perhaps by no coincidence, began a journey that would eventually land him in Bloomington, Illinois.¹³ A German was hardly a rarity in McLean County. The 1880 U.S. Census showed that 7,332 people, or 12.2% of McLean County's total population of 60,100, were either born in Germany or were of German descent.¹⁴

In 1882, leaving behind his wife and their four children—ranging in age from 12 to two—Rodenhauser sailed for the United States, where he hoped a chance for prosperity and better lives for his family awaited. He eventually made his way to Pekin, Illinois where he temporarily stayed with his sister, Juliana, and her husband, George Bruder. Despite their separation, Rodenhauser joining his sister in Pekin suggests that he and his siblings kept in touch with one another while in foster care and after. Once Rodenhauser had established himself, he then sent for his family to join him in the U.S.¹⁵

⁹ Stauter-Halsted, Keely, *The Nation in the Village: The Genesis of Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015); Eddie, S. A., *Freedom's Price: Serfdom, Subjection, and Reform in Prussia, 1648-1848* (OUP Oxford, 2013).

¹⁰ Robertson, Priscilla, *Revolutions of 1848: A Social History* (Princeton, NJ: University Press, 1952).

¹¹ Mommsen, Wolfgang J., "Kaiser Wilhelm II and German politics," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 25 (2/3,1990): 289–316; Fulbrook, Mary, [A Concise History of Germany](#) (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

¹² Dunn, 6.

¹³ United States Department of Homeland Security, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2008* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, 2009).

¹⁴ Detmers, William, and Diane Detmers, *1880 Census, German Immigrants and Their Families in McLean County* (Bloomington, IL: McLean County Genealogical Society, 2004).

¹⁵ Dunn, 6.

The Chicago & Alton Railroad and William Rodenhauer formed a serendipitous junction. The Illinois segment of the C&A was established in essentially three stages and in a relatively short period of time. A line from Alton to Springfield was chartered in February 1847, begun in February 1850, and completed in 1852, owing chiefly to the efforts of Alton businessman Benjamin Godfrey, who invested heavily in the project and even camped in a railcar to personally oversee construction.¹⁶ Following the groundbreaking, legislation was introduced in the 1850-51 Illinois General Assembly that provided for the next phase, an extension of the line from Springfield to Bloomington.¹⁷ Deeming another extension to be a critical step in spurring the growth of McLean County, prominent businessman Asahel Gridley, then representing McLean County in the Illinois State Senate, introduced a bill to connect Bloomington with Joliet. That bill became law on June 19, 1852, and the railroad reached Bloomington in October 1853.¹⁸

The Chicago & Alton connected Bloomington-Normal with both Chicago and St. Louis, among the most highly evolved centers of commerce in the Midwest. It also, as Gridley had hoped when he introduced the legislation, helped Bloomington grow and prosper. Between 1850 and 1880, the population of Bloomington grew from 1,594 to 17,180, or by a little more than 1,000 percent.¹⁹ The C&A built repair and maintenance shops on the west side of Bloomington and quickly became the largest employer in Bloomington. The shops were responsible for manufacturing needed items and for repairing others such as locomotive engines and railroad cars for the line. The Bloomington shops included everything necessary to build new and repair existing locomotives and rail cars including: a locomotive shop, boiler shop, foundry, upholstery shop, wheel and axel shop, paint shop, carpentry shop, and store department.²⁰ In 1856, just three years after “the shops” opened, 150 people were employed. At various times throughout its history (1853 through 1972), the shops employed between 500 and 3,000 people, and eventually occupied 50 acres—seven city blocks—between Seminary and Chestnut streets.²¹ While residing with the Bruders in Pekin, Rodenhauer learned of opportunities for those in his trade (carpenters and cabinet makers) at the C&A shops in Bloomington and made his way there sometime in 1883.²²

Apparently, his carpentry skills were quickly recognized as Rodenhauer was hired immediately by the C&A and assigned to a crew of woodworkers who were finishing interiors for both freight and passenger cars. Highly skilled craftsmen, like Rodenhauer, were needed to construct the railroad passenger cars that were built at the shops. Expensive and ornate details were installed in each and every one of these “first-class coach cars,” including silver-plated components, “acid-etched windows, small hand-painted wall murals, silvered mirrors, elegantly

¹⁶ Bauser, Beverly, *History of the Alton and Sangamon Railroad*, accessed June 13, 2021, madison.illinoisgenweb.org/railroads/alton_and_sangamon_railroad.html.

