

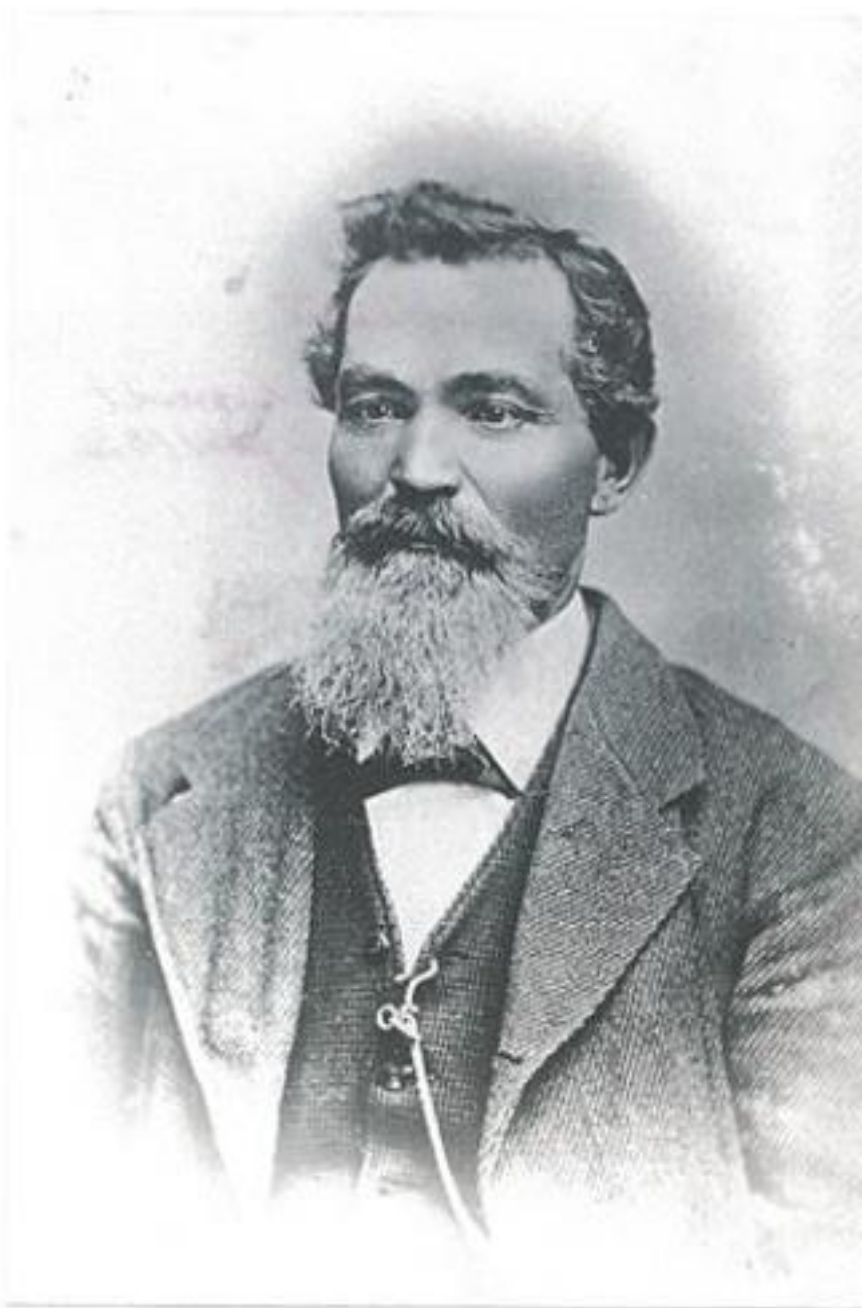
## HISTORIC ST. PETERS

### THE STAHLSCHMIDT FAMILY ON IFFRIG ROAD

By Mildred Iffrig

It is just about a mile in length--that Iffrig Road. It starts at the western end of Second Street, crosses the railroad track, and hugs the eastern bank of the Dardenne until it reaches the home of Mrs. Herbert Iffrig or branches off to the residences of Joseph Iffrig and Herbert Iffrig. Does that sound like a lot of Iffrigs? There used to be more. Closer to town there was the home of Hubert and Leona Iffrig. And then in the pretty white cottage where Catherine Schulte Reinhardt lives now, the family of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Stahlshmidt resided for more than 50 years. But the Stahlshmidts were Iffrigs as much as any of the others in a way, because their mother was an Iffrig, too. She was Emma, sister of Hubert, Joseph Sr., and Alois, the father of Robert. Some 30 Iffrigs in all lived, laughed and worked along Iffrig Road since the 1900's, and scarcely were there any other residents until recently.

