
OUR HERITAGE

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Old Time Bakers in Manheim

By Janet Atkinson Strauss

George Wilhelm, a German man, and Charlie Rickert, a young man from Lititz, were fellow employees of the William Bollinger Bakery at Lititz.

Charlie Rickert came to Manheim sometime in the 1890's and married Lillie Young Showers in 1894. After moving to Manheim, he became an employee of Baumgardner Bakery, North Charlotte Street in Manheim. Charlie always talked very highly of the Baumgardner family.

Charles W. Rickert 1872-1958

Charlie Rickert was born on June 5, 1872 at Lititz, Pa. His parents were Charles Rickert, Sr. and Ann Elizabeth Becker Rickert. His mother died Dec. 28, 1885 when Charlie

was thirteen years old. He loved his mother and when his father remarried he was devastated. He decided to leave home and boarded with different families. That is how he learned the baking trade. Since his parents were Moravians, I believe Moravian families took him in.

The first recipe in his handwritten book is credited to J. F. Bomberger. These recipes are for Strisslers (a Moravian treat), a recipe for 350 and 600 cakes. There are a few recipes for Mrs. Bomberger Lemon Cakes and Sponge Cake. Both Mr. Isaac F. Bomberger and Mrs. Bomberger are buried in the Moravian Cemetery at Lititz.

Mr. William H. Bollinger, the other baker Charlie worked for is also buried in the Moravian Cemetery. I believe that these families were a good influence on Charlie.

Found in Charlie's Recipes Book:

Lemon Cakes

4 lbs. of sugar
2½ lbs. of butter
2 doz. of eggs
2 oz. of ammonia
1 qt. of sour milk
6 lbs. of flour
essence of lemon

George Wilhelm

Sugar Cakes

4½ lbs. of sugar
1¼ lbs. of lard
6 eggs
1 oz. of ammonia
1½ qts. of sour milk
6 lbs. of flour

George Wilhelm

Spice Cakes

1 qt. of molasses
¾ lb. of sugar
½ lb. of lard
1½ oz. of soda
1 pt. of milk
4¼ lbs. of flour
1 tsp. cinnamon

Mr. Bollinger

This interesting entry is included in Charlie's recipe book. After a few blank pages, I found this "recipe" "Hoof Ointment"

2 lbs. pitch of tar - 3 pints kneets foot oil

2 lbs. tallow - - - lamp black

(It was important to keep the horses hooves in good condition) - my comment, Janet S.

Charlie became an employee of Elam Showers Bakery in Manheim and later became Elam's brother-in-law when he married Elam's sister, Lillie.

Elam Showers 1866-1951

Elam was born in Rapho Twp., Lancaster County.

It appears that he may have first operated a bake shop in Millway, Warwick Twp., Lancaster County. In the census for the year 1900, Elam was living in Brunnerville, Warwick Twp. with his wife Alice, sons Norman and Charles and daughter Elva. Elam later moved to Manheim where he operated a bakery on North Charlotte Street.

In the 1910 census, he is living on South Charlotte Street and is proprietor of a bakery.



Elam and his Bread Wagon

Two of Elam Showers recipes from Charlie's Recipes Book:

Sugar Cakes

4½ lbs. of sugar

1lb. of lard

6 eggs

3 oz. soda

1½ qts. of sour milk

6¾ lbs. of flour

Elam Showers

Ginger Cakes

2 qt. of molasses

2 oz. ginger

2 oz. cinnamon

4 oz. soda

½ lb. of lard

1½ pints water

6 lbs. of flour

Elam Showers



Charlie with a large tray of bread

Charlie Rickert loved to talk about his baking days and how he came to learn the baking trade. He continued to bake at home well into his 70's.

Elam Showers' wife died on 14 Feb. 1912. In December of that same year he married Fianna Ginder Miller, a widow with several children. Sometime in the coming years he gave up the baking business and by 1920 he was living on a farm in Penn Twp. He gave his occupation in 1920 as a full-time farmer. Also, at this time, Elam and Fianna had a little daughter, Anna Mae, who was born in 1918. By 1930 he is still living in Penn Twp. but gives his occupation as a baker of bread and cakes. I believe he may have been helping his son, Charlie Showers, in his bakery at Elstonville.



These pieces were used by Charlie when he baked at home. I still use them to this day. The teacup is to measure 1 cup of sour milk and the teaspoon is for the 1 tsp. of soda that you stir into the sour milk. The glass tumbler is for cutting out the cakes. The baking tin was also used by Charlie.

Janet S.