¹⁷ Burnham, J.H., et al, *History of McLean County* (Chicago: Wm. LeBaron Co., 1879) 363-65.

¹⁸ Ibid, 363-65; “Cheering,” *Bloomington Intelligencer*, October 5, 1853.

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, *Decennial Census*, census.gov, retrieved June 5, 2013.

²⁰ “Chicago and Alton Railroad Miscellaneous Collection,” McLean County Museum of History Archives

²¹ “Many Roads Enter County,” *The Pantagraph*, August 26, 1930; Mike Matejka, Greg Koos, Mark Wyman, eds. *Bloomington’s C&A Shops, Our Lives Remembered*. (Bloomington: McLean County Historical Society, 1988), 99 and 149; Guetersloh, M.K., “Bloomington Looking to Redevelop Swath of Land Used to Build, Repair Trains for Nearly a Century,” *The Pantagraph*, March 20, 2011, 1.

²² Dunn, 6.

upholstered seats, fine wood veneering, and ventilation systems that cleaned the air.” The cars also featured reclining chairs, a women’s restroom, and a men’s smoking lounge.²³

Rodenhauser and his colleagues were not confined to finishing interior cabinetry, though. They also made model parts for locomotive engines, which required considerable skill and patience. According to Stephen Tudor, who worked as a painter in the C&A shops, craftsmen “made every piece on an engine out of wood and made it perfect. And then they took it over to the foundry and they used that to make the mold for the pieces of the engine. The cabinet shop out there made every piece of an engine. They didn’t order it built someplace else. They made it there and built them [sic].”²⁴

The exacting nature of their work required, of course, the proper tools. Today, woodworking can be done by computer numerical control (CNC). CNC does not require a manual operator; rather, a machine processes a piece of material to meet specifications by following coded programmed instruction.²⁵ In Rodenhauser’s day, hand tools were used and were either purchased from a manufacturer or created specifically for certain types of work. Rodenhauser’s tool collection included some manufacturer’s tools, but also tools of his own invention. He also etched his initials, “W.R.,” into his tools, which were eventually passed down to his grandson, Albert Harwood Hoopes, Jr., who stored and preserved them. The collection included small hand planes (including a rabbet plane, for cutting grooves in the wood; and a molding plane for decorative work), a set of chisels (made by “Whitherby”), a handsaw (made by “R. Disston & Sons, Philadelphia), a right angle ruler, and a draw knife.²⁶ The tools in the collection belonged to Rodenhauser, not the C&A, making it possible for him to do some work for private customers; yet, there is no evidence that he moonlighted. According to his granddaughter, Mary Frances “Mary Fran” Rodenhauser, however, her grandfather did make all the furniture for the Rodenhauser family home.²⁷

Shortly before Rodenhauser began working at the C&A shops, a labor dispute unfolded in Bloomington that would set the tone for labor relations locally and become part of an evolving larger labor theatre. The C&A shops were generally productive, but fortunes did fluctuate, creating some down times. In May 1882, the plant produced 100 cars; but, as summer came, orders slowed and work “had to be curtailed.”²⁸ C&A decided, rather than lay off workers, it would reduce the day’s work hours from ten to either nine or eight, and wages were proportionately decreased as well. Shop workers, depending on the skill in demand, earned between \$1.25 to \$2.70 per day (which would be worth approximately \$32 to \$70 in 2021).²⁹ A carpenter, which Rodenhauser would soon become, earned \$1.75 per day (worth approximately \$46.00 in 2021).³⁰ A reduction from ten to eight hours would have reduced a carpenter’s wages from \$1.75 to \$1.40 per day. The workers were neither formally organized nor officially recognized; further, the individual shops were, at best, a loose confederacy, often at odds with one another. While the car builders and several other categories of position did not participate (said one car-builder, “I’ve yet to see anything gained by striking”), the machinists, blacksmiths,

²³ Koos, Greg. *Freedom, Land, and Community: A History of McLean County, Illinois, 1730-1900* (2021), Chapter 6 manuscript, 36-37.

²⁴ Matejka, Koos, Wyman, eds., 64.

²⁵ Pease, William, "[An automatic machine tool](#)," *Scientific American* 187 (3, 1952): 101–115.

