

John Nicholas Zeltinger
(1807-1882)

John Nicholas Zeltinger was born in Metzdorf, Germany in 1807. He moved to Dreis Germany in 1830, working as a school teacher in Dreis. Dreis is often called "Dreis by Dockweiler" as the railroad doesn't go through Dreis but stops at Dockweiler. He was a very well respected person as well as the tallest and heaviest man in the village of 379 people. Whenever there was a disagreement or argument in Dreis, John Zeltinger would be called rather than the police because of the respect he held. His very presence was enough to break up the up the argument. He married Margareth Elizabeth Muhler in 1834. She was a native of Dreis and in fact had been one of his students. She had a large number of relatives living in Dreis. Her stature was short and on the heavy order. She was born the same year that the King of Sweden hid from Napoleon in Dreis for three weeks. The place where he hid is still called the "Sweden Haus. Seven children were born to this union: Gertrude (Anna), Christine, John Adam, Elizabeth, Margaret, John Joseph, and Katherine. John Nicholas Zeltinger was buried in Dreis Germany in a small graveyard. After 30 years, the grave can be dug up and the space reused. His gravestone was moved to the yard of Rosa Meir 30 years after he died.

- 1) Gertrude was born in 1835. She married a gentleman named Jacobs. She immigrated to the US and lived near Goff, Kansas a city close to Kansas City. She and her husband farmed and raised four children.
- 2) Christine was born in 1837. She married Peter Tombers. She had one daughter, Gertrude and died in childbirth. Peter Tombers remarried and young Gertrude had a hard time with this situation and wanted to move to Kansas to be with her Aunt Gertrude. She eventually married Michael Meyer. They ran the mill in Dreis and had twelve children. Their son, Joseph, the final survivor ran the mill. His daughter, Terry Meyer visited the Zeltinger's in Tolley, ND in 1985.
- 3) John Adam was born in 1840. His sister, Margaret arrived in Dreis 1866 to visit her parents. She was living in Minneapolis at the time. John's family did not want him to have to serve his mandatory term in the German military so they sent him to the United States with his sister. He went to work for the Schaefers (relatives on his mother's side) 17 miles south of St Cloud, MN. He married Magdalena Haller in 1868. She was born in 1850 and died in 1942. John died in 1882 as a result of a fall from a hay wagon onto a pitchfork. They had six children: Ignatius, Mary, Magdalena, Adam, John, and Magdalena (Katherine).
- 4) Elizabeth was born in 1842. No history of her life is known.
- 5) Margaret was born in 1844. She married Joseph Merles and had five children. The eldest was named John. They ran a tavern and a rooming house in Minneapolis. She was remembered as always wearing fine clothing. She made an annual visit to St. Cloud. Her husband was a bricklayer. His brother Mike Merles was a cabinetmaker and a good friend of John Adam. He lived on the Haller farm.
- 6) John Joseph was born in 1848. He was a watchmaker (Uhrmacher). He married in 1882 and had three children, Michael, Peter, and Maria. Michael's wife died and his son was killed in WWII. He married again to a widow with a daughter, then he passed away. Peter was the father of Paul, Werner, Willie, and four

daughters. Willie also died in WWII. One of his daughters was killed when bombed in Koln during the war. Another died of cancer. Lucy and Mary Ann remained in Germany. Maria married a teacher much younger than she and was widowed. She died in 1968. Clarence, Cecelia, Victor, and Irene spent a lot of time with Werner, Paul and Joseph Meyer on their trip to Germany in 1972.

- 7) Katherine was born in 1851. . She never married. She was a teacher of hand crafts and sewing in Dreis and Dockweiler schools. She also cared for the altar at the church. She was well liked and respected. The people of Dreis enjoyed telling stories about Katherine and John Joseph. She died in 1938.

