Weller Family, Texas, Genealogy

As reconstructed by Norman Rozell
Harlingen Historical Preservation Society, November 2009

Weller is a common name both in Texas and across the U.S., so there are many dead-end leads when searching for a particular Weller. Almost all Wellers, however, appear to be of German ancestry.

The first trace of the Wellers of interest to us can be found in the U.S. Census of June 1, 1880. The large family is living in Precinct 8 of Lavaca County, Texas. Head of the family is August Weller, age 51 and born around 1829 in Germany or as sometimes noted Prussia. His occupation is noted as merchant. His wife, and mother of the family of seven still living children and residing at the home, is Anna, 45, also Prussia born. The offspring are Amelia, 20; Charles, 17; Herman H., 15; Ida, 8; William, 6; and Edward, 4. Also living with the family are son, Augusta H., 23, and listed as a store clerk, and his wife Augusta, 18. She is keeping house along with her mother-in-law. Augusta's parents are also Prussia born.

Of future interest in this account is some additional 1880 census information. The county to the immediate north of Lavaca is Fayette. In the July 2, 1880 census of this area we find what appears to be two brothers living there. They are both of Prussia birth. Heading one family is Konrad Letzerich, age 40 and a blacksmith. His Prussia born wife is Henriette, 35. Their Texas born children are Charles, 11; Annie, 8; Casper, 6; and Kate, 4. The second family is headed by Charles Letzerich, 35 and a wheelwright and his Texas born wife, Augusta, 29. Their children are Konrad, 8; Lizzie, 6; Walter, 4; Otto, 3; and Ulga, 1.

Records of the 1890 U.S. census were lost in a fire and are not available, so the next information is to be gleaned from the June 1, 1900 census. The family is still residing in the same area of Lavaca County. The senior August and his wife Anna are no longer to be found. It is likely that they are deceased. Instead we discover that August H., now 43 having been Texas born September 1856, has sired a sizeable family with Augusta, 38 and born in Texas May 1862. August is a farmer and a merchant. Members of the family are Selma, 17 born May 1883; Maud (also spelled Maude), 15 February 1887; Agnes, 13 May 1887; Elvie, 10 August 1889, and Catherine (Kathryne), 7 April 1893. Living with the family is C(asper) W. Letzerich, 24 born November 1874. He is noted to be a physician and may also be a distant cousin. He will later move to Harlingen and marry Maude Weller. Both will die in Harlingen of heart attacks; he at age 59 on 9/5/35 and she 3/7/50.

In the June 12, 1890 census of Precinct 3 of Fayette County, Texas is also to be found information on two other Wellers. In the Charles Letzerich household where the November 1845 born head is now farming, his 49 year old July 1850 born wife, Augusta, is keeping house. Still residing with them are children Lizzie, 26 (born 1874) and Walter, 25, born March 1875. Also with them however is Otto Herman Weller, 16, born May 22, 1874 and noted to be a nephew, and Otto's sister Augusta, 12, born December 1888. Their mother,
who apparently was deceased (perhaps even during childbirth), was possibly a sister to the brothers rather than to Charles' wife Augusta. There appears to be some kind of familial connection between the Letzerichs and Wellers but this cannot be confirmed.

The descendants of Otto Weller relate in oral history that it was August H. Weller who fathered Otto and Augusta. If he did so he was either a bigamist or an adulterer, for he was already married to Augusta Bock by June 1880. If, after the death of the mother of Otto and his sister, Mrs. A. H. Weller was reluctant to take the two orphans into her home, one can see where the alienation on her part would enter. It would have taken an extraordinary Christian who could overlook the past indiscretions of her husband; Mrs Weller was not that person. A strange pattern exhibits itself when the years of birth of August's children are listed chronologically:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children of Augusta</th>
<th>Children of Letzerich (?) Kin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selma</td>
<td>Otto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maude</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agnes</td>
<td>Augusta</td>
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<td>Elvie</td>
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<td>Kathryne</td>
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The A. H. Weller family are recorded during the 1910 census but not easy to pull up for whatever reason. August H. Weller, 59, lists his occupation as saloon. Augusta is 47 and daughter Katherine is 17. Also living with the family is Augusta's father, 77 year old Charles Bock. Otto Weller came to Harlingen in 1909, according to his son Bert. He is listed in the Justice Precinct 4 (Harlingen) census as a worker in a saloon.

All reappear in the 1920 census. A. H. Weller, now 63, lists no occupation. Augusta Mary keeps their house at 401 S. Commerce, but all the children have married or moved off. Augusta boosts of her father, Charles Bock, Sr., being the first Texas Ranger but as the appended obituary for him clarifies, he was only the first volunteer of a particular ranger company at Goliad. Daughter Selma, who will die in December 1969, married Andrew J. Goldammer, who was a major building contractor in the very early days of Harlingen.