²⁶ Dunn, 16-18.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 17.

²⁸ “They Went Out,” *The Pantagraph* (Bloomington IL), August 19, 1882, 4.

²⁹ <https://www.measuringworth.com>, Accessed August 19, 2021; Dunn, 18.

³⁰ <https://www.measuringworth.com>, Accessed August 19, 2021.

boiler workers, engine repairmen, and foundrymen—even though, ironically, they were the least affected by the company’s announcement—staged a work stoppage (a walk-out) on August 18, 1882. About 400 of the 800 shopmen did not return from lunch break and issued a resolution requesting that the company, in light of reduced hours, increase workers’ pay by ten percent.³¹ The dispute ended peacefully and the following day, the Chicago & Alton Railroad restored the old hours and full production resumed the following Monday, August 21.³² In the almost 25 years that followed the incident, each category of position formed its own union. The last of them was the carpenters’ union, which officially organized in 1906, just prior to William’s retirement.³³

Prior to the organizing of the carpenters’ union, Rodenhauser, his fellow workers, and, in some cases, their spouses, took part in the Ancient Order of United Workmen (A.O.U.W.), Local 282. The A.O.U.W. was a benefit society (essentially a cross between a fraternal organization and a union), which provided financial protection, insurance (something resembling workers’ compensation), and a collective voice for industrial workers.³⁴ Rodenhauser was elected “Guide” of Local 282 in 1895. As “Guide,” it was his duty to escort candidates for membership through the induction ritual.³⁵ His wife, Christiana, was a member of the Degree of Honor, the women’s auxiliary of the A.O.U.W.³⁶

After occupying houses at 1210 W. Market Street (1885) and 803 W. Seminary Street (1886) in Bloomington, and 1312 N. Major Street in Normal (1887), the Rodenhauers found a more permanent dwelling at 803 N. Morris Avenue in Bloomington, remaining there from 1889 to 1905. The house would have been very near the southern border of the C&A complex, probably within walking distance to the shops for William. From 1905 to 1909, prior to their western venture, the family made their home at 204 S. Willard Street in Bloomington.³⁷

Rodenhauser apparently found all that he had hoped for by immigrating to the U.S. While establishing residences in McLean County, he also obtained U.S. citizenship. According to naturalization records, he officially became a U.S. citizen on October 18, 1892.³⁸ At the same time, while he had not found late nineteenth century Germany to be economically and politically accommodating, he did not abandon, altogether, its folkways and mores. Prior to the outbreak of the Great War (known as World War I today), Rodenhauser and his family and friends enjoyed the community’s respect and many opportunities to preserve their German heritage. According to family memories, the Rodenhauers spoke only the German language in their home, the children attended German School on Saturdays, and the family was free to worship at the German

³¹ “They Went Out.”

³² Ibid.

³³ Matejka, Koos, Wyman, eds., xxiii

³⁴ Alvin J. Schmidt, *Fraternal Orders* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1930) 82.

³⁵ “Installed Officers,” *The Pantagraph*, January 10, 1895, 5; Ancient Order of United Workmen, Supreme Lodge, *Digest of Laws and Decisions of the Ancient Order of United Workmen* (Buffalo, NY: Press of Baker Jones & Co., 1879) 98.

³⁶ “Mrs. Rodenhauser Dies” *The Pantagraph*, September 20, 1915, 6.

³⁷ Ancestry.com. *U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995* [database on-line] (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011); City Directory summary for Rodenhauser Family, compiled by Denise Fries-Romack.

³⁸ Ancestry.com, *U.S. Naturalization Indexes 1791-1992* [Indexed in the World Archives Project] (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010).

Methodist Episcopal Church.³⁹ Additionally, Rodenhauers workmates were almost exclusively German, though other ethnicities worked at the shops too.⁴⁰