John Adam Zeltinger
(1840-1882)

John Adam Zeltinger was born in Dreis, Germany in 1840 to John Nicholas Zeltinger and Margareth Elizabeth (Muhler) Zeltinger. He was third of seven children. He immigrated to the United States in 1866 when he was 26 years old. His sister Margaret was living in Minneapolis at the time and was visiting her family in Germany. They sent John to the US with her to avoid serving in the German army. John never saw his parents again. He went to work for the Schaefers (relatives on his mother's side) in St. Cloud, MN. He bought forty acres of railroad land in 1867, about a year after he arrived in the St. Cloud community. He built a shack on this land but never lived in it. He married Magdalena Haller in 1868, the daughter of Anselm Haller and Magdalena Fuchs Haller. Six children were born to this union:

1. Ignatius	Born: 1871	Died: 1952	Married: Katie Ethen
2. Mary	1873	1915	Nick Kirsch
3. Magdalena		1882	Died of Diphtheria
4. Adam		1882	Died of Diphtheria
5. John	1879	1971	Anna Marie (Josephine) Dahinden
6. Magdalena (Katie)	1882		Jens C. Jensen. They lived in the Norma area before homesteading In Montana in 1914.

John and Magdalena were married in a double wedding ceremony on April 18, 1870 in Luxembour, MN with her identical twin sister, Mary, and Casper Scheeler. John Adam moved in with Magdalena's family after the wedding. Several years later, Anselm died. Anselm never fully recovered from the death of a son in 1866 of a ruptured appendix. A man named Mike Merles also lived on the Haller farm at this time. He was a good friend of John Adam and a brother of Joseph Merles who was married to John Adam's sister Margaret. Mike Merles was a cabinetmaker and had a very nice shop on the Haller farm equipped with many fine tools.

John Adam and Magdalena each had an ox team and enjoyed working together in the fields.

In 1882 it was a common practice for farmers to be in competition with each other to see who could have the highest grain stack. In the process of stacking bundles of grain on the Schaefer farm, John Adam was descending down the ladder from the top of the stack when a frightened team of horses pulled the ladder away causing John Adam to fall to the ground and landed on the handle of the fork he was carrying. The pitchfork did not penetrate the skin, however it caused massive internal injuries and he died within three days. The second day after the accident he had his family help him up and lead him to the mirror to see his injuries. Upon seeing his own bruises, he remarked "Now the Zeltinger has lived long enough". "Now you have to be a mother and father to these children." Hearing this, the eleven year old, Ignatius, fainted. Upon his death Mike Merles made the coffin for his friend. At the grave site, as the family were leaving, young John of three years old said to his mother, 'When these people go home we'll

come back with a shovel and dig him out and take him home again". He was only 42 years old. That same year Magdalena also suffered the loss of two children, Magdalena and Adam. They died of Diphtheria eight days apart. Merles also made their coffins. Later that same fall, Magdalena, who was called Katie, was born. She never met her father.

Mike Merles helped out with the farming after John's death. Twin calves were born on the farm. They were so much alike no one could tell them apart. Mike Merles trained them for a team on the request of the boys. They were young and during a lightening storm they took off running and were hung up on a tree. Merles cut them down and never hitched them up again. Ignatius suffered a dislocated shoulder and a broken arm during the ordeal.

Living in this same area was a widower named Francis Xavier Dahinden. He had married Anna Marie Iten in 1881 and she died in childbirth in 1886. They had three children:

1. Anna Marie	Born: 1882	Died: 1971	Married: John Zeltinger
2. Frank	1884	1950's	Margaret Weber
3. John Joseph	1886	1968	Lilly Swenson Mattson

Francis Xavier Dahinden and Magdalena Haller Zeltinger were married in 1888. Xavier Dahinden was more well off than Magdalena Zeltinger and had a team of horses to use for plowing. Magdalena continued to work in the field with her new husband but he was able to make two rounds with his horse team to her one round with her oxen. As he would pass her in the field he would tip his hat to her and smile. One daughter was born to his union in 1889 and was named Magdalena. Sometime after their marriage, there was a disagreement between Xavier and Magdalena. There were two houses located on the farm and they each took their children and moved into separate homes. Their common child, Magdalena, would run between the two homes, spending time with each parent.

The Fuchs Family

In the early 1840's, the Fuchs family came to Cincinnati, Ohio from Bavaria. They had five children: Magdalena, Mary, Adam John, and Lizz.

Magdalena married Anselm Haller and had three children:

Gerhardt (George) born in 1848. Died at age 18 of an appendicitis.