This all had its beginning when the prospering German farmers on the hills to the south began to buy up fertile lands in the prairie. By 1905 Alois Iffrig Sr., Ignatz Auchly and Henry Reineke held considerable acreage there east of the Dardenne. In addition, according to his will in the 1880's, Frank Schulte Sr., the venerable patriarch, had provided farms there for his daughter, Mrs. Mary Schlschmidt, wife of Joseph, and for his sons, Marcus Schulte Sr. and Frank Schulte Jr., as well as for a granddaughter, Mrs. Frank Buegler.



This is Engelbert Stahlshmidt who came to this country with his parents when he was only one year old. He married Mary Schulte of St. Peters and farmed in West Alton until his death of appendicitis in 1887 at the age of 51.

Eventually the Auchlys and Reinekes sold to the Iffrigs and Stahlschmidts. The Iffrig land for the most part was the original George Gatty Spanish land grant of 1800, and the Stahlschmidt land was the original Spanish grant to the French Joseph Voizard Sr. of about the same time. It may be of interest to know that when Joseph Voizard, by a deed dated 1831, sold the 320 acres in which the present Stahlschmidt land lies today, the price was \$400.00. Furthermore, this description is a quotation: "One certain price tract or parcel of land lying in the county of St. Charles, on the Dardenne River containing 320 acres and being the one undivided half of a tract of 640 acres confirmed to me by the Government of the U.S. bounded and described as follows: -- North and West by the Dardenne River, George Gatty, Pierre Chateau, public lands, East by Daniel Smith and Robert Spencer, and South by Joseph Du Bois."

The above was copied from the recorded deed which was acknowledged before Robert Spencer, Justice of the Peace of St. Charles County. (It must be noted that the description with the names of neighbors was taken from the papers of confirmation of 1816. The one neighbor, George Gatty, for example had died in 1826.) The land above described was sold to the Voyard, in 1831 as above stated

After awhile Emma and Joe bought more land until they had a sizable farm. Their children were: Oliver, now retired in St. Charles; Elizabeth Hennrick and Joseph Jr., both working in St. Louis and living in the same apartment building on Dover Place; Louis of St. Ann, and Albert of St. Charles. All five went to school here, found jobs elsewhere and

eventually became established near their work. Several tried to help keep the farm going, too, but the time came when it had to be rented out.

In the 1830's, along with other relatives and friends, a family of Stahlschmidts emigrated from Germany to St. Charles County.

Engelbert, the son of Anton Stahlschmidt, was only one year old when his family came. When grown up, he married Mary A. Schulte, who was born in 1839, one of the older daughters of Franz Schulte of St. Peters. The couple lived and farmed in West Alton where five children were born: Frank in 1860, Mary in 1869, Augustina (Teena) in 1873, Joseph in 1879, and Anna, who lived only a few months, in 1884.

In 1887 Engelbert died. Mother Stahlschmidt had to face life alone with her children: Joseph, 8; Teena, 14; Mary, 18; and Frank, 24, who was planning to marry Clara Willott, daughter of Michael and Johanna Willott of St. Peters.

In 1889, when daughter Mary died of pneumonia, Mother Mary made up her mind to move. She took Teena and Joseph with her to St. Peters to live upon the land inherited from her father, Franz Schulte, on the Dardenne Creek. There was an old log house on the place, a good substantial old building erected perhaps by the Voizards. Not very fancy, but adequate for a small family. Nursing her grief, Mary felt a certain satisfaction that at least she had returned home. Her Schulte brothers and sisters were all nearby. From her yard she could see the pretty red brick church on the hill which had replaced the frame one she had been married in so many years before.

There was little Joe going to school every day, and Teena, a young lady helping with the chickens, cows, gardening, kitchen work, and sewing. They would and did get along, and all too soon the two children grew up. Teena fell in love with dashing Albert Alois Auchly who came down from the hills to work on his father's land nearby in the prairie. In time she married him, and they went to live on one of the Auchly farms on Knaust Road. Neighbors used to see young Joe Stahlschmidt riding west on his bicycle on Mexico Road to visit his newly wedded sister.



Augustina Stahlschmidt – before she was married – about 18 years old – St. Charles, MO.



An 1895 Wedding Picture of Albert Auchly, son of Ignatz and Catherine Braun Auchly, as he became the husband of Augustina Stahlschmidt, the daughter of Engelbert and Mary Schulte Stahlschmidt. The children of this couple are Bertha Sammelman of Cottleville, Estelle Wiechens of St. Charles, Eleanor Wiechens of Glendale, Arizona and Isadore who died in Arizona.