However, during and after the war, Germans faced especial difficulties in McLean County as they did elsewhere in the United States. After the U.S. entered the war on April 6, 1917, the movement to “stamp out Germanism” gained traction nation-wide.⁴¹ The same large, thriving German American community in McLean County found itself the target of a systematic campaign of suspicion and persecution by “superpatriot” organizations like the Council of National Defense (C.N.D). Feeding the growing public hysteria in the community was a steady diet of propaganda against Germans, which naturally spread to include those of German descent as well.⁴² Because of this, the German language newspaper, *The Bloomington Journal*, was forced to publish in English; German language classes were dropped in all McLean County schools; *Deutscher Tag*, or German Day, festivals were halted; St. Mary’s Catholic Church eliminated instruction of German; and at the C&A shops where Rodenhauser worked, workers who spoke German were strongly encouraged to speak only English or else they would lose their jobs.⁴³ Germanness all but disappeared from Bloomington just a few years before Rodenhauser’s death, despite the fact that McLean County Germans gave little indication of rallying behind their former homeland.⁴⁴

The Bureau of Labor Standards, an agency of the U.S. Department of Labor, imposed some safety measures for industrial shops, but only loosely and not until 1934. It wasn’t until the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) was established in 1971 that industrial shops were required to ensure employee safety.⁴⁵ So, during Rodenhauser’s time at the shops, protective covers and automatic shutoffs for equipment were nonexistent. On a fateful day in 1907, probably while pushing wood through a steam-powered circular saw, Rodenhauser lost all the fingers on his right hand and, at the age of 65, was forced to retire from the C&A shops.⁴⁶ The injury, however, did not completely separate him from carpentry, at least as an avocation. According to family history, there is evidence that he devised a strap to tie a hammer to his impaired hand, and it appears he was also able to lay wood tile on the floors of his home after the accident.⁴⁷

This disability did not stop him from finding another way to prosper and create a legacy for his family. President Abraham Lincoln signed into law the Homestead Act of 1862, which made 160 acres of land in the West available for free to any citizen or applicant for citizenship, provided the claimant had never taken up arms against the United States (e.g., soldiers of the

³⁹ Dunn, 7; “William J. Rodenhauser Dies at Age of 77,” *The Pantagraph*, August 30, 1919, 10.

⁴⁰ Dunn, 7; Matejka, Koos, Wyman, eds., xxv.

⁴¹ “Brakebill, Tina, “From ‘German Days’ to ‘100 Percent Americanism;’ McLean County, Illinois 1913-1918: German Americans, World War One, and One Community’s Reaction,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Vol. 95, No. 2 (Summer, 2002): 148-171.

⁴² Kemp, Bill, “Local German Americans told to ‘get right or get out’ during World War I,” *The Pantagraph*, June 3, 2007.”

⁴³ “Complete Minutes of McLean County Committee of the State Council of Defense,” *McLean County Committee State Council of Defense II Vertical File*, McLean County Museum of History Library and Archives, p.15.

⁴⁴ Dunn, 7; Matejka, Koos, Wyman, eds., xxv; “Coliseum filled at German Day Celebration,” *The Pantagraph*, October 29, 1915; Kemp, Bill, “Turner Hall a Lost Monument to German Pride,” *The Pantagraph*, February 11, 2018, A9.

⁴⁵ Occupational Safety and Health Code, 29 U.S.C., 15 (1970).

⁴⁶ Dunn, 11

⁴⁷ Ibid, 17

Confederate States of America). The claimant was required to live on the property for five (later reduced to three) years. After Southern states seceded from the Union, Lincoln used the opportunity to privatize lands in the West for the purpose of making them free of slavery. In 1866, following the war, the Act was amended to include Blacks as eligible claimants; and amended yet again in 1909, this time to increase the allowable acreage an individual could claim to 320.⁴⁸

Sometime in the year 1909, at the age of 67, Rodenhauser responded to the frequent advertisements in local newspapers and registered for ownership of 320 acres near Galatea, Kiowa County, Colorado, about 160 miles southeast of Denver near the border of Colorado and Kansas. The Rodenhausers—William, Christiana, and son Will with new wife Editha (Mapps)—took up residence in Galatea for the required time to secure rights to the property, an entire section of ground (i.e. 640 acres) in the “drylands” of Colorado.⁴⁹ The patent (ownership document) for the tract was issued on March 25, 1913 out of Lamar, Colorado.⁵⁰ There is some evidence that, despite his advanced age and disability, William had intended to farm the claimed ground. In the months prior to the family’s move to Colorado, he purchased farm equipment at several different auctions in Central Illinois and had it loaded on a box car for the trip by rail. Since he did not know much about farming, and even less about farming in Colorado, he was never able to establish an operation and the equipment had to be disposed of, likely before he returned to Illinois.⁵¹

The Rodenhausers returned to Bloomington from Colorado in 1912 or 1913 and lived at 707 N. East Street.⁵² They then sold or transferred ownership of that house to their daughter, Julia, and her family, and moved to 905 E. Chestnut Street shortly before Christiana’s death.⁵³

Christiana Rodenhauser passed away on September 18, 1915. Her obituary stated that she had succumbed to “an illness of about two months with a complication of diseases,” what her death certificate identified as “a stricture of the esophagus,” or a narrowing of the esophagus causing swallowing difficulties, on September 18, 1915.⁵⁴ Her funeral was held at the German Methodist Church on September 21 and she was buried in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery.