Identical twin girls, Magdalena and Mary were born January 8, 1850

The Hallers raised grapes and manufactured soap. They lived near the fort in Berlin Ohio and moved to Minnesota when the twins were 8 years old. Anselm Haller homesteaded in 1862 in Rockville. Haller's Homestead carried the personal signature of President Abe Lincoln.

Mary married a gentleman named Shabel. They had four children:

John

Joseph

William

Mary

Adam had William, Ignatius, Joseph, Mary (married Henry Ethen) and other daughters. He was a brick manufacturer by trade.

John was a civil war veteran and had a fair sized family.

Lizz married a gentleman named Craven and had children. Her husband was a brick manufacturer in partnership with Adam. They also ran a tavern in St. Cloud.

The following events took place in the year 1862:

- 1) John Fuchs convinced all of his brothers and sisters to homestead seventeen miles south of St. Cloud. Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Acts. They arrived via the Mississippi River by steamboat from Cincinnati, Ohio.
- 2) The Indian Uprising (Also called the Sioux Uprising or Minnesota Massacre). The homesteaders were forced from their homes by the renegade Indians who had left the reservation and were camping along the river. The following are some stories of communication with the Indians told by Magdalena Haller, the daughter of Anselm and Magdalena Haller:

When the Indians got into a rage in Minnesota, all the settlers had to go to the fort for protection. When they got there, there was no room inside for them and they had to be in a tent outside the fort. They were told that as soon as there was trouble that they would open up the fort for them. They were scared to death of the Indians. The Indians loved bread and her mother made the best homemade bread. They would take the bread by

piercing each loaf and threading a strap through them then throwing the straps with bread over their shoulders. Magdalena, Anselm's wife, talked the Indians out of one loaf to last them until she could bake again. She tried to convince them to take the flour but they were uninterested. They loved salt and would eat it by the handful. After the Indians had taken bread and other food, they returned the next day with a full tub of venison for the Haller family.

When the Indians would come, the children would run and crawl under the bed. One story of an Indian dog that stayed behind hiding under a bed made the Haller family fearful that the Indians would think they wanted to keep the dog. Magdalena called to the animal as the Indians would in a high pitched scream and the dog immediately ran out of the house.

Anselm Haller had a good relationship with the Indians through trading with them. Although there was a language barrier, the Indians came to him and pointed at the clouds and let it be known to him to leave the area. He took his family and left his home traveling to Fort Snelling close to St. Paul, some eight miles. They would walk by night and hide in the brush by day knowing the Indians would never attack at night. The fort was so full when they arrived, they camped outside the fort but were fully guarded by the Calvary. St. Cloud was said to be surrounded by Indians. The Calvary arrested the leaders of the renegade Indians. Abraham Lincoln pardoned all but 32 of the Indians. Those found guilty were hanged all at once in New Ulm, MN. Anselm Haller and his family returned to their home.

Magdalena Haller was called "Goettle" by the community and her family. Goettle, which means Godmother was given to her as she was a midwife for most of the community. The children were baptized immediately with Magdalena as their Godmother.

Magdalena spoke German and poor English. She only spoke English to some of the neighbors and to the dogs.

The Dahinden Family History: by Irene Pommier:

Xavier and his brother Joe Dahinden came from the capital of Switzerland together.

They both married Iten sisters:

 Xavier married Anna Marie Iten

 Joe also married an Iten girl

Xavier and Anna Marie had three children:

 Joe Dahinden

 Frank Dahinden

 Anna Marie Dahinden

The two brothers never talked about their life in Switzerland. They did once talk about a sister but we know very little about their family. Joe was accidentally shot and killed in the woods in MN by people out hunting.

Anna Dahinden's mother's father was a wealthy man and lived at St Joe, MN. When he died each of the children got a dollar. Anna was so mad that she sent the money back and said to have masses said for Iten because he needed it. She burned her pictures of Grandpa Iten. He was married many times. He kept going back to Switzerland to get a wife. Once he married a widow and Joe married one of the widow's daughters.

Anna Marie Iten Dahinden died in childbirth when Joe was born. Anna was 6 years old. Xavier Dahinden married a widow in the area, Magdalena Haller Zeltinger. She had six children. Xavier and Magdalena had one daughter together, Lena Dahinden. Magdalena was a good stepmother to Xavier's children. Xavier had a temper and liked the spirits.