Albert Auchly about 19 years of age

Then they'd see Teena and Albert Auchly, first with one, then two, then three little ones in their buggy, pass along for Sunday church or visits to relatives.

The children were Eleanore, Isadore and Estelle. But after the next one, little Bertha, was born, Mother Teena died. More changes now. Albert took the three older ones to grow up in the home of his parents, but baby Bertha went to live with Uncle Marcus and Aunt Mary Auchly Schulte, who was Albert's sister.



Grandmother Catherine Braun Auchly



Grandfather Ignatz Auchly



*R. Goebel,*

*St. Charles, Mo.*

1896  
1901.

Isadore Stella & Eleanor Auchly

Today Bertha is Mrs. Elmer Sammelmann of Cottleville and Eleanor, whose husband was Alois Wiechens, is now a widow living on her farm near Glendale, Arizona. Besides being busy selling hay for her farmer son, she entertains old friends and relatives who "drop in" from St. Peters quite frequently, and is always interested in news from home. Her brother, Isadore, and father, Albert, both of whom had also moved to Glendale, have passed away, and Estelle is now Mrs. Frank Wiechens of St. Charles. Everyone calls her by a nickname which sounds like "Sooce", or "Suse", not Susan, of course, because her name is Estelle. You figure it out.

Meantime, what had happened in West Alton? Frank and Clara Stahlschmidt were prospering as farmers and acquired a large family too. As often as possible they would come to St. Peters with their children for visits with Grandma Mary Stahlschmidt and Grandma Johanna Willott.

But in 1910 the whole family came for a very special occasion. Frank's young brother, Joseph, was being married to Emma Iffrig and the reception would be in a new house which the groom had just completed building for his bride and his mother. It was a very happy day, and the new furniture and wedding gifts looked very pretty in the new home. Joe had designed it well -- and even today after 65 years of use, cousin Catherine Schulte Reinhardt enjoys living in it.

To those who had known Joseph and Emma Stahlschmidt well for many years, a most obvious and truthful description would be, "They were very devoted to each other -- and just as devoted to their children." From the

time Emma became engaged to Joe to the time that he was so ill that he had to be cared for in a nursing home, her thoughts and conversation always showed deep love and concern. As a bride she was thrilled to invite people in to show off their new home and to "boast" about her good kind husband, and she never changed her mind.

Of course she was all "wound up" in the success of the farm and in the children. And after they left home and married, there were joyful family reunions on the farm every Sunday, the happiest of days.

Grandma Mary Stahlschmidt lived until 1925. The day on which her son Joseph was going into town to make arrangements for her funeral, little Joe, just five years old, had an accident -- he broke his leg in several places. There were other problems, too, of course. Elizabeth had to start school on crutches; she had TB of the bone, but time and love cured all.

People who remember little Joe during his lengthy stay in the hospital were delighted with his personality. Everyone wanted to go in to see the little fellow; he was so cute. Somebody gave him a toy bank and told him to charge for each visit. He did. As soon as anyone entered the room, he would pull the sheet over his head and say, "Deposit a nickel, please." On hearing the clang, he'd pull down the sheet and give the caller a visit for his money. He did not get enough to pay his large hospital and doctor bills, however.

Oliver remembers the days when his father Joe used to drive the hearse for Mr. Henry Wahrhausen, the jack of all trades, who in the 1910's and 1920's did embalming and funeral directing, too.

The hearse was kept in a shed behind Mr. Wahrhausen's shop and furniture store. It was black and shiny, and beautiful with fancy brass coal oil lamps on each side. Preparing for the funeral was something. Joe would curry the two black horses until they shone and the harness was polished to match the sheen of the horses. Then Joe himself dressed in formal black and white. How could Ollie forget such a stunning picture! He was proud to see his father perform the sad duty with such dignity and beauty.

All the Stahlschmidt children remark about the sense of humor their mother had -- how she loved to play April Fool jokes on them and really fool them. Sometimes the funny little packages she placed for her own family on April First were picked up by someone else. That was not so funny!

Father Joseph Stahlschmidt passed away in 1966 and Mother Emma went to live with her children in St. Louis. There she spent much time making embroidered pillow cases for church and charity -- hundreds of them - - as well as beautiful other handwork for her family. She died in 1970. The children were so pleased as they looked back, that they celebrated with a large and elaborate party on their mother's last birthday which she enjoyed so much.