Sometime late in 1918, when William’s health began to decline, he moved in with his daughter, Julia (back to the 707 N. East Street residence). Following nine months of treatment for “acute cystitis” (urinary tract infection) and a brief stay at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Bloomington, William J. Rodenhauser died on August 29, 1919.⁵⁵ His funeral was held the following day at the Goodfellow’s parlors. Rev. A.C. Piersel of the Grace Methodist Episcopal Church officiated the ceremony.⁵⁶ Befitting of his status in the German community, Rodenhauser’s pallbearers were prominent citizens of Bloomington and, like him, were German immigrants. His pallbearers were: Joseph Wetzel (born, Wurttemberg territory, Germany), a

⁴⁸ Potter, Lee Ann and Wynell Schamel, “The Homestead Act of 1862,” *Social Education* 61, 6 (October 1997) 359-364.

⁴⁹ Dunn, 12.

⁵⁰ Rodenhauser, William, U.S. Patent 321487, issued March 25, 1913.

⁵¹ Dunn, 12-13.

⁵² *Ibid*, 15.

⁵³ “Mrs. Rodenhauser Dies,” 6.

⁵⁴ Rodenhauser, Christiana Leiderman, *Certificate and Record of Death*, filed September 18, 1915; “Mrs. Rodenhauser Dies,” 6.

⁵⁵ Rodenhauser, William John, *Standard Certificate of Death*, filed August 29, 1919; “William J. Rodenhauser Dies at Age 77,” 10.

⁵⁶ “The Rodenhauser Funeral,” *The Pantagraph*, September 1, 1919, 7.

foreman at the C&A shops where William had been employed; Gustav “Gus” Bischoff (born, Nordhausen, Thuringia, Germany), a well-known grocer; and Frederick (F.C.) Muhl (born, Magdeburg, Germany), a sought-after roofing and ceiling contractor.⁵⁷ Rodenhauser was buried next to his wife, Christiana, and daughter-in law, Lillian, in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery in Bloomington.

William J. Rodenhauser had four children. Below is a brief summary of their lives:

Margaret “Maggie” Rodenhauser Baumetz, the eldest of the Rodenhauser children, was born in König, Germany on December 8, 1870, and, at the age of 16, sailed to the United States with her mother and three siblings. She worked as a domestic for Professor Robert O. Graham, a science professor and dean of faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University, and a multi-term alderman for the city of Bloomington.⁵⁸ Maggie married David John Baumetz on February 5, 1901, in Bloomington. By September 1915, she and David had moved to Stinton, Texas, where they operated a cotton farm.⁵⁹ The Baumetzes raised three daughters—Myrtle, Charlotte, and Bernardine. David died at age 76 on December 27, 1949, in Stinton. Maggie died on June 15, 1954, in Austin, Texas, possibly while visiting or staying with their daughter, Myrtle. She was 83 at the time of her death.⁶⁰

Henry Charles Rodenhauser, Rodenhauser’s oldest son, was born April 3, 1875, in König, and traveled with his mother and siblings to Bloomington to join his father when he was nine years old. He attended Bloomington public schools and graduated from both the Northwestern School of Dentistry, Chicago, Illinois, and the Dewey School of Orthodontics in New York City.⁶¹ He set up practice in Bloomington and, later in life, opened a second office in Peoria. His Bloomington office was housed in several buildings in downtown Bloomington at various times, including the Eddy Building (Main and Market streets), the Griesheim Building (200 block of North Main Street), and the Peoples Bank Building (Center and Washington streets). His various ads in the *Pantagraph* listed him as a dentist and a dental surgeon, and emphasized his skill in providing “painless dentistry” and his specialty for “Plate, crown, and bridge work . . .” and “porcelain fillings.”⁶² Henry was married three times, first to Lillian “Dollie” Anis Voorhees (1876-1915), then to Myrtle Mericle (1873-1951) in 1901. His first wife, Lillian, died at the young age of 23 from tuberculosis in 1900. Myrtle was a member of the music and theatre faculties at Illinois Wesleyan. The couple had one daughter, Jayne Willa, who lost her life in an automobile accident in 1932 at the age of 21. The couple divorced and he later married Lulu Bea Pursifull (née Kasserman), who was 21 years his junior, in 1935.⁶³ Evidently dedicated to his profession to the literal end, Henry was found dead in his Peoria office on December 27, 1945.