Stories of the Zeltinger family as told by Irene Pommier:

Magdalena's sons, Ignatius Zeltinger and John Zeltinger, both stayed at their Great aunt Lizz's home while attending Normal School in St. Cloud. They both received teaching certificates. Ignatius taught for six years at Spring Hill before homesteading in 1900. John immediately homesteaded after receiving his certificate. John had to lie about his age by 1 year so he would be old enough to homestead. They homesteaded across the road from the Dahindens (Magdalena and Xavier Dahinden, Mary and Katie Zeltinger and the Dahinden boys) south of Tolley. John had worked for neighbors in Minnesota. When he was ready to homestead in North Dakota, he dismantled a house and shipped it to Tolley. It was reassembled on Ignatius' farmstead and Ignatius and Katie lived in the house. For a while, the whole family lived in the house before they were able to build their own homes. John and Ignatius' homesteads were side by side with Ignatius on the north of John's homestead. John lived his whole married life on that homestead with Anna.

Anna stayed in St Cloud when her parents Xavier and Magdalena came to ND and worked for Chris Schmidt, Stearns County Treasurer, as a domestic for two silver dollars a week. From her meager wages, she saved \$13 to buy a breaking plow for her father. When she came to North Dakota in 1902, she had an offer to work in Kenmare at the Ervin Hotel for \$5/week. Her parents refused to have her working in the hotel because of the bad reputation of the hotel. Instead, she took a job working for about a year for Jacob Welsh, a Norma homesteader, and later for Gust Johnson of Tolley.

John and Anna were married on January 11, 1904 in Kenmare, ND by the pioneer priest, Father Wagner. Their attendants were Anna's brother Frank Dahinden and Katie, John's sister. Following their marriage vows, they returned to the tarpaper shack that John had built in 1901, one year after he settled on the homestead. In 1908 they had to expand the shack to accommodate their growing family. In 1916 John and Anna added another room and in 1946 they erected two more rooms and a bath with the added convenience of running water. This was to be their home for their entire married life. They were the parents of seven children:

Mary	October 1904	Dec. 14, 1990
Florence	February 1906	April 21, 2002
Joe	March 1908	April 1979
Irene	Aug 1, 1910	
Clarence	Sept 19, 1913	March 3, 1994
Agnes	Nov. 1917	
Hazel	Nov. 1923	

All of the cousins went to a country school right north of the Zeltinger farm. John Zeltinger donated the land for a school and told them that they could have the land as long as they needed the school. When the school closed, the land would go back to John Zeltinger. There were 10 to 12 children going to school at the little country school.

There was one teacher and she would teach all of the 8 classes. There was a stove in the school for heat. They had to carry out the ashes and start the fires in the morning. The teachers had to scrub the floor and do the janitor work. There was an outhouse by the school but no well for water. They had to carry the water from home. The kids were able to go to that little one room school through the eighth grade. The school was only about ¼ of a mile from the Zeltinger home and the Zeltinger kids were able to walk home for dinner each day. The teacher boarded with the Ignatius Zeltinger family. When the children finished the 8th grade, they went to high school in Tolley. They usually walked to school when the weather was nice. When the weather got bad, they would rent a room in Tolley and do light housekeeping. Irene told of one time when they brought the lignite coal, I was running out of coal and my brother-in-law brought the coal. He couldn't get close to the school because of the snow so he dumped the coal in the ditch. The kids and I carried buckets of coal at recess and put the coal in the coal bins. There was no wood on the prairie so they had to burn coal in the stove. Lena, Marie, Mary, Florence, Irene and Joe Zeltinger all taught in that one room school. When it closed the land went back to the homestead and the school was put up for bids. Joe Zeltinger got the bid and used the school for a granary.

The winters were very harsh with lots of snow and very cold temperatures. There were many hardships caused by the early blizzards in North Dakota. One in particular was told about such a blizzard and how John Zeltinger went to the school on his homestead to get the children with the stone boat. He took a horsehide along to cover the children. There was no room for the teacher so she stayed all night in the schoolhouse. On the way home he got lost and didn't know where he was and the horses were facing the wind and didn't want to go on. He dug in the snow to see what field he was in, if it was stubble or plowed, and finally got his bearings and found the way home. Anna had put a light in the window to guide them home. The next day they went and brought the teacher to their home. During another blizzard, John had to tie a rope from the house to the barn so he could follow the rope out to the barn to feed the livestock.