Otto H. Weller is 35 and working as a vulcanizer, an individual who re-treads tires. Otto He became a minor stockholder of the nascent Harlingen Ice and Gin Company in early 1910. In the middle of 1911 he was one of the town's volunteer fireman. In 1917 he is married to Texas born Gertrud A. Leysaht, 26. Her birth date is November 19, 1893. She will do her part in WWI by being, in 1917 sewing chairman for a Red Cross committee. They have no children at this point.

By the 1930 census Otto and his wife have built a modest cottage located at 206 E. Van Buren. Ironically enough it is situated next door to his half-sister(?) Mrs. Selma Gol-
dammer. Otto's occupation, and one he will continue with for several decades, is a whole-
sale candy jobber. He will be self-employed and work out of his home.
By this year Augusta has become a widow and will continue to live at 401 S. Commerce
until her death in 1944 or 1945.

In her 38th year, on January 30, 1932 Gertrud will have her only child, a son, Berthold
(Bert) L. Weller. The attending physician at the old F Street Valley Baptist Hospital is
Dr. Alfred Letzerich, likely a cousin to her husband. Because of her age and other con-
siderations a c-section was warranted. With increasing commercialization of E. Van Bu-
ren Avenue, the Wellers are forced to vacate and move to 206 E. Buchanan Ave. by
1948. The adjacent Goldammer house is relocated to Polk Street and updated with a brick
veneer. By 1958, a year before Otto retires, the Wellers will have moved to 1417 Chaparral Drive. Gertud will be widowed by 1965 but will live on until August 2, 1991. Both
will be buried in the Mont Meta, North San Benito cemetery. Their son Bert was graduat-
ed from Harlingen High School in 1949 and Texas A & M University in 1953. In 2009 he
and his wife Barbara are retired in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Addendum

Obituary of the Father of Mrs. A. H Weller

The First Texas Ranger in 1851 Company is Dead.

Chas. Bock Sr.

Harlingen, Texas, Feb. 3, 1913

Charles Bock, Sr., of this city died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. A. H. Weller, at 11 o'clock
after an illness lasting about five weeks. Mr. Bock was born in the village of Verncen Braun-
schweig, Germany, in the year 1833. In 1843 he sailed for America from Bremen, on the Ship Siaona, and landed in Galveston, from where he walked to Harrisburg and then to Houston
and later to Columbus, Texas.

At the age of 18 he joined the Texas State Rangers at Goliad. Captain Henry was then in
command and he was the first Ranger to be accepted. He fought the Indians for two years and
was a Confederate soldier under General Bates in the Civil War, being a private in Captain
Sanders' company of Major Brown's battalion; In 1858 he married Miss Katheryne Pelzer in
New Braunfels. Five children of this union survive.

Services were conducted at the Weller home here this afternoon, Rev. L. R. Burress of
Brownsville officiating. The remains were shipped to Oakland, Texas, for burial in the Bock
Home Cemetery and were accompanied by Mrs. A. H. Weller of this city and Mr. and Mrs. H. H.
Weller of Brownsville. Deceased was a member of the Masonic Lodge No. 258 at Oakland. –

Houston Post.

Otto Weller references in The Chronological History of Harlingen

7/22/17 The organization meeting for a Red Cross Chapter here is held in the Methodist
Church. Seventy three members are enrolled. President is Mrs. C.D. (Sally) Pendleton;
Miss Paul Hill, secretary; Mrs. H.H. Burchard, treasurer; Mrs. Otto Weller, sewing chairman; and Mrs. E.W. Patterson, finance chairman.

2/3/10  The Harlingen Ice and Gin Company is organized. Its shareholders and shares are: R. W. Horlick of Varasotoa, Texas 100 shares, Lon C. Hill 20, C.W. Clift 30, Jacob Miller 10, Kate Bailey 4, O.H. Weller 10, S.H. Bell 20, J.D. Ellis 4, S. Lozano and Son 2 for a total of 200. The purpose of the corporation is to construct or purchase and maintenance of mills and gins, manufacture and supply to the public by any means of ice, gas, light, heat and electric motor power or either in connection with such mills and gins. By 1912 Gordon Hill and R.L. Autrey are involved with the company.

6/5/11  Dr. S.M. Briscoe is appointed to serve, without pay, as city's second health officer. He is mandated to abate the mosquitoes breeding in the stagnant water from broken pipes between City Lake and the ice plant. Before the year is over the town has completed the installation of a 12,000 gallon tank atop a 50 foot tower east of the water plant. A water system is buried and hydrants installed up Harrison to 4th Street and along Commerce. The next year a five foot diameter hose reel on two wheels is purchased at a cost of $170. Nine of the ten members comprising the Volunteer fire fighting force are Otto Weller, Homer Morrow, H.D. Seago, Fred Chambers, Sam Botts, A.L. Brooks, Sam Sanders (the tailor), Al Pendleton, and Osco Morris, who acts as nominal head.