⁵⁷ “The Rodenhauser Funeral,” 7; “Death Summons Joseph Wetzel,” *The Pantagraph*, August 6, 1926, 3; “Gus Bischoff, Grocer Here for 30 Years, Dies,” *The Pantagraph*, January 18, 1929, 5; “Frederick C. Muhl Dies at Age of 81,” *The Pantagraph*, November 8, 1928, 3.

⁵⁸ “Prof. R. O. Graham Dies at Lilly,” *Daily Pantagraph*, 27 May 27, 1911, 6; Dunn, 19.

⁵⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920—Population*, retrieved July 20, 2021.

⁶⁰ Margaret Baumetz Obituary, *Austin American* (Austin, TX), June 15, 1954, 24.

⁶¹ Dunn, 20.

⁶² “Dentists, Dr. H.C. Rodenhauser” (ad), *The Pantagraph*, August 1, 1911, 6; “Dentists, Drs. H.C & W.R. Rodenhauser” (ad), *The Pantagraph*, September 8, 1906, 6.

⁶³ Dunn, 20-21.

He was 79. Henry was a mason, a member of several dental associations, active in the Presbyterian church, and involved in civic affairs and charities in Peoria.⁶⁴

Julia Rodenhauser Hoopes Arnold preceded her brother Henry in death by 39 days. She was born August 30, 1877, in—like her parents and siblings—König, Germany. At the age of six, she accompanied her family to the United States and settled in Bloomington. She married Albert Harwood (A.H.) Hoopes in 1903 and the couple had three children: Margaret Augusta (1907-2001), Benjamin Franklin (1911-1993), and Albert Harwood Jr. (1915-2004).⁶⁵ A.H. died in 1918, a victim of Spanish Influenza.⁶⁶ Julia remarried in 1923 to Chalmer Badget Arnold (1889-1973), who made a career of the U.S. Navy. Julia died at Mennonite Hospital in Bloomington on November 18, 1945, at the age of 68.⁶⁷

William Robert Rodenhauser, known familiarly as “Will” or “Willie,” was born June 3, 1880 in König, Germany, and, like his brother Henry, became a dentist. He graduated from the University of Illinois College of Dentistry in 1904. From 1906 to 1908 he was in partnership with his brother, Henry, and their office was in the Griesheim Building in downtown Bloomington. When his parents moved to Colorado to live on their claimed property, Will, accompanied by new wife, Editha, joined them. Will and his family returned to Illinois in 1923 and settled in Peoria, where he was in practice as a pediatric dentist for the rest of his professional career. He was briefly married to Editha Mapps (1882-1918), then to Helen Holmes (1890-1960). He died August 25, 1980 at the age of 100.⁶⁸

By: John Capasso, 2021

⁶⁴ “Rodenhauser Rights Held in Peoria,” *The Pantagraph*, January 1, 1946, 12; Dunn, 21

⁶⁵ Dunn, 24; Ancestry.com, *Public Member Stories* [database on-line] (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006); Hasbrouck, Jacob. *History of McLean County, Illinois in Two Volumes, Illustrated, Vol. 2* (Indianapolis: Historical Publishing Company, 1924), 1055-1056.

⁶⁶ “A.H. Hoopes & Son Business Has Been Sold,” *The Pantagraph*, November 12, 1918, 8.

⁶⁷ “Mrs. Julia H. Arnold Dies; Funeral Services Tuesday,” *The Pantagraph*, November 19, 1945, 3.

⁶⁸ Dunn, 21-23; Rodenhauser, Mary Francis “Mary Fran” Memorial Page, *Find a Grave* (www.findagrave.com/memorial/201952796/mary-frances-rodenhauser, accessed July 18, 2021).