John and Anna had a few cattle and horses, and also raised many sheep. The animals were watered by a hand pump on a well John had dug about 200 yards south of the house. That well provided the water for all the animals and the house. In the early forties, they had a deep well dug to supply the water. Like the other homesteaders in the area, John farmed with horses. About 1910, John turned sod with an International Titan gas tractor. He had to lift each of the six bottoms by hand. He was actively engaged in farming with his sons until he retired. Over the years, John was called upon to perform a number of civic duties. He was township treasurer for seven years, on the Roosevelt School board for 14 years and assessor for thirty years.

Anna was very active in church work in connection with Altar Society of Sts. Peter and Paul's Catholic Church in Tolley. She also served the community as midwife. She assisted in the delivery of many babies in the Tolley area. When a neighbor, Mrs. Carl Hilscher, went into premature labor Anna was called to assist with the birth. She constructed an incubator for the two pound baby girl by lining a dresser drawer with bottles and jugs full of hot water. The little girl survived and they called her Little Annie

after the midwife that delivered her. When the Dr. made it to the Hilscher home the next day he said that he couldn't have done it any better himself.

They had a large garden each summer. The cellar was just like a store. Mother canned everything. She had a bin of potatoes and carrots. She raised cabbage and sold cabbage in Tolley. She always had three large crocks of sauerkraut in the basement each winter. They had sauerkraut to eat each day. They went to the mines near Kenmare to get lignite coal to burn and heat their home. It wasn't an easy life. They raised pigs, cows, chickens, and horses. One year we had so many apples that mother didn't know what to do with them. She used them in the sauerkraut...one layer of cabbage, one layer of apples. It was so good. We used to go to the Mouse River with a wagon with sacks, take our dinner and lunch and pick June berries. She would make June berry sauces and jams. There was a flourmill at McKinney. They would take their wheat down to the mill and have it ground into flour. It was a big white mill. The mill was always busy grinding flour for the families in the area. Growing up in the Tolley area you could buy anything you needed in Tolley. They had two stores in Tolley, the Coop or Co-operative, a General Store where you could buy everything that you needed and the Smith store which sold mostly groceries. There was also a hat shop run by Aunt Lena Marum. She was also a dressmaker on the side. She was so handy with the needle. They also had a restaurant and a filling station. Tolley also had a small hospital.

When the homesteads were established, they planted a tree grove around the buildings. Before the groves, they had to go down to the river to get wood to burn. After the groves were established, they would go out into the groves and gather the small twigs and broken branches and tie them in a bundle. The bundles were used to start the fires in the stove in the morning. They collected the bundles all summer long and were paid a small amount for each bundle. They were stacked next to the house and were ready for use as kindling to start the coal fires during the winter. Never had a fire in the house even though they had fires in the stove and used kerosene lamps. They were always very careful. Anna cooked with a Home Comfort stove and heated with coal. She baked bread every day. There was a water reservoir on the side which they kept full of water so they would have hot water for washing. They would go down to the river and cut ice blocks and bring them home and put them in the icehouse. They had a freezer where they made homemade ice cream. They would make it with real cream and eggs. They would chop ice and put around it then they would turn the crank until it turned to ice cream. Ice cream was a real treat. The homemade was the best ice cream. Anna made homemade choke cherry jelly and jam. At first we had only two kinds of potatoes, red and then white ones that we didn't like. Our mother went to Minnesota one time and came home with russet potatoes...big potatoes. She brought some home in her suitcase for seed. In a few years we had a small bin of russet potatoes. They were beautiful potatoes.

When Irene was young, and they would pick rock in the fields, they would find lots of flint arrowheads and Indian hammers. The schoolhouse was situated on a knoll. In the dirty thirties the wind blew and all of the dirt was blown off of that knoll many Indian arrowheads were exposed. Irene's dad told her that that was where they had had an Indian battle because it was just covered with arrowheads. Irene was so interested when

she heard about the Indians that she read all the books she could find about Indians. There were no Indians left on the prairie when Irene was growing up.

Aunt Mary Kirsch (John's sister) lived just south and east of John and Anna. Mary died in 1915 of consumption when her children were very young. She was married to Nick Kirsch. She spent the summer in a tent in the yard as she was contagious with the consumption. Their house was just a shack. Aunt Katie Jenson, her sister from Montana came and took care of her until she died. They had four children, three girls and one boy. The two middle girls walked to Tolley for high school. The whole town was sorry for the children without a mother so they gave Nick carpenter work in Tolley so he could rent a house in Tolley so the girls could go to school there. Annie was the oldest daughter. She didn't even go to grade school as she had to stay home and take care of the smaller kids. The two oldest girls, Kate and Clara did so well in high school that the superintendent at the Tolley school borrowed them the money so that they could go to college. They both graduated from college and were teachers for many years. They paid back all of the money that the superintendent lent them. Willie, Anna, and Helen never had the opportunity to go on to school.

There was no more land available for homesteading so when Xavier's two son's Frank and Joe were old enough to homestead, they went to Montana where there was still land available. When John's girls, Agnes, Hazel, and Irene became teachers, they first taught in country schools in the area. Irene decided to go out to Montana to where the Dahinden cousins lived to get a teaching job. The pay for school teachers in ND was \$50/month and \$100/month in Montana. Agnes and Hazel follow later. Agnes and Hazel married the Jochim brothers and stayed in Montana. Joe Dahinden married later in life and never had any children. Frank married and had children...his grandson Joe, lives in Belgrade MT and works with our son-in-law, Kelsey Holt. Irene came back to North Dakota. She had gone to Minot State for 3 months to become a teacher. She then spent many of her summers going to school at Minot State until she got her degree in teaching. She was a teacher for 32 years. After she retired, she worked as a foster Grandparent in the Minot school system for many years. She was a wonderful teacher and touched the lives of many children during her teaching career. She got a plaque from KMOT for a lifetime of learning. She was on TV when she was a foster grandparent.

Aunt Lena Marum was first married to Al Marum. In 1912 they homesteaded in Montana and had a small butcher shop at Inverness, Montana. Al died during the flu epidemic in 1918. Lena was sick with the flu when he died and she insisted that they walk past her window with the casket so she could see it. They had one son, Leonard. When her husband died, her parents went out to Montana and brought her and her son back to Tolley. Her husband's brother Arthur was living in North Dakota and she married him and had two more boys. Many times those second marriages were arranged by family or friends.

She had two more sons with Arthur, Delbert and Bobby. Bobby went to Seattle and became superintendent of King County Schools in Seattle. They said at the school, when Mr. Marum opens the door the sunshine comes in with him.

Magdalena and Xavier, homesteaded across the road from John and Anna in 1900. Magdalena's twin sister Mary stayed in Kimball, MN. The twins did not see each other again until they were 75 years old. Magdalena went in a Model T Ford with Joe, Hazel, John and Anna and 2 Fuchs to visit her sister. They slept in rural schools along the way. Hazel couldn't tell the grandmas apart. When Magdalena and Xavier sold their farmstead in 1912 to Clem and Lena Resch, they moved in with John and Anna and the kids.

Xavier Dahinden died in 1922 from cancer. At that time there was no local treatment for cancer so he had to go to Rochester, MN. Xavier didn't have and money so John gave him some money to go to Rochester to get treatment for his cancer. When he got to Rochester, he went to the sisters and asked if they would give him a place to stay and he would do handyman jobs for them while he was getting his treatments. After a while they said that they couldn't do anymore for him so he came home. He rode the train to Kenmare and then walked to Tolley from Kenmare. He lived a long time with the cancer. He was in so much pain but would get up and walk each morning. One day they were sitting on the porch and Clarence scratched his leg and it bled, Xavier looked at Clarence's leg and said "I wish that my blood was as red as that". He lived at the John Zeltinger home until he died. Magdalena continued to live with the John Zeltinger family for 29 years until her death in 1942 at the age of 92.

This information was compiled by Ann Zeltinger from oral information from Clarence Zeltinger as compiled by Kae Zeltinger Essler and from oral information from Irene Pommier.